

Exploring Literacy Provision for Post-Secondary Education Learners

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## Abstract

The introduction of the Children and Families Act (Department for Education, 2014) has enabled professionals to engage in work with young people aged 16-25. However, very little is known about the educational provision available to those young people with additional needs. Statistics from international studies have found that the United Kingdom (UK) has one of the lowest mean scores for literacy skills for this age range (OECD, 2013). Considering this, alongside the poor outcomes associated with low literacy skills, it seems an important area for more in-depth exploration to uncover examples of good practice.

This study includes a systematic literature review aiming to determine the evidence for the ways in which post-secondary settings support the development of literacy skills for older learners. Subsequently, a series of interviews with three young people at a Further Education (FE) college were conducted. These interviews were informed by an Appreciative Inquiry approach attempting to explore the best of what is already happening in a fairly under researched area. The findings of the systematic review found a number of intervention strategies that had been evaluated in America, mostly with some success. There were various methodological limitations alongside significant gaps within the literature, for example, no research had been conducted within the UK and very rarely had the authors ascertained young people's views on the support that they were receiving. The empirical study adopted a thematic analysis and found that young people were able to identify the support that they perceived to be helpful. They were also able to identify literacy skills that might be necessary in achieving their aspirations and the additional support that they would find beneficial.

The final chapter provides a reflection of the potential benefits of this research related to evidence based practice alongside the dissemination plan for this work within the local context alongside the wider professional and research community

## Declaration

No portion of the work referred to in this thesis has been submitted in support of an application for another degree or qualification of this or any other university or other institute of learning.

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## Introduction to Thesis

### Overall Thesis Strategy

Recent legislative changes and reforms to the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice (SEN COP, Department for Education (DfE) / Department of Health (DoH), 2015) and The Children and Families Act (DfE, 2014) have consequently entitled young people to receive educational support up to the age of 25. Educational Psychologists (EPs) are one of various professional groups who are named within the SEN COP. It has been widely acknowledged that EPs have a key role in supporting parents, acting as an advocate for young people utilising interpersonal and collaborative problem-solving skills in order to reduce and resolve barriers to learning for children and young people (Ashton & Roberts, 2006; Fallon et al., 2010; Farrell et al., 2006;). For most EPs however, working with the 16-25 age range offered new opportunities and challenges including, but not limited to, unfamiliar contexts, policy, legislation and assessment tools. Perhaps most importantly, it provided an opportunity to develop understanding and skills of the approaches, support and intervention that represent best practice for those with additional learning needs in this age range. There appears however, to be a limited range of good quality research related to interventions for young people with additional needs at this stage of learning (Wright, 2006). In a thought provoking statement Wright (2006) suggests ‘for reasons that are unclear, the education community appears to have lost interest in this group of learners’ (p. 34). This is particularly concerning especially when considering the less than positive reports as to the nature of support that young people are receiving in Further Education (FE) provisions (Elson, 2011; Ofsted, 2013, 2014). One specific area of interest for policy and practice in FE over the last decade has focused on the literacy skills of older

learners. It would be fair to say that this is perhaps a result of the statistical reports of the UK's current performance in literacy skills as compared to other countries.

Echoing Wright's (2006) statements, despite statistics and prioritisation in governmental reports, there seems to be a limited range of research exploring what works well with this age group to support the development of literacy skills; a gap that the small-scale research reported in the following papers of this thesis attempts to begin to address.

Paper 1 presents a systematic literature review which aims to explore and describe the range of literacy support and interventions available within the current research base. The research question that this study addressed is as follows:

- What is the evidence for the ways post-secondary education settings can support the development of literacy skills of young people aged 16-25 years old?

To date it seems that there are no systematic literature reviews which could be found focusing on the literacy support and interventions that are available for this age range. It is hoped that this review will scope the international arena to gain an understanding and insight into the way in which practitioners can support young people and whether these mechanisms of support appear to be effective. Significant findings from the research highlighted a dearth of evidence originating from the UK alongside a lack of consideration of the views of the young people receiving this support.

Paper 2 presents empirical research undertaken by the researcher. The aim of this study is to begin to address the lack of research relating to older students with literacy difficulties in the UK by exploring their views on the literacy support that

they receive and the role of literacy in the successful transition to adulthood. The research was an exploratory qualitative study utilising semi-structured interviews informed by appreciative inquiry in an attempt to answer the following research questions:

- What are the views of young people about the literacy support that they receive in FE?
- In what ways do young people perceive literacy skills as applicable to their aspirations for adulthood and are these supported in FE?

Finally, Paper 3 reflects on the nature of evidence based practice and practice based evidence as related to the EP profession. The aim of the paper, to some extent, is to rectify the limited range of good quality research concerning the post-secondary age range by describing the implications of the research at the research site, organisational level and at the professional level. The paper also illustrates a dissemination strategy for the research at each of these levels.

### [Introduction to the Researcher and Rationale for Engagement](#)

The researcher's professional background is mostly based in the primary and secondary phases of education. Within both phases the researcher has supported literacy initiatives across year groups. In her role as both Learning Support Assistant and Assistant Special Educational Needs Coordinator in a secondary school, the researcher coordinated and implemented literacy interventions for young people aged between 11 to 16. What was striking in these contexts was the disparity between the requirement of the secondary education curriculum and the recognition and understanding of the literacy difficulties that these young people were experiencing. An integral part of the researcher's role resulted in acting as an

advocate for these young people across their curriculum subjects and with staff, describing the impact of the literacy demands of the classroom. The pupils with whom the researcher worked have inspired her interest, concern and ultimately this research related to the development of literacy skills for this age range with a view to promoting an understanding of the nature of these skills with those who are working with them. There seems to often be a common theme or narrative amongst staff once learners become older, a view that these young people “should be able to read by now”. Before embarking on this doctoral journey, the researcher had little experience of FE, other than supporting Year 11 pupils with their choices and aspirations. However, one particular young person with whom the researcher worked left secondary school the same year as the researcher left to begin her training as an Educational Psychologist. The researcher and this student had often discussed her aspirations to work in health as a nurse. Considering this, the researcher has often wondered how the FE provision supported her to achieve the literacy demands of these aspirations for the future. Upon presentation of the thesis proposals in the first year of the professional doctorate training the researcher aligned herself with one proposal; the experience of young people aged 16-25 with literacy difficulties.

### **Philosophical Considerations: Ontology, Epistemology and Axiology**

Ontology is concerned with the nature of reality. This would question whether researchers believe in an objective, context free reality that can be proved and discovered, or whether the researcher assumes a position where there are multiple constructions of reality that are bound by the context in which they originate. Ontological positions exist on a continuum, on one side, realists believe that there is an objective reality “which exists independent of human belief, perception, culture and language we use to describe it” (Hart, 1998, p.85). Whereas,

on the other, relativists would entirely reject any concept such as truth or knowledge. Epistemology aims to consider how we come to know what we know, or, how it is that we acquire knowledge. Again, epistemological positions reside on a continuum with positivism on one side and constructionism or interpretivism on the other. A positivist approach to research design would favour the use of quantitative, experimental designs in order to discover straight forward, casual relationships and objective knowledge that does not succumb to researcher partiality or involvement (Willig, 2013). Constructionism or interpretivism would align with a more qualitative approach to research as knowledge can only be constructed through our personal experiences and social interactions which are an interpretation of reality based on history, language and culture.

The research outlined in this thesis is underpinned by a critical realist position. Critical realists acknowledge that, ontologically, the world and reality exists independently of our knowledge of it, but accepts that epistemologically, our knowledge of it is socially constructed. What is real therefore, cannot be reduced wholly to epistemology (our knowledge of what is real) as this captures only one unit of a vast reality. It is therefore, “theory-laden not theory determined” (Fletcher, 2017, p. 182). The critical realist perspective advocates for the central and active role of the human agent but “with reference to their interactions with an independent external reality which can constrain or facilitate human action” (Johnson & Duberley, 2000, p. 153). As this research hoped to offer an exploration of a particular topic by ascertaining and understanding young people’s experiences, it took place in a specific time and social context to facilitate ideas regarding “what works best, for whom, and under what circumstances?” (Robson, 2002, p. 34). A critical realist stance was therefore thought to be appropriate.

## Axiology

Axiology originates from the Greek word *axios* meaning value (Killam, 2013) and whilst ontology and epistemology are concerned with the truth and reality, axiology deals with the nature of value and what is considered to be intrinsically worthwhile. The purpose of considering axiology is to encourage researchers to reflect on their own individual values and belief systems to appreciate and acknowledge how these then in turn impact on research; the topic chosen, how one goes about conducting research and what one as a researcher prioritises for interpretation within the results of findings. A position of critical realism postulates that the values and beliefs that a researcher brings to the research are essential and that researchers should embrace their influence whilst also upholding rigour and scientific inquiry within the research process. This, therefore, has encouraged the researcher to reflect on her own beliefs and value systems in order to report these openly for the reader so that they may adopt both an open and critical view of how these may have impacted the research process and the findings reported in the following papers included in the thesis. These values and beliefs are listed below for ease of access.

- As highlighted above, the researcher believes that literacy holds value in the society in which we live and that it is indeed an essential skill for wholly participating in modern day society. Connected to this, the researcher believes that an understanding of literacy development and possible support mechanisms are part of an EP's day to day role, particularly in relation to casework undertaken across the phases of education.
- The researcher values the necessity of ongoing professional development within EP practice and therefore believes that efforts should be undertaken to



ensure that we broaden and develop our understanding of unfamiliar topics or contexts that EPs are expected to work in.

- Perhaps representing one of the researcher's most intrinsic values is the belief that children and young people have the right to have their views listened to and acted upon and that they should be integrally involved in the decisions that concern them. This should only increase as young people develop in order for them to independently make decisions about their education and subsequently their future and adult lives.
- Finally, the researcher values an educational approach that fosters independent learning skills; moving away from a "traditional" view of adult support for children with additional learning needs which can in some cases, promote an over reliance on adults. By adopting an approach that fosters independence, professionals and practitioners can develop young people for moving towards their aspirations for the future and adulthood.

The beliefs and values reported above have inevitably shaped and influenced the chosen topic for the thesis outlined above, alongside the discovery and exploration methods utilised to capture young people's views.

## Summary

This chapter has provided a brief introduction to the aims, rationale and context for the study alongside a description of the philosophical and theoretical assumptions underpinning the research that is reported in the subsequent sections of this thesis. Very little is known about EP practice and perhaps, more importantly, post-secondary practice in general when supporting the additional literacy needs in post-secondary phases of learning. It is hoped that this study will provide an original and distinct contribution to the research base through providing a systematic

literature review to amalgamate research in this area alongside an initial study to ascertain the views of young people with literacy difficulties about the most helpful parts of the support that they receive and how college is currently providing them with the literacy skills required in relation to their aspirations for the future.

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## Paper 1

# A Systematic Literature Review of the ways in which Post-Secondary Education Settings Support Literacy Development

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## Abstract

The aim of this paper is to identify and explore the evidence for the ways in which post-secondary education settings can support the development of literacy skills for young people ages 16-25 years old. The paper reports a systematic literature review of 3216 studies dated from 2000-2016, from which, seven emerged as relevant in relation to meeting inclusion criteria alongside scoring at least medium on an overall weight of evidence framework. These studies illustrated a number of strategies and interventions that may be useful in demonstrating improvements in literacy skills in the areas of reading comprehension, reading fluency and orthographic knowledge for the 16-25 age range. The review found a number of limitations in each of the research articles including scarce follow-up or longitudinal data, small sample sizes and a lack of evidence as to whether participants were able to generalise strategies outside of the intervention setting. The paper concludes by summarising the potential implications of the review for both practice and future research.

Key words: Literacy, Intervention, Strategy, Post-Secondary, College, Review

## 1. Introduction

Literacy, at the most fundamental level, can ultimately be defined as a person's ability to read and write (Oxford English Dictionary, 2016). It is regarded as a multi-component skill, with competencies such as decoding and comprehension as contributors. However, literacy is also complex and dynamic. In 2008, The National Joint Committee on Learning Disabilities highlighted that literacy:

is complex set of skills that comprise the interrelated processes of reading and writing required within varied socio-cultural contexts. Reading requires decoding, accurate and fluent word recognition, and comprehension at the word, phrase, sentence and text levels. Writing requires automatic letter formation and or keyboarding, accurate and fluent spelling, sentence construction, and the ability to compose a variety of different text structures with coherence and cohesion. (p.211).

In 2002, the United Nations declared 2003-2012 'the United Nations Literacy Decade'. Resolution 56/116 acknowledged the position of literacy at the heart of lifelong learning, affirming that literacy is critical for the attainment of crucial life skills that enable successful participation in the modern world (United Nations, 2002). This relates to the notion of functional literacy, that is, the ability to use reading and writing to effectively function and develop within society and the community (Moser, 1999).

### 1.1 Incidence and Prevalence of Low Literacy Skills in Adulthood

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's (OECD, 2013) survey of adult skills defines literacy skills as the 'ability to understand, evaluate, use and engage with written texts to participate in society, to achieve one's

goals, and to develop one's knowledge and potential' (p. 59). This report identifies that literacy encompasses a range of different skills including decoding, comprehension, interpretation and evaluation of texts. The authors associate these skills with various different aspects of life including work, personal, society, community, education and training. The prevalence rates for low literacy levels in adults and older young people are illustrated in various international research articles and commissions. Biancarosa and Snow (2004) highlight that in the United States (US) as many as eight million adolescents struggle with reading at the word level alongside 26% of 17 years old failing to demonstrate a fundamental ability to communicate in writing (The National Joint Committee on Learning Disabilities, 2008). Maxwell (2010) reported that in Canada, 25% of high school students graduating each year do not have adequate literacy skills and furthermore within the age group of 16-25 years, this percentage increases to 37.8%. Despite the focus on early intervention and prevention for teaching reading skills, Hay and Elia (2005) propose that 70% of students who experienced literacy difficulties within primary school, still had these reading and literacy difficulties when they reached the age of 15. Within the United Kingdom (UK), the context is just as concerning. The OECD (2013) report highlighted that the UK had one of the lowest mean literacy scores for 16-24 year olds out of 24 countries. A more recent study specifically directed at evaluating youth skills indicated that young people in the UK demonstrated significantly lower literacy skills than all countries, with many young people only accessing literacy or reading that were at a skill level of 1 or below according to the national standards for adult literacy (Department for Education and Skills, 2000; OECD, 2015). England was also reported to be the only country in the 'developed world' where 55-65 year olds are more literate than 16-24 year olds. With reference



to the workplace, the Confederation of British Industry (CBI, 2011) noted that 44% of employers have had to invest in remedial courses and training due to the literacy skills of the workforce.

## 1.2 Outcomes Associated with Literacy Skills

The impact of literacy on adult outcomes has been well documented within the literature with associations to health, employment and crime (Parsons & Bynner, 2002). The report produced by the OECD (2013) also highlighted that if an individual were to score one standard deviation higher on the literacy scale, they would be 20% more likely to participate in employment activities. Additionally, a young person participating in Further Education (FE) was also associated with a 45% increase in actively engaging in employment. Proficiency in literacy skills was positively associated with outcome measures related to trust in others, political efficacy, participating in religious, political or charitable activities and self-assessed health status. Lower levels of literacy were related with a lower sense of political efficacy and poor self-assessed health. This relationship was strongest for participants in the UK. Morrisroe (2014) reports that individuals with poor literacy are less able to understand and obtain information about healthy living, moreover, those with entry level literacy are three times more likely to have their daily life and daily activities limited than those with functional literacy levels. The author also indicates that 48% of offenders have a reading age of below the expected level of an 11-year-old. The Social Exclusion Unit (2002) supports these figures by suggesting that 50% of offenders have serious problems with reading. The EU High Level Group of Experts on Literacy (European Commission, 2012) state that:

Literacy is about people's ability to function in society as private individual active citizens, employees or parents...literacy is about people's self-esteem

their interaction with others, their health and employability...ultimately, literacy is about whether a society is fit for the future (p.11).

Participants in a recent review concurred regarding the impact of literacy skills on a person's ability to function in society in relation to many similar points. In a study reported by the Business, Innovation and Skills Committee (2014), one participant commented that literacy affects all parts of life from completing independent tasks such as filling in a form to 'being able to read a story to your child' (p. 5).

Furthermore, the Department for Business Innovation and Skills (2013) concludes that young adults now do not have the basic skills to function in modern societies and the work place. The figures and conclusions presented above paint a stark picture of the literacy needs of older adolescents and young people within the UK and the requirement for development of understanding and practice on how to support the acquisition of literacy skills in order to participate more widely in society.

### 1.3 Rationale for the study

#### 1.3.1 Research evidence in the area of young adult literacy

Whilst there is international recognition of the importance of developing functional literacy skills alongside acknowledgement of the negative outcomes associated with poor literacy, there are still many young people who have not yet developed such skills. Within education, particularly within the UK, research and policy is conveying the consistent message of early intervention and prevention; the recognition that intervening early will negate the associated outcomes in later life. This is illustrated in the vast number of articles published with regards to effective interventions for improving literacy in the primary education phase of learning

(Brooks, 2016). However, early intervention will only support those who are identified early, but what happens for those who have missed this opportunity? Additionally, the idea that educational practice should become more evidence-based is now a prominent international view, although to what extent this is achievable in educational practice has been subject to considerable debate (Biesta, 2007; Slavin, 2013). One of the central aspects of evidence-based practice is that of effective intervention (Biesta, 2007). In recent years, there have been a range of systematic reviews and meta-analyses based on determining effective practice and “what works” for developing literacy skills within both the primary and secondary age range (Brooks, 2016; Galuschka, Ise, Krick & Shulte-Korne, 2014; Graham & Santangelo, 2014; Paul & Clarke, 2016). However, similar research reviews for the post-secondary education system appears rare. Furthermore, a number of these reviews specify strict inclusion criteria such as only including randomised controlled-trials to fit with the “gold standard” approach to research design and evidence-based practice (Slavin, 2002). In contrast to this view, when focusing on fairly under-researched areas it is useful to consider other research designs and approaches to “reflect the wide range of research designs used to assess the effectiveness of reading interventions” (Paul & Clarke, 2016, p. 117).

The context of the FE system has changed remarkably over the last decade. For example, in 2002 new statutory regulations were introduced that meant that all FE teachers of literacy had to complete a standardised initial teacher education curriculum. This was to complement the newly implemented national literacy curriculum and assessment framework for post-school learners. Despite this, evidence of effective literacy interventions for older children in the secondary phase of education within the UK appears to be extremely limited. The National Joint

Committee on Learning Disabilities' (2008) report states that we 'will likely fall short of the ultimate goal of improved literacy for all unless a similar investment is made in reading and writing instructions for older students' (p.212). The report concludes that the opportunities to access such support 'decreases markedly' (p.212) when the older students leave the public school system.

One research report that aims to provide insight and understanding into provision for older learner literacy development is that produced by Donnelley (2010). Literacy learning within three different sectors, community learning, Her Majesty's (HM) prisons and colleges was evaluated. The information gathering was undertaken by a group of HM inspectors. Donnelley (2010) found that colleges were using a range of different information to identify and evaluate interventions and inform planning, however, within the report there is very little guidance as to how colleges were doing this. The author also reports that literacy needs and skills were profiled for all learners upon admission to the colleges and then support groups were arranged as necessary. The colleges indicated that between 40 and 60 percent of their learners had literacy levels which would have a detrimental effect on successful completion of courses. Donnelley (2010) suggests that colleges are providing individualised literacy support for learners where positive elements of literacy support included drawing on interests, past experience, life experiences, contextualising learning and making it applicable to real world situations. Positive outcomes of the literacy support that colleges offered were identified more generally as being able to participate in modern society, for example, sending text messages, going to the supermarket and reading a magazine. However, the report also found that diversity of learner's aspirations made it difficult to track their progress and that there were insufficient opportunities for learners to receive formal recognition for

their achievements in literacy. There was also rarely expansion on what the individualised literacy support that was offered to learners entailed. Indeed, as Paulson (2006) suggests, there is not necessarily a unified approach to supporting older students. It is however important to uncover what perhaps are the most evidence based approaches that have been developed and implemented so far, allowing FE professionals to make informed decisions regarding the provision that they are able to offer students. The report concludes that it is imperative that research is provided to determine the instructional approaches and the factors that may affect change for learners who are still developing literacy skills. It also highlights the need for systematic studies within the area of older adolescent literacy development. It has been demonstrated that young adults not only need to possess an appropriate level of literacy skill in order to further educational opportunities via college courses but also to function successfully in day-to-day life. It has also been highlighted that there is a dearth of relevant research to provide evidence of what effective support for the development of adult literacy looks like.

To date, there appears to be no systematic literature reviews (SLRs) of post-secondary education literacy interventions. This review, therefore, aims to explore and evaluate existing evidence relating to such interventions by attempting to answer the following research question:

- What is the evidence for the ways post-secondary education settings can support the development of literacy skills of young people aged 16-25 years old?

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Focus of the Literature Review

The following SLR will aim to highlight interventions and programmes that directly relate to supporting literacy development for young people who are between the ages of 16 and 25 years old.

### 2.2 Literature Search Strategy

The current review adheres to the guidelines that are proposed within the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta Analyses (PRISMA) statement (Moher, Liberati, Tetzlaff & Altman, 2009). This consists of a 27-item checklist for identifying and reporting studies within a SLR (Appendix A). The searches were conducted between January and February 2016 and were then updated in August 2016 prior to writing this review to capture any relevant research published since the initial review period. Electronic databases (ERIC, British Education Index, PsycINFO and ASSIA) were searched for published articles that evaluated targeted interventions based within a full-time education setting which caters for young people between the ages of 16 and 25 years old. Articles from any country were considered if they were written in the English language. Search terms were generated by consideration to the inclusion criteria for the study. The search terms are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Search terms

Search Terms
(Read* OR write* OR spell* OR literacy AND College OR “further education” OR “post-16” OR “post-secondary” OR sixth-form OR college AND intereven* OR instruct* OR package* OR support OR Program* OR develop* OR strategy* OR assist* OR course*)

Criteria were set with regards to publication date and language. Articles published between 2000 and 2016 were considered for inclusion. The earlier date limit was chosen to enable the inclusion of any research triggered as a result of the United Nations Literacy Decade initiative (United Nations, 2002) and the introduction of a standardised teacher training focused on literacy for FE settings in 2002. Articles were restricted to those published in the English language. Following these searches, reference harvesting was also undertaken to identify further articles of relevance to the research question. A summary of inclusion and exclusion criteria is presented in Table 2.

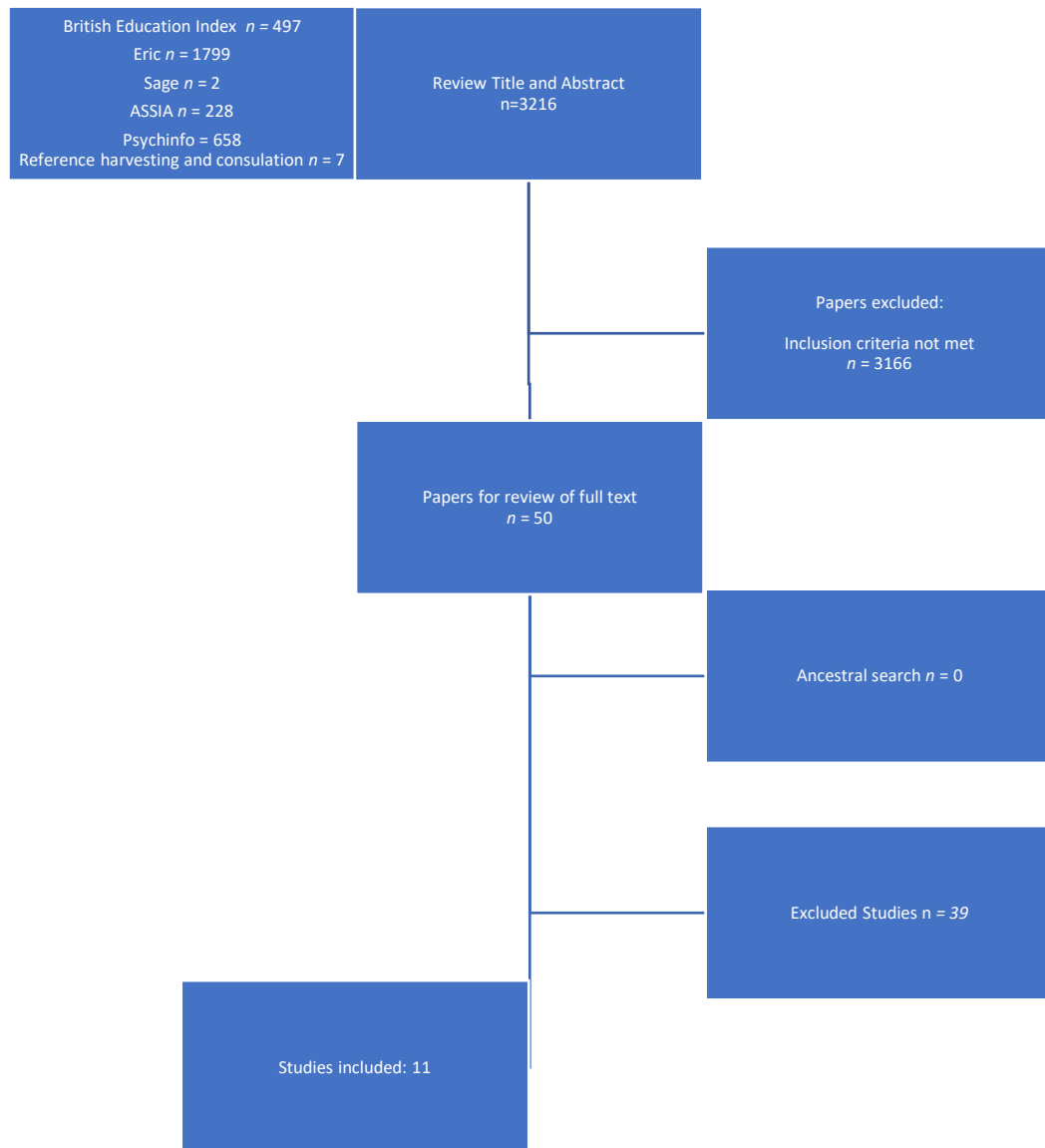
*Table 2: Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria*

<b>Inclusion Criteria</b>	<b>Exclusion Criteria</b>
An article published within a peer reviewed journal between January 2000 and August 2016	A study not published in a peer reviewed journal
An article that was written in the English language	Commentary or discussion papers
A research study that was conducted in a setting that educates learners between the ages of 16 and 25	A study that only included participants who spoke English as an additional language
A research study that is conducted in a post-secondary full-time education setting	
An empirical study that includes intervention strategies or interventions that aim to improve literacy skills (including reading, writing and spelling skills)	
An article that is published in any geographical location	

From the electronic searches 3216 results in total were identified as being potentially relevant to this study. Further examination of titles and abstracts excluded 3166 of these. The 50 remaining articles were read and examined in full, leaving only 11 papers meeting all inclusion criteria. Of the 39 articles excluded at this stage, many related to participants who spoke English as an additional language. Subsequent interventions may, therefore, have been specific to this population and thus limited the generalisability of the findings. Two articles were excluded as they were duplications. Eleven papers remained, four which were identified through reference harvesting and seven through the initial searches. No additional articles



were uncovered at the second search point in August 2016. Figure 1 illustrates the process.



*Figure 1: Illustration of systematic search process*

A full list of excluded studies can be found in Appendix B along with justification for their exclusion.

For ease of access, the data from the remaining eleven studies included in the systematic literature review are summarised in Table 3 under the following headings:

- Article reference information
- The overall aims of the study
- The study design
- Description of the intervention used
- Participant information
- Data collection methods
- Outcomes

Table 3: Overview of Studies

Reference	Location	Aims	Study Design	Intervention	Participant Information	Data Collection	Outcomes
Ari (2015)	America	To determine the impact of the “Wide Reading” and “Repeated Reading” interventions on silent reading rate and reading comprehension in comparison to a vocabulary intervention.	Randomised control group design.	<p>Experimental group interventions were:</p> <p>“Wide Reading” intervention and “Repeated Reading” intervention.</p> <p>Control group intervention was a vocabulary study.</p> <p>Passages for reading were taken from</p>	<p>33 participants at a two-year community college.</p> <p>No information provided regarding the specific age or age range of participants</p>	<p>Nelson Denny Reading Comprehension assessment.</p> <p>Silent reading was measures by participants marking the line they were reading 1 minute after starting the assessment.</p> <p>Pre and post test measures.</p>	<p>Both experimental conditions made a statistically significant improvement on their silent reading rate scores.</p> <p>Wide Reading <math>p &lt; 0.014</math></p> <p>Repeated Reading <math>p &lt; 0.039</math></p> <p>There was no statistically significant improvement for participants within the</p>

				Timed Readings materials.			vocabulary study group.  Null effects for reading comprehension.
Atkinson, Zhang, Zeller and Phillips (2014)	America	To determine whether a word study instructional technique has an impact on orthographic knowledge.	Quasi-experimental pre-test post-test control group design.	Word Study intervention developed from <i>Words Their Way: Word study for phonics, vocabulary and spelling</i> (Bear et al, 2004; 2007).  Five week intervention.	39 students from a developmental reading course  Experimental group = 20 participants (8 male and 12 female)  Control group = 19 participants (10 male and 9 female)  No information about the specific age or	Assessment materials from <i>Words Their Way</i> package.  Upper Level Spelling Inventory (pre and post test data)	Intervention group showed a statistically significant improvement in orthographic knowledge when compared to the control group.  Upper Level Spelling Inventory indicated a significant improvement in comparison to

					age range of participants given. Authors noted that participants were in their “first year” of college.		control (p<0.001).
Caverly, Nicholson and Radcliffe (2004)	America	To determine the short and long term effects of a strategic reading intervention PLAN.	Study 1 – Quasi Experimental design.  Study 2 - randomised control group design	PLAN -Predict - Locate -Add -Note	Study 1- 36 participants from a development reading course at an American university.  Study 2 – Experimental group 51 participants Control group – 78 participants  No information about the age	Texas Academic Skills Programme – Reading Subtest (pre and post test assessment)  Checklist of metacognitive strategies for reading (based on Weinstein & Mayer, 1985).	Study 1 – Significant differences for reading comprehension scores p<0.001.  Significant difference in self-report of metacognitive strategies p<0.001)

					<p>or age range of participants provided.</p>	<p>Self-report questionnaire based on self-efficacy in ability.</p> <p>Telephone Interviews (18 participants selected for interview)</p> <p>Study 2 – final course grade in American History</p>	<p>Self-efficacy results were not significant.</p> <p>Participants reported understanding strategies such as breaking ideas down and main idea location.</p> <p>11/18 participants reported continuing to use the strategies beyond a semester.</p> <p>6 students reported experiencing no benefits from the PLAN strategy).</p>
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							<p>Study 2 – Those involved in the reading intervention made a significant improvement on a reading assessment compared to those who had not received the intervention <math>p &lt; 0.014</math>)</p> <p>Significantly higher overall grades on a reading intensive course (American History) for the intervention group.</p>
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Gaddy, Bakken and Fulk (2008)	America	To determine the efficacy of using a “Text Structure” strategy on reading comprehension skills.	Randomised control group experimental design	<p>Experimental group intervention used a “Text Structure” strategy</p> <p>Control group followed “traditional instruction” e.g. Participants were asked to read a passage and then answer the questions to follow.</p>	<p>40 participants in a post-secondary education setting.</p> <p>Experimental group mean age = 19.3</p> <p>Control group mean age = 19.02</p>	<p>No information was given as to the form of measures used for pre and post test data.</p> <p>Both conditions were tested at both immediate and delayed intervals.</p>	<p>Experimental group improved reading comprehension scores at the delayed recall period with a large effect size.</p> <p>Small effect size for recall of main ideas within the text.</p> <p>Immediate recall effect size “negligible”</p>
Hua et al. (2012)	America	To determine the impact of the ReRead Adapt and Answer Comprehend (RAAC)	Multiple baseline across subjects design	ReRead Adapt and Answer Comprehend (RAAC). Participants accessed the intervention in	Three students within a post-secondary education setting that caters for young people	Authors state the use of a “Oral reading fluency curriculum measure”. Participants	All participants improved their reading fluency (words per minute) immediately



		intervention on reading fluency.		1:1 sessions for 15 minutes 3 x per week.	with additional needs.  The age range was reported to be between 19 and 21 years old.	were also given comprehension questions at the end of each passage; four factual and four inferential.	after intervention.  All participants were observed to show a decrease in decoding errors immediately after the intervention.
Hua, Wood-Groves, Ford and Nobles (2014)	America	To determine the impact of a three-step paraphrasing strategy on comprehension skills.	Randomly assigned control group design.  Experimental group – five participants (three female and two male)  Control group – five participants (two female	A three step paraphrasing strategy: Read a paragraph, Ask yourself what is the main idea and what are two details, and put this into my own words (RAP).	Ten participants enrolled in a two-year post-secondary education provision that caters for young people with additional needs.	The dependent variable in this study was the total number of main ideas and details that participants recalled.	There was a significant difference between groups with regards to both the total number of main ideas ( $p < 0.05$ ) and details ( $p < 0.05$ ) recalled. The authors report that this exhibits

			and three male).	Use of “Timed Readings” materials.	Ages ranged between 20-23 years of age.		a large effect size.
Hsu and Wang (2010)	America	To determine whether the use of a blogging tool will improve reading levels in developmental reading groups.	Randomised control group experimental design.	<p>Implementation of a blogging tool within a developmental reading course.</p> <p>Seven groups continued with their every-day developmental course.</p> <p>Two groups continued with their developmental reading course alongside using blogs as a supplementary tool.</p>	<p>149 participants enrolled in a developmental reading course at a four-year university.</p> <p>Two blogging groups and seven non blogging groups.</p> <p>Mean age of participants = 18.15 years</p>	<p>Motivated Strategies for Learning.</p> <p>COMPASS reading assessment for pre and post reading data,</p>	<p>Developmental reading course improved reading significantly for both groups <math>p &lt; 0.000</math>.</p> <p>No significant difference between groups for reading performance.</p> <p>No significant differences between groups for motivation.</p>

							Instructors for the group reported that it highlighted the comprehension skills of more introverted students and fostered positive peer interactions.
Lesley (2004)	America	To learn about the educational mechanisms that contribute to literacy “failure” and the pedagogies that facilitate and inhibit literacy development.	Exploratory qualitative design.	Participants were development readers undertaking the Reading 100 intervention at a university in America.	22 participants (14 female and 8 male) American university. No information provided regarding the specific age or age range of participants	Focus group interviews. Key class discussion transcriptions. Pre-post literacy assessments. Field notes. Reflective journal.	Participant narratives focused on feeling marginalised through:  Labelling Tracking  Developmentally inappropriate literacy practices.

						Student written artefacts.	<p>Facilitators included:</p> <p>Approaching literacy learning using student narratives rather than teacher narratives.</p> <p>Moving away from fixed deficit models.</p> <p>Approaches that were personally relevant to students.</p>
Perin, Bork, Peverly and Mason (2013)	America	To determine the impact of a content comprehension strategy intervention for	Two quasi experimental design studies.  Experiment 1 – intervention contextualised	Intervention focused on strategies including context clues, main ideas, word analysis,	Experiment 1 – 322 participants  Experiment 2 –	Nelson Denny Reading Test.	Experiment 1 – intervention group had statistically significant improvements in main idea

		reading comprehension.	<p>in science text and compared to comparison group receiving developmental curriculum but no intervention.</p> <p>Experiment 2 – different participants randomised into science text condition and generic text condition where both receive the intervention.</p>	<p>text structure, summarisation, questioning and predicting.</p>	<p>246 participants.</p> <p>67-70% were between the ages of 16-18. No identification of mean age of participants overall.</p> <p>Based across two community colleges.</p>		<p>generation and recall (<math>p &lt; 0.01</math>), word definition (<math>p &lt; 0.01</math>) and accuracy of information (<math>p &lt; 0.05</math> when compared to control).</p> <p>Experiment 2 – participants within the contextualised intervention group made more improvement for main ideas and word definitions (<math>p &lt; 0.001</math>) than the generic group.</p> <p>Both groups still made significant improvements</p>
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							after intervention (science $p < 0.001$ ) and generic $p < 0.05$ ).
Savery (2012)	New Zealand	To investigate the efficacy of targeted reading strategy instruction on improving the components of reading underpinning comprehension and critical reading of text.	Quasi experimental Action Research design.	Intervention based on five key strategies for reading comprehension.  12 week intervention (one hour per week)	14 participants (12 male and 2 female)  Ages ranged between 16 and 55.	Assessment Tool for Adult Literacy and Numeracy (pre and post assessment data)  Student Attitudes to Reading Survey from the Teaching Adults to Read with Understanding support book).	Significant improvement for scores on Assessment Tool for Adult Literacy and Numeracy)  9 of 12 believed they had learned strategies that were helpful.  7 of 12 could name specific strategies.  3 of 12 did not think that their reading had improved.

						Contextualised reading assessment (musical texts).	
Snyder (2002)	America	To examine the effect of a course-based reading strategy training on developmental learners reading comprehension skills.	Randomised control group design.	Reading strategy based on principles of: Main idea Summarization Question generation Clarification Prediction  Intervention was based within course materials.	86 development readers in small university. All students identified through failing to pass basic skills tests in reading writing and maths.  20 participants within intervention group.  66 participants within control group who received no	Nelson Denny Reading Test Form G.  Assessment consists of 80 vocabulary questions and 38 comprehension questions.  Pre and post intervention assessment.	Observed statistical difference between groups at pre-test.  Observed statistical difference between groups at post-test.  The reading intervention group made a statistically significant improvement in their reading

					<p>direct instruction of reading strategies.</p> <p>No information provided regarding the specific age of participants.</p>		<p>scores following the intervention (p&lt;0.001).</p> <p>No significant results found for the non-reading intervention group (p&lt;0.075)</p>
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## 2.3 Data analysis methodology

### 2.3.1 Study Quality Assessment using evaluative frameworks

Of the eleven articles selected for quality assessment, eight were quantitative studies, one used a qualitative methodology and two used a mixed- methods methodology.

As both quantitative and qualitative methodologies were considered acceptable for inclusion, two frameworks were used to assess quality. Quantitative studies were assessed using a framework devised by Bond, Woods, Humphrey, Symes and Green (2013) established from the American Psychological Association (APA;2006). This framework gives credit for six specific criteria including:

- Use of a randomised group design
- Focus on a specific, well defined disorder or problem
- Comparison with treatment usual, placebo or less preferably, standard control
- Use of manuals and procedures for monitoring fidelity checks
- Sample large enough to detect effect (Cohen, 1992)
- Use of outcome measures with demonstrably good reliability and validity

(Article receives 2 points if more than one measure has been used)

A maximum score of seven points was available, with one point being awarded for meeting each criteria with the exception of the last criterion offering a potential score of two. Once scored, a quality descriptor of **high** was given to articles that achieved between five and seven points, **medium** for three to four points and **low** for zero to two points.

One article was also scored using a qualitative framework created with reference to Spencer, Rithie, Lewis and Dillon (2003) by Bond et al., (2013). This framework gives credit for 12 specific criteria including:

- Appropriateness of research design
- Clear sampling rationale
- Well executed data collection
- Analysis close to the data
- Emergent theory related to the problem
- Evidence of explicit reflectivity
- Comprehensiveness of documentation
- Negative case analysis
- Clarity and coherence of reporting
- Evidence of researcher-participant negotiation
- Transferable conclusions
- Evidence of attention to ethical issues

A maximum score of twelve was available. Once scored, quality descriptors were also applied with a score of nine to twelve points being awarded a **high** quality score, **medium** for scores of five to eight and a **low** quality score for zero to four points.

In the studies where a mixed methods approach had been utilised, both frameworks and quality descriptors were applied. The complete scoring frameworks for each of the 11 studies can be found in Appendix C.

#### 2.4 Weight of evidence judgements

Having assessed each of the eleven articles according to an appropriate quality framework, the results were incorporated into the 'Weight of Evidence

(WOE) Framework' (Gough, 2007) (see Table 4) Studies judged to be of **high**, **medium** and **low** quality were given a score of 3, 2, and 1 respectively for WOE A.

*Table 4: Weight of Evidence (Gough, 2007)*

<b>Weight of Evidence A</b>	<b>Weight of Evidence B</b>	<b>Weight of Evidence C</b>	<b>Weight of Evidence D</b>
A judgement based around the quality of the methodology	A judgement specific to the current reviews based on how appropriate the evidence is in relation to answering the review question (methodological relevance)	A judgement specific to the review based on the relevance of the focus of the study for the review question	An overall assessment as to the extent the study contributes evidence to answer the review question (overall weight of evidence)

In order to consider each paper in terms of its relevance to the research question, judgements relating to WOE B and C were then made. Specific criteria for WOE B and C are presented below in Tables 5 and 6.

*Table 5: Weight of Evidence B Criteria*

<b>High (Score 3)</b>	<b>Medium (Score 2)</b>	<b>Low (Score 1)</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A participant sample between the ages of 16 and 25 only.</li> <li>• An education setting that is similar to the UK equivalent of further education</li> <li>• No inclusion of participants with English as an additional language</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A participant sample with an age range of 16-25 OR a wider age range than 16-25 but where the majority of participants are within this age bracket.</li> <li>• An education setting that is similar to the UK equivalent of further or higher education.</li> <li>• No mention OR low proportion of English as an additional language represented in comparison to the entire sample</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A participant sample with a wider age range than 16-25 where no judgement can be made with regards to the majority age.</li> <li>• An education setting that is unequivocal to UK further or higher education.</li> <li>• High proportion of English as an additional language represented in comparison to the entire sample</li> </ul>

Table 6: Weight of Evidence C Criteria

High (Score 3)	Medium (Score 2)	Low (Score 1)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A study that focuses on a specific intervention that can be used to improve literacy skills.</li> <li>• Evidence within the study of how this strategy might be replicated in practice.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A study that uses an intervention or appropriate strategy to impact literacy skills.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Little evidence of the type of intervention or strategy used and how this might be replicated in practice.</li> </ul>

For overall WoE (WoE D), scores for each of WoE A, B and C were added together and then averaged to give an overall score where the maximum score was 3.

In order to check the reliability and bias in scoring procedures three articles were scored independently by the researcher’s supervisor, using both quality and WoE frameworks. The scores of the research supervisor were the same as that of the researcher. These independent scores were discussed in research supervision, particularly regarding the scoring for outcome measures. It was agreed that articles would be given scores related to outcome measures based on the researcher’s independent exploration of their relevant reliability and validity. This was applied to the remaining eight articles.

### 3. Results

#### 3.1 Summary information

Quality assessment indicated that, in terms of methodology, four of the eight quantitative studies were considered **high** quality, three were assessed as **medium**

**quality** and one as **low quality**. The two mixed methods studies were considered **medium quality** as was the purely qualitative study. A summary of the quality assessment scores is presented in Table 7.

*Table 7: Quality Assessment Scores (Weight of Evidence A)*

<b>Study</b>	<b>Quality Assessment Scoring</b>	<b>Type of Study</b>	<b>Weight of Evidence A</b>
Atkinson, Zhang, Zeller and Phillips (2014)	5/7	Quantitative Evaluative	3
Ari (2015)	5/7	Quantitative Evaluative	3
Gaddy, Bakken and Fulk (2008)	5/7	Quantitative Evaluative	3
Hsu and Wang (2010)	5/7	Quantitative Evaluative	3
Perin, Bork, Peverly and Mason (2013)	4.5/7	Quantitative Evaluative	2
Hua, Wood-Groves, Ford and Nobles (2014)	4/7	Quantitative Evaluative	2
Synder (2002)	4/7	Quantitative Evaluative	2
Savery (2012)	2.5/7 & 6.5/12	Mixed Methods	2
Caverly, Nicholson and Radcliffe (2004)	4/7 & 5/12	Mixed Methods	2
Lesley (2004)	5.5/12	Qualitative Investigative	2
Hua et al., (2012)	2/7	Quantitative Evaluative	1

Scores on WoE B ranged between 1.5 and 3, with 6 of the 11 studies only scoring 1.5 on this criterion. This was due to many of the studies failing to report a mean age of participants and little mention as to the proportion of students using English as an additional language. Scores on WoE C ranged between 1 and 3, with 8 of the 11 studies scoring a 2 or more on this criterion. The majority of the studies provided

sufficient information regarding the type and nature of the intervention that was utilised.

Overall WoE scores ranged between 1.5 and 2.7. A summary of all scores is presented in Table 8.

*Table 8: Summary Weight of Evidence Scores*

<b>Study</b>	<b>Weight of Evidence A</b>	<b>Weight of Evidence B</b>	<b>Weight of Evidence C</b>	<b>Overall Weight of Evidence (out of a possible 3)</b>
Gaddy et al., (2008)	3	3	2	2.7
Atkinson et al., (2014)	3	1.5	2.5	2.3
Hua et al., (2014)	2	3	3	2.3
Ari (2015)	3	1.5	2	2.2
Hsu and Wang (2010)	3	2	1	2
Hua et al., (2012)	1	3	2	2
Perin et al., (2013)	2	2	2	2
Caverly et al., (2004)	2	1.5	2	1.8
Savery (2012)	2	1.5	2	1.8
Synder (2002)	2	1.5	1	1.5
Lesley (2004)	2	1.5	1	1.5

Having scored for Overall WoE, it was decided that studies which fell in the ‘low’ category (i.e. a score of less than 2) would be omitted from further analysis in this review on the basis that they were of low value in terms of evidence and appropriateness of focus to the review question. Only the seven articles considered to have either a **medium** or **high** Overall WoE are discussed from this point forward. None of these articles were considered to have a **high** Overall WoE.

Gaddy et al.'s. (2008) article was considered to have the highest WoE score in this review (2.7). This study clearly referenced an education setting similar to a FE college in the UK, alongside providing specific information with regards to the age of the participants. The authors also clearly identified a strategy or intervention that potentially could be replicated. Hua et al. (2014) followed closely behind with scores of 2.3. Both studies scored **high** for WoE A, however, Hua et al.'s. (2014) study was more explicit regarding the nature of the intervention used. Atkinson et al. (2014) also scored 2.3 for Overall WoE. The study was conducted in setting similar to that of a higher education setting in the UK, although, there was little information regarding age or participants who might speak English as an additional language. However, the study scored highly for WoE C as a specific intervention was named alongside providing detailed descriptions regarding how this intervention had been modified and used in the study. Ari (2015) scored 2.2; the author included a sample of participants from a community college similar to how one might experience UK FE. There was also detail as to the strategies that participants used to improve literacy skills. Finally, Hsu and Wang, (2010) Hua et al. (2012) and Perin et al. (2013) had the weakest Overall WoE in the review; the latter study included participants with a mean age of 20-22 and the setting of the study was a community college. Furthermore, some information was provided as to the nature of the intervention or strategy used. Hua et al. (2012) specified information with regards to their participants (for example, age ranges) and used a named intervention strategy. Hsu and Wang (2010) provided little information with regards to the literacy intervention that was used but scored highly for methodological quality alongside conducting the study with a sample within the age range of 16-25 in a setting equivalent to a UK FE or higher education provision.



## 3.2 Overview of key characteristics of studies

This section will begin by providing an overview of the pertinent characteristics across the studies. Following this, an account of each of the seven articles will be provided detailing the interventions utilised and the associated outcomes reported within the studies.

### 3.2.1 Focus and Aims of the Studies

Three of the studies included in this review had the primary focus of improving reading comprehension skills (Gaddy et al., 2014; Hua et al., 2014; Perin et al. 2013). One other study also aimed to improve reading comprehension skills however the primary aim of this study was to develop reading fluency (Hua et al. 2012). Another study focused on a reading comprehension developmental group, however, the primary aim was to determine the impact of the use of technology (blogging) on outcomes (Hsu & Wang, 2010). Two studies were primarily concerned with improving reading fluency, Ari (2015) and Hua et al. (2012). However, Hua et al. (2012) used an intervention to improve reading comprehension in order to do this. Finally, one study focused on improving written literacy such as spelling and orthographic knowledge (Atkinson et al. 2014). Only one study contextualised the intervention into academic and educational texts (Perin et al. 2013).

### 3.2.2 Location of study

All studies included in this review were conducted in America. There was only one study identified through the systematic search that was conducted outside of America (New Zealand), however, this study was excluded based on Overall WoE. With regards to educational settings, two of the studies were based in two-year community colleges (Ari, 2015; Perin et al. 2013) and a further two were based in American universities (Atkinson et al., 2014; Hsu & Wang, 2010). Both Hua et al.

(2012) and Hua et al. (2014) were based in a post-secondary setting for young people with additional needs. Only one study did not specify, simply stating a “post-secondary education setting” (Gaddy et al. 2008).

### 3.2.3 Target group and Age Range

The information presented within some of the studies relating to age is somewhat inconsistent. Only two studies presented the age range of participants (Hua et al. 2012; Hua et al. 2014), reporting participants were between 19-21 years of age and 20-23 years of age respectively. Two studies reported the mean age, for example, Gaddy, et al. (2008) highlighted that the mean age in their study was 19.25 years and Hsu and Wang (2010) reported 18.15 years of age for their study. Perin et al. (2013) stated that between 67-70% of the participants were between the ages of 16-18 years old but gave no indication of the other age groups for participants. Finally, two studies did not report any information with regards to mean age (Ari, 2015; Atkinson et al. 2014). All the studies targeted learners who experienced difficulties with reading. Two of the studies were based in education settings for young people with additional needs, therefore, the studies reported the nature of their additional needs alongside identifying their difficulties with reading (Hua et al, 2012; Hua et al. 2014). The remaining studies identified participants from those who were assigned to developmental reading courses based on basic skills assessments taken on admittance to the education setting.

### 3.2.4 Outcome Measures

A range of outcome measures were used throughout the studies, each with varying degrees of validity and reliability; many studies failed to provide any information of the reliability or validity of the measures utilised. Two studies (Ari, 2015; Perin et al. 2013) used the Nelson Denny Reading Test; a two-part test which

reports to measure vocabulary, comprehension and reading rate and is designed for use with high school and college students. One study used the COMPASS reading assessment (Hsu & Wang, 2010); a test that is often used for college placement in remedial programmes in America. The only other published assessment used was the Upper Level Spelling Inventory; a spelling assessment used with ages between middle school and post-secondary. This was used in Atkinson et al's., (2014) study along with materials provided through the intervention, *Words Their Way*. Both Hua et al. (2012) and Hua et al. (2014) used purely curriculum-based measures designed and adapted by the authors, this, therefore, makes it difficult to determine the nature of the assessment and outcomes measures they used.

### 3.2.5 Types of Intervention

#### *Comprehension*

Three of the studies which aimed to improve reading comprehension skills used named strategies or interventions, these were, the Paraphrasing Strategy (Hua et al., 2014), 'Text Structure' strategy (Gaddy et al. 2008) and ReRead Adapt and Answer Comprehend (RAAC) (Hua et al. 2012). The first two interventions focused on participants identifying and explaining the main ideas of the text. Hua et al. (2012) RAAC strategy involved providing participants with a cue card which they were required to read three times with the researcher offering a series of prompts depending on the participant's response. Perin et al. (2013) and Hsu and Wang (2010) did not use a named intervention or strategy but indicated the different strategies that were taught within the reading comprehension intervention, for example, summarisation, question generation, vocabulary understanding, and identification and communication of main ideas. Whilst Hsu and Wang (2010) were using strategies within their reading intervention, the study was focused on what

impact using blogs to support this intervention would have, for example, completing activities using technology, recording these and receiving online feedback.

### *Fluency*

One study (Ari, 2015) compared two reading fluency interventions ‘Repeated Reading’ and ‘Wide Reading’. The ‘Repeated Reading’ intervention in this study required participants to re-read the same text four times and then answer comprehension questions. This was supported by guided practice and immediate error correction by the adult supporting the readers. The ‘Wide Reading’ intervention required participants to read four different passages, supported in the same way as within the ‘Repeated Reading’ intervention. Hua et al. (2012) also aimed to increase reading fluency skills, however, did not use a specific reading fluency intervention but an intervention designed to target reading comprehension skills (RAAC).

### *Orthographic Knowledge and Spelling*

Atkinson et al. (2014) implemented a word study intervention based on ‘Words Their Way: Word Study for Phonics, Vocabulary and Spelling Instruction’ (Bear et al. 2004, 2007). They implemented a five-week intervention that focused on orthographic and spelling development at three different levels; alphabet letter-sound relationship, patterns of letter groupings, and meaning (groups of letters denoting meaning to words).

### *3.2.6 Intervention Process*

All the studies included in this review outline the process that was involved in delivering the intervention. This should be considered vital information for those wishing to replicate an intervention alongside important insight into the ways in which this age group can be supported within interventions.

### 3.3 Narrative Descriptions of Studies

The descriptions presented below have been themed according to the type of literacy skills that the study was attempting to develop. Within the reading comprehension section, these studies are ordered in line with their Overall WoE.

#### 3.3.1 Reading Comprehension

##### *Gaddy et al. (2008)*

Gaddy et al. (2008) aimed to research the efficacy of a 'Text Structure' strategy on comprehension of instructions. The study took place within a two-year private post-secondary education setting and included 40 participants with self-identified difficulties with learning. The authors adopted an experimental design with a control group using what the authors call 'traditional instruction' (describing this as reading, listening and answering questions that follow a text). Within the experimental group, the participants followed a one-to-one programme of strategy presentation and modelling, guided practice, independent practice and reviewing. The 'Text Structure' strategy required participants to underline and explain the main idea and identify the differences between main and supporting ideas. Subsequently results indicated that the intervention group significantly outperformed the control group at the delayed testing point but not at the immediate post-test; the effect size for recall of main ideas was small. As for much of the research in this area, the passages that participants read and used throughout the intervention were selected by the researchers. This therefore limits that generalizability of the study in terms of reading skills in natural settings.

##### *Hua et al. (2014)*

Hua et al. (2014) implemented a three-step paraphrasing strategy to improve reading comprehension of expository texts. This strategy has been empirically tested

with school age children with some positive results. The authors suggest that it provides a cognitive process with which to monitor and evaluate comprehension skills. 10 students participated in the study and were enrolled at a two-year post-secondary education setting for young people with additional needs. All participants had a minimum 6<sup>th</sup> grade level in oral reading fluency. Within this randomised control group design, the control group accessed a life skills class while the experimental group met twice per week for 60 minutes with a trained instructor and graduate assistant. The intervention was implemented for 6 weeks and sessions followed a pre-defined plan, for example, in the first session, participants made commitments, developed an understanding of the importance of reading comprehension skills and described their own goals for this skill. The second session involved a description and modelling of the strategy from the tutor, including verbalisation of thought processes behind decision and actions. The participants then experienced rehearsal, controlled practice and advance independent practice in the remaining weeks. The dependent variables were the total amount of main ideas and details that were recalled. Pre and post test data were collected and at post-test the experimental group displayed significant differences from the control group, showing a statistically significant increase in the amount of main ideas and details that they were able to recall ( $p < 0.05$  respectively). No significant differences between the groups were found at the pre-test. Considering limitations of the study, there is no indication of whether the skills would be maintained or generalised outside of the intervention. The generalisability is further compounded by the small sample size.

*Perin et al. (2013)*

Perin et al. (2013) implemented a content comprehension strategy intervention for one semester within a community college. The intervention focused on summarisation, vocabulary definitions, understanding of context clues, question generation, identification of main ideas, text structure and short opinion writing. The study involved two quasi-experimental designs, firstly the intervention was contextualised in science textbooks and secondly, the science textbook group was compared to a group using general texts. Developmental reading students from two colleges were involved and a teacher with more than five years' experience delivered the intervention. Using the Nelson Denny Reading Test, the intervention group significantly outperformed the "business as usual" group ( $p < 0.001$  for main ideas,  $p < 0.01$  for vocabulary understanding and  $p < 0.005$  for information accuracy). When compared to the generic text condition, the Science group outperformed the generic group ( $p < 0.001$  for main ideas and  $p < 0.05$  for understanding of vocabulary). The post-test data was completed immediately after the intervention and therefore it was a limitation of the study that there was no longitudinal follow-up.

*Hua et al. (2012)*

A description of this study can be found in the Reading Fluency section below as this was the primary dependent variable.

*Hsu and Wang (2010)*

The study conducted by Hsu and Wang (2010) aimed to ascertain whether the use of a blogging tool would improve reading comprehension results for students enrolled on a developmental reading course in an American university. The blogging tool supported a college reading strategy course and 40 participants were assigned to this group with 60 just accessing the strategy course. This course aimed to enable

students to interpret important information, select information, summarise text, generate and answer questions, and communicate ideas to others; blogging acted as a supplementary tool to support these strategies. With regards to outcomes measures, the authors included data from Motivated Strategies for Learning questionnaires and COMPASS assessments. No significant differences were found between groups for reading performance at the pre or post test period. When asked directly, instructors believed that the blogging tools supported peer interactions and helped more introverted students who would be less likely to answer questions in front of others. Improvements for the reading group were illustrated as all reading scores improved significantly ( $P < 0.000$  for both groups). It would therefore be useful to understand and explore the reading course in more depth and the different strategies that were utilised.

### 3.3.2 Reading Fluency

*Ari (2015)*

Ari (2015) utilised a randomised control group trial to uncover the impact of two reading fluency interventions, 'Wide Reading' and 'Repeated Reading'. The researcher recruited 33 participants from a two-year community college who were randomly assigned to either an intervention group or vocabulary study group (control). Groups were taught by the same teacher and the Nelson Denny Reading Test was used to assess silent reading rate for both pre and post test measures. Nine intervention sessions were planned and each participant was given a handbook binder with instructions, passages, questions and progress graphs. Participants in the vocabulary control group were also provided with a binder which contained, academic words, definitions and blank index cards; each session participants worked on 15 words and filled out index cards for each. No significant differences were



found on the pre-test measure between groups. Silent reading scores for both the intervention groups significantly improved ( $p < 0.039$  for the 'Repeated Reading' group and  $p < 0.014$  for the 'Wide Reading'). No significant improvements were found for the control group. Additionally, these interventions had no effect on the reading comprehension skills of the participants. The authors advocate the use of a hybrid programme that improves fluency whilst teaching metacognitive strategies for reading comprehension.

*Hua et al. (2012)*

Hua et al.'s (2012) study aimed to use the RAAC intervention to target both reading fluency and reading comprehension skills. The intervention involved students repeatedly reading instructional level materials to a tutor who detected and corrected errors. The students then answered a series of comprehension questions before and after reading. The participants within this study were 3 students with additional needs who, at the time of the study, attended a post-secondary education setting that catered for young people with additional needs. Participants accessed individual sessions three times per week for 15 minutes during which, participants were required to read the passage three times, after being prompted that comprehension questions would follow. When responding to questions, if participants did not know the answer they were provided with prompted mediation. Using an oral fluency curriculum measure as the dependent variable, the authors were able to identify that all three participants improved their reading fluency scores and decreased their decoding errors immediately after the intervention. They also concluded that the participants' comprehension skills improved however it is not clear to what extent these results were statistically significant. Due to the practised nature of these texts, it is difficult to ascertain how well these skills would transfer

and generalise to unknown passages. Furthermore, whether any strategies were utilised to improve comprehension skills beyond the mediated questioning remains to be seen. Finally, the study only included three participants which limits the generalisability of the findings.

### 3.3.3 Orthographic Knowledge and Spelling

*Atkinson et al. (2014)*

The authors evaluated the impact of word study instruction on participant orthographic and spelling skills. This intervention utilised materials and resources from the *Words Their Way* programme. Adopting a quasi-experimental design, 39 participants from a developmental reading course at an American college were randomly assigned to either a control or intervention group and the intervention group met for 50 minutes twice per week for five weeks. Based on scores from the Upper Level Spelling Inventory and assessment materials from *Words Their Way* the intervention group showed a statistically higher improvement in orthographic knowledge when compared to control. They also had statistically higher scores on the spelling inventory ( $p < 0.001$ ). It must be acknowledged that one outcome measure was designed by the creators of the intervention and therefore further information should be provided with regards to validity and reliability. Finally, it would be useful to know more information as to the content of the intervention to enable it to be replicated in other studies.

## 4. Discussion

The range of interventions and ways in which post-secondary education settings can support the development of literacy skills for young people aged between 16 and 25 have been explored within this SLR. The studies reviewed

provided data highlighting a variety of strategies that can be used with young people age 16 to 25 years old to promote literacy outcomes in areas including; (a) reading comprehension (Gaddy et al. 2008; Hsu and Wang, 2010; Hua et al. 2014; Perin et al. 2013) (b) reading fluency (Ari, 2015; Hua et al. 2013) and (c) orthographic knowledge and spelling (Atkinson et al. (2014). Within all studies, comparisons were made with control groups either receiving a different intervention or continuing as usual. The majority of studies focused on improving reading comprehension skills as their primary aim. This may suggest that by this age participants have learned strategies to read fluently enough or make practical and appropriate guesses in order to read text. It may also go some way to suggest the perceptions of adults about which skills are more important for students at this stage of learning. Four out of the five the studies that focused on improving reading comprehension skills demonstrated to some extent the impact of the interventions utilised. For example, significant improvements in identification of main ideas (Gaddy et al, 2008; Hua et al, 2014) alongside summarisations, vocabulary definition and question generation (Perin et al., 2013). Although no studies used the same intervention, it is clear that many similarities existed across the strategies and interventions used. For example, all studies were interested in participants' improvement in understanding and identifying the main idea of the text. This was achieved through strategies such as underlining the main ideas and explaining the difference between the main and supporting ideas. Other useful methods for supporting students with literacy difficulties were identified such as developing vocabulary knowledge, developing the ability to discuss predictions and clues from text content, generating and answering questions and finally summarisation. A number of studies also clearly identified the enabling factors of the intervention process which may provide some

insight into best practice in teaching such skills to young people within this age group. Providing transparent guided instruction appeared to be helpful for participants such as, a process of modelling, verbalisation and guided practice from the teacher (Gaddy et al., 2008; Hua et al., 2013). Participants were also asked to identify the importance of reading comprehension in their lives and discuss their individual aspirations and goals; a factor that may have increased their engagement in the intervention.

The remaining comprehension study was Hua et al. (2012) study which implemented RAAC (a fluency and reading comprehension intervention). Whilst the authors concluded that there appeared to be an impact on reading comprehension skills, there was little suggested as to the nature of this improvement. Furthermore, the intervention involved a significant amount of prompting and whilst this is useful information for supporting students to obtain the correct answers, it may not necessarily support their independent learning and ability to comprehend other texts in adulthood. Hua et al. (2012) and Ari (2015) both used a repeated reading strategy to promote improvements in reading fluency. Whilst this strategy, alongside Wide Reading (Ari, 2015) appeared successful in exhibiting significant improvements in reading fluency scores, it was necessary for an adult to immediately detect and correct decoding errors. Some of the successful implementation factors of the studies may be a consistent teacher leading the intervention (Ari, 2015), a supporting handbook or binder for independent practice, and following a specific named strategy (Ari, 2015; Atkinson et al., 2014). However, it remains to be seen whether participants were able to generalise these skills outside of the intervention context, or indeed without the support of an adult. Within the studies there did not seem to be any specific teaching of how the participants could identify decoding errors

themselves. This poses a concern for independent learning alongside the requirement for educators to be preparing young people for adulthood. The independence of young people in terms of their literacy skills is crucial, particularly when considering the literacy definitions presented in this review, for example, the EU High Level Group of Experts (2012) stated 'literacy is about people's ability to function in society as private individual active citizens' (p.11) This would suggest that it is important that interventions encourage awareness and practice of strategies so that they may be used in the individual and private lives of students. With groups of young adults, it may be important to encourage their metacognitive awareness and foster discussion on how strategies are being used. This is potentially vital to encourage independent learning and preparation for adulthood. These findings have implications for educational professionals and Educational Psychologists (EPs) both internationally and within the UK. Due to the implementation of The Children and Families Act (DfE, 2014) in the UK, the role of the EP has expanded to include an increased upper age range from 19 years of age to 25. This has therefore meant that EPs, along with other professionals within the education sector, have found themselves working in a somewhat unfamiliar context (Atkinson, Dunsmuir, Lang & Wright, 2015). Working with this relatively new age range includes attempting to understand post-secondary contexts and developing knowledge bases around the provision that is being offered to learners in these settings. Furthermore, the focus on Preparing for Adulthood (2013) in the UK highlights four key outcomes for young people; paid employment, good health, independent living and community inclusion. Developing an understanding of the potential avenues of support and interventions that are available and effective in post-secondary education settings appears to be

vital; particularly how these strategies and interventions encourage independence and metacognitive awareness.

Whilst the studies in this review offer an insight into the range of ways professionals can support literacy development for this age group, a number of methodological limitations across all studies mean that results and interventions should be interpreted cautiously.

## 5. Limitations

### 5.1 Limitations of the studies

Whilst studies did include information as to the type of outcome measures that were used, many failed to provide any information with regards to the validity or reliability of such assessments. Furthermore, some studies included within this review reported using curriculum based measures or assessments designed by the researchers but failed to provide examples of these measures or copies within appendices. This information is important for readers, particularly if the study were to be replicated. Moreover, if assessments were designed by the researcher, it is possible that a certain level of bias may have been introduced during creation. Whilst the outcome measures used in the studies included within this systematic review may undermine results, due to the scarce research in this area, it would not have been possible to exclude studies based on the validity and reliability of the outcome measures that were used. Many of the studies included in this review involved small sample sizes, some studies had as little as three participants which may further undermine the generalisability of the findings. In relation to this, only one study provided information on longitudinal follow up (Gaddy et al. 2008). With limited longitudinal data, it is not possible to determine whether any of the strategies that

participants learned during interventions were maintained. Future research should aim to include follow-up information to ascertain whether the gains made immediately following the intervention are maintained over time. Additionally, many of the studies required students to re-read the same texts to practice strategies, often these texts had been created by the researchers. Therefore, determining whether participants generalised these strategies to every day texts or educational texts within their course proved difficult. Only one study assessed the impact of the use of different texts, contextualised science texts in comparison to generic texts (Perin, et al. 2013) and highlighted that the contextualised texts produced more significant results than the use of a generic text. This may go some way in supporting the views presented by Donnelly (2010) suggesting that the most positive aspects of literacy learning occurred when it was contextualised and applicable to the real lives of the students. When considering independent learning and preparation for adulthood, this becomes problematic as it could be suggested that participants have not necessarily improved their reading comprehension, fluency or orthographic skills, but have improved them in relation to the texts that they have repeatedly practiced. Future studies should aim to incorporate these learned strategies in learning after the intervention has ceased. It is necessary for researchers to share information with teachers and tutors and for the strategies to be advocated across the curriculum for these young people.

## 5.2 Limitations of the review

Although this review has offered a systematic overview of the evidence for the ways in which post-secondary education settings can support the development of literacy skills for young people aged 16-25, it has some limitations. The date range was limited to studies conducted between the years 2000 and 2016, this may

therefore have excluded research preceding these dates that may have evaluated relevant strategies or interventions. Secondly, only peer-reviewed published articles were included. It is possible that potential other sources, such as theses, may also provide relevant information in relation to the topic. Finally, only articles that were conducted within America were included and whilst this is not necessarily a limitation of this specific review, it is perhaps a limitation of the focus topic in general. There was very little research conducted outside of America and this is a crucial finding in relation to future recommendations.

## 6. Recommendations

A number of recommendations may be relevant in concluding this SLR. When considering the limitations of the studies involved and future research, it will be important to ensure that robust, reliable and valid instruments and outcome measures are used to obtain accurate and transferable pre and post intervention data. Ensuring this may involve further research as to appropriate assessment techniques and instruments for this age range. Furthermore, the assessments utilised in the studies reported in this review were relevant for an American population; ensuring the appropriate tools and instruments for a UK population will therefore prove imperative. Consideration must also be given to appropriate sample sizes in empirical studies in order to obtain statistical power for the analyses methods chosen. Future research should also provide information regarding follow-up data to determine whether participants are able to retain and utilise strategies and techniques learned within interventions. Moreover, it would be useful to explore how these interventions and strategies work when incorporated directly into course or curriculum content and how teachers utilise and refer to these skills with young people.



The systematic search conducted for this review did not uncover any research in this area that was situated within the UK. This is vital considering the recent changes in UK policy and legislation (DfE, 2014; DfE/DoH, 2015), increasing the age range of those who can acquire educational support to the age of 25 years. When considering this, alongside the statistical figures reported for literacy skills in this age range, it is concerning that there is no research that could be uncovered illustrating strategies or interventions that have taken place within UK FE contexts to support young people develop literacy skills. Whilst it is useful to explore the strategies and interventions that are being implemented internationally, there is no certainty that those interventions would be effective within the UK. Before trialling interventions that have been developed overseas, it is necessary for research to understand the best of what is already happening within the UK. There is currently a significant gap within the literature exploring the ways in which UK post-secondary educational settings are supporting young people between the ages of 16-25 develop their literacy skills. Furthermore, most of the studies included within this review targeted literacy skills for college reading rather than literacy life skills. Many of the young people with whom professionals such as EPs will be working, may attend vocational or functional skills training and therefore it is questionable whether the interventions highlighted above would prepare and equip these learners for using literacy skills in daily life. It may be that a different approach is necessary when considering this. Additionally, very rarely within the identified research did authors ascertain young people's views on what they believed was effective about the strategies or instruction they received.

At this stage of life, it is important that learning is situated within the personal experience of the student, rather than a 'top down' approach. Although

Lesley's (2004) study was excluded from this review, the author made the important observation that literacy learning should reflect the personal narratives of young people, rather than teacher narratives. This relates to Preparing for Adulthood's (2013) five elements to effective learning including, developing a shared vision, raising aspirations, adopting a personalised approach, improving post-16 options and support, and planning services together. These elements are imperative to raising outcomes for young people in the areas of employment, independent living, community, and health. It is interesting that since this publication, there has been no research identifying the range of support accessible for young people experiencing difficulties with literacy. Whilst there has been more generic research into the provision available for young people with additional needs at post-secondary settings, Wright (2006) concludes 'for reasons that are unclear, the educational community appears to have lost interest in this group of learners'. If aspirations and outcomes for literacy are to be raised for this age group, it is important that professionals working within the education sector begin to adopt a greater interest in the views of young people as to the ways in which post-secondary education settings successfully support their literacy development.

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## Paper 2

Exploring the views of young people aged 16-25 regarding literacy provision and their aspirations for the future.

Word Count: 8468

## Abstract

It has been estimated that approximately 5.2 million adults within the United Kingdom (UK) have significant difficulties with literacy. As such, raising standards in literacy has become one of the government's main priorities. Despite this focus, however, there is a dearth of evidence both internationally and particularly within the UK as to how, provisions such as Further Education (FE) colleges support young people aged 16 – 25 develop their literacy skills. This empirical paper therefore aims to contribute to the literature base by providing an initial exploratory study. The objectives of the study were two-fold, firstly to ascertain student views as to what aspects of the literacy support they perceive to be the most helpful. Secondly, to explore how participants felt literacy skills were related to their aspirations for adulthood, and how the college were currently supporting them with these skills. A series of interviews with three young people at FE college were conducted. These interviews were informed by an Appreciative Inquiry approach in order to explore the best of what is already happening in a fairly under researched area. The interviews were analysed using Thematic Analysis. The findings highlighted a number of supportive strategies and accommodations that adults used to enable their literacy access, however, very little was mentioned regarding literacy development. Participants were able to reflect on how literacy skills were applicable to their aspirations for the future and identify the current and future support that would be supportive in college. The findings of this empirical study have implications when considering young people's independence and metacognitive awareness of literacy strategies. The paper concludes with an exploration of practical implications and future research directions.

Key words: Literacy, "Further Education", Support, Aspirations, Perspectives

## 1. Introduction

At a fundamental level, literacy refers to a person's ability to access and complete reading and writing tasks. However, the ability to complete such tasks requires a complex integration of component skills (The National Joint Committee on Learning Disabilities, 2008). Furthermore, when transitioning to adulthood, literacy should be viewed as critical for engaging and participating in society and fulfilling one's aspirations (The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, OECD, 2013; European Commission, 2012). It is therefore concerning that reports suggest that at least 70% of young people who experience reading difficulties in primary school, still experience these reading difficulties at 15 years of age. Furthermore, the UK's comparatively low performance against other countries when assessing literacy skills for 16-25 year olds raises questions regarding the educational provision and support they have received in order to develop functional reading and writing skills (OECD, 2013, 2015). The recent legislative shift stipulated by the Children and Families Act (DfE, 2014) entitling young people up to the age of 25 to receive provision and support for special educational needs has catapulted education professionals into unfamiliar territory. It does however, raise opportunities to enhance professional development and learning in this area.

A report by Foster (2005) identified that over 3 million learners attend Further Education (FE) colleges annually and that this is the most common provider of post-16 learning for students with identified special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). This includes those learners experiencing difficulties with literacy. In 2009/2010 it was reported that over 30,000 young people aged 16-25 received

support for 'high level' SEND and a further 87,700 for 'low level' SEND in FE colleges. This was at a cost of £506,000,000 and £35,000,000 respectively (Foster, 2005). Despite this level of need and funding, there is limited research into the personal outcomes for these young people, or indeed exploration as to the quality of the provision that they are receiving. Recent reports from OFSTED (2013, 2014) have indicated variable observations and conclusions. In 2013, within the entire post-16 education sector, 71% of provisions were considered good or outstanding. However, when specifically considering colleges, this decreased to 58%. In some cases, the inspections found that teachers had low expectations of learners and too often goals were focused on task completion rather than understanding. In relation to areas of need, such as literacy, the reports suggested that some teachers had a lack of skill or experience in supporting the understanding of concepts that underpin the development of skills, for example, the over-use of work sheets and paper based activities that did little to help learners to develop the skills or confidence to approach literacy tasks independently. However, in the most successful and effective examples, FE providers were observed to use a variety of approaches to support learners to develop literacy skills, including identifying subject-related spellings, increasing vocabulary knowledge and providing help with written structure. Nevertheless, success rates for functional English in FE remained at 52%, striking a similar resemblance to the statistics and figures highlighted previously. The National Joint Committee on Learning Disabilities (2008) noted that we 'will likely fall short of the ultimate goal of improved literacy for all unless a similar investment is made in reading and writing instruction for older students' (p.212).

A limited range of studies have attempted to develop an understanding of the literacy provision available within the UK. The *Literacies for Learning in FE project*

(Ivanic, Edwards, Barton, Martin-Jones, Folwer, Hughes, et al, 2009) investigated how students used literacy in their everyday lives and how these compared to the general literacy practices in the FE classroom curriculum. The authors concluded by suggesting that by harnessing the literacy practices that individuals used outside of college, the learning and the richness of literacy can be enhanced within FE. What this project did not provide, was specific information regarding the practices of literacy associated with those who have difficulties in this area. Donnelly (2010) also attempted to develop an understanding into the literacy provision provided for older learners in Scotland. The FE colleges involved reported that between 40-60% of all learners had literacy levels which would have a significant impact on their ability to complete courses. Where individualised support for literacy was provided, the positive elements of this were reported to be, drawing on learner interests, past and life experiences, contextualising learning and associating this with real world situations. The author indicated the need for a range of systematic research to uncover the instructional approaches and factors that might affect change for these young people. The first paper in this thesis consists of a systematic review to explore the existing evidence related to post-secondary education literacy development. The systematic review found a limited number of studies that had been conducted within America focusing on promoting literacy outcomes in the areas of reading comprehension (Gaddy et al., 2008; Hsu and Wang, 2010; Hua et al., 2014; Perin et al., 2013), reading fluency (Ari, 2015; Hua et al., 2012) and orthographic knowledge and spelling (Atkinson et al., 2014). Although some studies demonstrated the impact of the interventions that were utilised, limitations were uncovered within the studies, including the scarcity of follow up data and the lack focus on vocational or functional skills. The review found no papers published in the UK. Interventions

appeared to relate primarily to providing support for academic work rather than preparation for adulthood. In addition, very rarely did authors attempt to ascertain the voice of the young people involved in the interventions to determine what they perceived to be effective literacy instruction.

### 1.1 Student Voice

The Children and Families Act (DfE, 2014) and SEN Code of Practice (DfE/DoH, 2015) highlights that professionals should be consulting and engaging with young people directly for their views, wishes and goals to be central in the planning of educational provision. Most importantly, it is a young person's right to be consulted and actively participate in decisions that are made about them and their lives (United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989, Articles 12 and 13). The need for person-centred approaches that focus on the development of independence in line with personal goals is related to Preparing for Adulthood's (2013) four key outcomes for young people; paid employment, good health, independent living and community inclusion. Significantly improving these outcomes for young people will involve developing a shared vision, raising aspirations, adopting a personalised approach, improving post-16 options and support and planning services together (Preparing for Adulthood, 2013). Various research articles have highlighted the importance of gaining young people's views generally (Flutter & Ruddock, 2004; Reid, Challoner, Lancett, Jones, Rhysiart, & Challoner, 2010), however, there is a limited range of research that has incorporated young people's voices with regards to the reading provision they receive to inform practice within this area (Francois, 2013; Pflaum & Bishop, 2004; Pitcher, Martinex, Dicembre, Fewster & McCormick, 2010).

Francois (2013) noted that although much research has taken place in developing initiatives, very little is known about how young adults make sense of this and how useful these practices are. The author concludes ‘this lack of information undermines researchers’ and practitioners’ ability to gain an authentic understanding of academic contexts from youth’s point of view’ (p. 143). From focus groups with secondary school students in America, Francois (2013) ascertained that successful provision was perceived to be; being treated equally by teachers, developing a sense of agency, exploring interests, practitioner-student relationships, and space for reading activities. However, what can often occur is a prescriptive ‘one size fits all’ approach with an attempt to ‘fix’ skills rather than create experiences or provision that a young person needs to reach their personal goals (Alvermann, 2003). Santa (2006) states that ‘struggling students are not in control of their reading and learning and do not have a clue about how to gain control’ (p.470). Saal and Sulentic-Dowell (2014) echo these statements concluding that adult ‘literacy programmes do not provide the autonomy for the participants’ voices to be heard’ (p.136). When surveying college students in America with literacy difficulties against pre-determined criteria, Bolt, Decker, Lloyd and Morlock (2011) found that the most utilised accommodations were, providing extended time, an individual setting and an assistant reading text aloud. Other accommodations that were found to be useful but were cited less included directions for reading aloud, a word processor with spell checking capabilities, using a dictionary, use of scribes and larger print. The most helpful of these were reported to be, dictionary use, extended time and providing a dictated response. A high percentage of young people also reported that the staff were key facilitators for their access to support. The authors conclude that more instruction in self-advocacy and independent skills is crucial for these learners, alongside

providing appropriate learning accommodations. This view is supported by Lyon (2016) who explored the views of FE staff and one student regarding dyslexia and found that for both, the fundamental aspect was building confidence and encouraging independence.

### Rationale for the current study

Given the lack of research relating to older students in the UK, the current study aims to address this gap in the literature by exploring young peoples' views of the role of literacy in the successful transition to adulthood. This rationale informed the following research questions:

1. What are the views of young people about the literacy support that they receive in FE?
2. In what ways do young people perceive literacy skills as applicable to their aspirations for adulthood and are these supported in FE?

## 2. Method

### 2.1 Design

The research uses an exploratory case study series design informed by Yin (2009) to investigate young people's perceptions of current FE practices used to support their literacy needs. Yin (2009) highlights that case studies can be used to allow in-depth study of a particular instance, in this case, perceptions of additional literacy provision. The Units of Analysis were informed by young people's perceptions collected through semi-structured interviews (see Figure 2). Whilst case study designs may limit the generalisability of findings, it appeared to be the most appropriate design in view of the exploratory nature of this area of research (Robson, 2002).



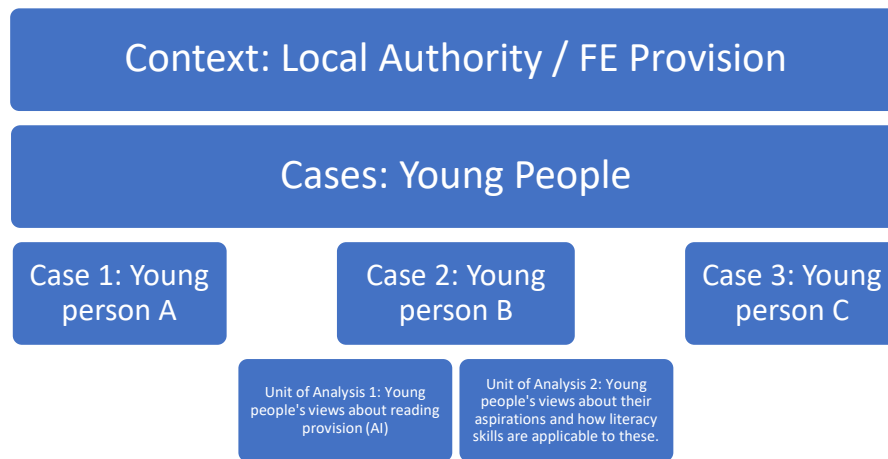


Figure 2: Illustration of Case Study Design (Yin, 2009).

The FE setting was an inner-city college which specialises in a number vocational qualifications including Sport, Health and Social Care, Business and Skills for Working Life. The FE setting is part of a larger conglomerate of five local college sites. A diverse population of college students is represented across all sites with the proportion of students from ethnic minority groups at 26.41%. Of the students who attend the college full time, 68.4% are between the ages of 16-18 and 31.4% are over 19 years of age. Students undertake a range of qualifications with 16.19% undertaking pre-entry and entry level qualifications, 19.2% Level 1, 28.2% Level 2 and 33.6% Level 3 upwards. The particular FE site where this research took place has approximately 1000 students. The setting has a dedicated Learning Support Team where staff members hold specialist qualifications (Level 4 and 5) in Literacy, Numeracy and Language support. The college documentation notes that it offers students with additional needs support including one to one support, specialist assessment, assistive technology, individual support plans, access arrangements and classroom support. There appeared to be no specific group interventions for literacy, however literacy support was planned on an individualised needs basis. The college reports that their overall achievement rate is 3.3 % above the national average.

## 2.2 Participants

A purposive and opportunistic sampling approach was employed to identify a provision considered to be supporting additional literacy needs. The author liaised with a senior member of the EP service who has a specialist role with the 16-25 age range. Discussions with this colleague identified a particular setting with which the service had an existing relationship with. This college was also known to be supporting young people with additional needs and had engaged in research projects in the past. The author visited the college to meet with senior staff members and tutors working with young people with additional needs to discuss and agree the research. Within the meeting, the author went through the participant information sheets and consent forms with members of staff to ensure that the young people with whom they worked would be able to access them. The author also discussed the proposed interview questions and schedules with senior staff members to further ensure participant access and understanding. Following this, a presentation about the research was given to groups of young people where the author went through the information sheets and consent forms in detail. The researcher stayed to answer any questions that the young people had to further support their understanding of the research process. An opt-in approach to participant recruitment was utilised. This involved young people self-identifying if they perceived themselves to experience difficulties with literacy. The participants' literacy needs were also confirmed with a member of staff. The college also displayed 'invitation to participate' posters to gather participants from other courses at the college. Following a process of gathering informed-consent, the study recruited four participants. One participant, however, subsequently left the setting and was no longer available for involvement in the research. Therefore, a total of three participants remained. In the first interview

with each participant, the author went through the information sheet in detail once again. Informed consent was viewed as an ongoing process and was referred to at the beginning of each interview alongside going through the key and salient features of the information sheet. All participants in this study were male with ages ranging between 19 and 21 years old and enrolled on a Skills for Life course within the FE college. The researcher had no previous connection with the young people or educational setting. Further detail regarding the participants is indicated in Table 9.

	<b>Age</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Time at college</b>	<b>Course</b>	<b>Aspirations</b>
<b>Participant 1</b>	19	Male	3 years	Skills for Life	1.To continue to maintain employment in the technology /gaming sector. 2.To live independently. 3.To continue to access health services as necessary 4.To maintain friendships and participate in the community

<b>Participant</b>  <b>2</b>	19	Male	3 years	Skills for Life	<p>1.To gain employment in the practical/manual sector.</p> <p>2.To live independently</p> <p>3.To continue to access health services as necessary.</p> <p>4. To be able to help in the community and possibly volunteer.</p>
<b>Participant</b>  <b>3</b>	21	Male	2 years	Skills for Life	<p>1.To gain employment in technology.</p> <p>2.To live independently.</p> <p>3.To continue to access health services as necessary.</p>

					4. To volunteer in the community.
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Table 9: Participant information

### 2.3 Data Collection

The data collection method chosen for this research was semi-structured interviews, which were informed by a positive approach to inquiry and framed with reference to Appreciative Inquiry (AI). The interviews took place without additional adults present and participants were assured that their contributions would remain anonymous. Each young person was involved in three individual interviews which lasted between 30-50 minutes. The interviews were audio-taped using a digital audio-recorder, transcribed by the researcher and subsequently anonymised. Consent was obtained both on the consent forms and at the beginning of each interview for these recordings to take place. The FE college and participants were each given a pseudonym for the purposes of analysis. Interviews are a fundamental aspect of AI with Cooperrider and Whitney (2005) arguing that ‘at the heart of AI is the appreciative interview, a one on one dialogue’ (p.14). Therefore, the interview schedule included the key aspects of AI interviews presented in Figure 3 (Watkin & Mohr, 2001).

- Affirmative language – what is wanted rather than what is unwanted.
- All-encompassing definitions so that individuals can make their own meaning of the question
- Respecting individual responses as to ‘what is’ and facilitating the identification of affirmative experiences.
- Communication unconditional concern and encouragement for the individual and their involvement.
- Bringing out of essential values and inspirations.

*Figure 3: Key aspects of AI interviews (Watkin & Mohr, 2001)*

Interviews informed by an AI approach were chosen to provide a positive experience for the young people involved and uncover what is currently working well and what else additional might be needed (San Martin & Calabrese, 2010). Reed (2007) identifies that AI is a useful framework when a researcher is asking questions such as ‘what’s going on here that can be appreciated’. It was thought that this approach was in line with the aims of the current research questions, to explore what is currently happening and consider a desired future. Using an AI framework to guide interviews and work with young people enabled each session and interview to be responsive and flexible to each individual participant (Reed, 2007). The main model associated with AI is the 4-D cycle (Cooperrider, Whitney & Stavros, 2003):

- **Discovery** – *exploring the best of what is and what has been.*
- **Dream** – *Imagining what could be.*
- **Design** – *Determining what should be.*
- **Destiny/Delivery** – *Creating what will be.*

The semi-structured interviews in this research followed the first three phases of the above cycle, with the last cycle being covered by dissemination of the findings to

the college staff and wider professional context (example interview schedules can be found in Appendix D). To support research question two, the themes were pre-identified by the researcher and presented to the participants within the interviews informed by the Dream and Design phases of AI. The rationale for this was two-fold. Firstly, the four presented themes were in line with Preparing for Adulthood (2013) and subsequently the DfE's priority outcomes for young people aged 16-25. Secondly, presenting the themes in this way provided a structure and framework for participants to discuss their futures rather than open-ended questions. Open ended questions were appropriate for research question one as the interviews asked participants to reflect on present and past personal experiences rather than imagined futures. The interview process as outlined above was piloted with one participant (subsequently, this data was included in the final write up due to participant attrition). The pilot process informed the development of the latter interviews by confirming the use of the pre-identified themes and utilising a visual framework to present these to participants in order to support identification of their future aspirations. The pilot also offered the opportunity to reflect on use of open-ended questions with the young people such as "tell me about reading at college" in order to gather their views on elements of literacy support that they perceive to be both helpful and unhelpful rather than a researcher-directed focus on only the positive aspects.

## 2.4 Ethical Considerations

With reference to the nature of the study, due to the small sample size, the ability of the researcher to establish and provide entire anonymity for participants within the transcript, data analysis and final write up was an ethical concern. In order to minimise the risk of information that could have identified participants

unknowingly, such as contextual information, familial information and case examples were dealt with sensitively and either further anonymised or omitted entirely from the transcript. In the event that any interview caused distress, participants were informed of their right to withdraw at any point during the interview process and could be signposted to a variety of subsequent avenues of debriefing and support. Documentation concerning the ethical considerations of this research can be found in Appendix E.

## 2.5 Data Analysis

The data from the recordings of the interviews were transcribed by the researcher and analysed using Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase model of thematic analysis (TA). In order to maximise familiarity with the data set, transcripts were read and re-read. Initial ideas and observations were noted within the transcript and codes were created with reference to ideas that seemed to re-appear throughout the data that contributed to the understanding of the research questions. These codes were then labelled on a computer document with supporting evidence and transcript locations cited underneath. Photographs were taken to document this process. Please see Table 10 for a further description of how each phase was implemented within this research.



<b>Phases</b>	<b>Description of analysis process in this study</b>
1. Familiarisation with data	The researcher listened to the audio recordings of each interview and following this transcribed them. The author read and re-read the transcripts and then annotated the transcripts when reading to generate initial ideas by highlighting the data. The transcripts were checked against the audio recording.
2. Generation of initial codes	Line numbers were created for the transcripts and interesting features of the data were coded in a systematic way. A separate computer document for codes was created. Presence of a code was indicated by a section of meaningful text. This text was then copied and pasted under the relevant code. As the list of generated codes increased, these were either collated under similar codes or the coding document increased to incorporate new codes as required.
3. Search for themes	The coded text (as described above) was printed and cut into segments of text in order for them to be moved and collated into potential themes. Initial codes with similar properties were grouped together into initial themes.
4. Review of themes	The researched checked the themes and their weighting against the coded segmented text under each theme. This involved the researcher checking back against the whole coding documents and the full transcripts to ensure that they were representative of the data that had been collected and the reoccurring patterns of response from the participants.
5. Defining and naming themes	The themes were named to reflect the nature and story of each theme by referring to the coded extracts which supporting individual themes. At this point, the superordinate and subordinate themes were identified and subsequently a thematic map was created.
6. Production of themes	The process of analysis and generation of themes were written up and were

	linked to each research question and relevant literature.
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*Table 10: Description of six phase Braun and Clarke (2006) analysis process adhered to in this study*

In order to promote robust and trustworthy data, the researcher enlisted the support of the supervisor of this research to support with identification of codes. These codes and their supporting evidence were then printed and cut into individual sections in preparation for grouping and labelling upon ascertaining common themes within the codes (an illustration of the data analysis process can be found in Appendix F). Both inductive (Frith & Gleeson, 2004) and deductive (Boyatziz, 1998, Hayes, 1997) approaches were adopted for the purposes of analysis. The first research question lent itself to a more inductive analysis allowing for a bottom-up process ensuring that themes were linked specifically to the data. It also allowed for the researcher to capture themes directly from participant views. For the second research question, the themes had already been presented to the participants within the interviews. Therefore, the researcher was using a pre-existing framework to support both the discussion and the thematic analysis. To support the trustworthiness of the data collected, the researcher used a process of continuous member checking throughout the interviews, this included using skills in summarisation and reflection within the interviews. At the end and beginning of each interview, the researcher summarised the discussion with the participants and offered them opportunities to correct or add to the researcher's understanding of the discussion. The themes were discussed and finalised with the supervisor of this research to further support the trustworthiness of the data. A Thematic Map is illustrated in Appendix G alongside a visual representation of how the themes for research question two were presented to the participants (Appendix H).

It is acknowledged that a major critique of the method of qualitative analysis chosen relates to the difficulty the researcher may have in maintaining objectivity. The process of inductive analysis is likely interconnected with the existing knowledge of the research topic from the researcher; therefore, whether themes actually ‘emerge’ from the data inductively could be questioned. However, the thorough process of analysis followed was aimed at addressing this issue. In addition, the epistemological position of the researcher as a critical realist is congruent with the view that our beliefs and perceptions are influenced by our understanding of a real world that exists outside of these perceptions and beliefs. This study focused on understanding perceptions of young people within a specific time, social context and topic (Easton, 2010; Robson, 2002) and as such, a critical realist stance was thought to be appropriate. Furthermore, this is in line with the viewpoints proposed by Ingram (2013) regarding the EP role in facilitating the voice of children and young people through realistic evaluation, a research paradigm proposed by Pawson and Tilley (1997). This perspective advocates that there is more than one voice to a problem, social context or organisation and aims to partially illuminate rather than holding answers.

### 3. Results

The results from this study will be presented with reference to the first three stages of the AI framework. Research question one relates to Discovery, the exploration of what is currently working for the participants. Research question two links to Dream/Design, the consideration of a desired future and the realistic steps that are currently enabling participants to achieve this.

### 3.1 Discovery

Within the Discovery stage, the two superordinate themes emerged. These were **the role of adults** and **additional avenues of support**. Each in turn had subordinate themes which are presented within a thematic map presented in Figure 4:

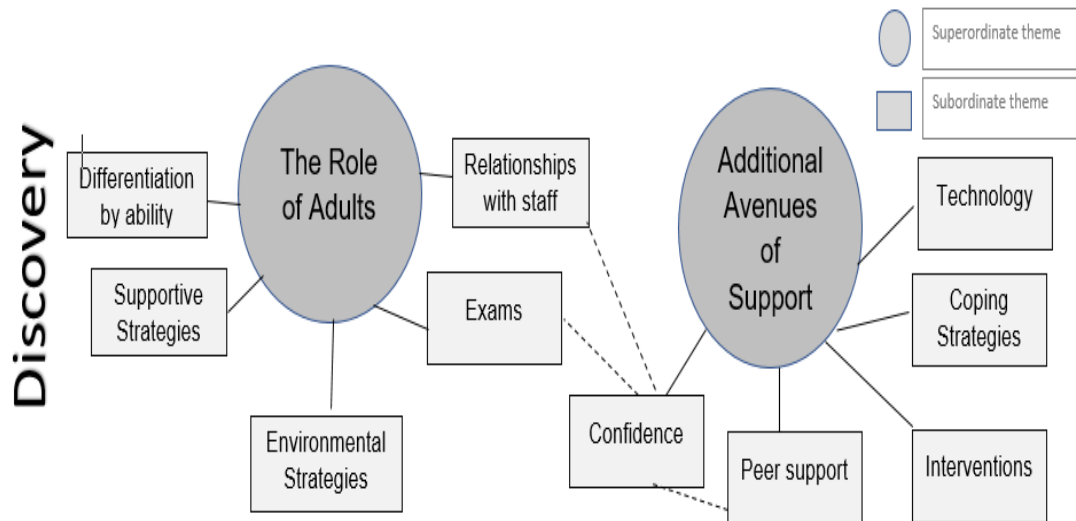


Figure 4: Discovery thematic map

#### 3.1.1 The Role of Adults

All participants spoke of the support that they received from adults within their course at FE college, one participant noted ‘all teachers help me with my reading and writing all the time’ (P1, T1). Reference was made to the different roles of adults who support them, including Teaching Assistants (TAs) or one to one support, library staff and the personal tutor. All participants made reference to specific named adults who helped them with their literacy skills in FE. Within all the transcripts, this adult support fell into five key areas; relationships with staff, differentiation based on ability, supportive strategies, exams, and environmental strategies.

### *Relationships with Staff*

Two of the three participants referred to the supportive nature of their relationships with staff members within the FE college; both feeling respected by adults, ‘you get treated differently, they help you...without making you feel small’ (P1, I1) and teachers understanding of individual needs and personalities ‘they know me well’ (P3, I1). One participant noted that this was different to how they had been made to feel in secondary school and felt strongly about being ‘treated like an equal’ (P1, I1) in college.

### *Differentiation by Ability*

Within the transcripts, two participants highlighted that different groupings were used for students of differing abilities, ‘we were in different groups and for the groups there were different words’ (P2, I1). One participant spoke of support being allocated ‘dependent on who you are and what your needs are’ (P1, I1). It was noted that those with more significant literacy difficulties would be allocated a higher level of support and that this might involve being removed from the classroom to concentrate on work.

### *Supportive Strategies*

Participants spoke about a range of strategies that adults used to support them with their literacy skills. This included adults breaking work down, which related to spellings, explaining instructions and decoding ‘they’ll talk you through it’ (P2, I1). One participant spoke of finding spelling tests useful for learning and that this is something that had been utilised since he was in high school. With regards to reading fluency, other strategies that were mentioned included adults helping students to segment words ‘they’ll help you break that down into tech-no-logy so that it would make sense’ (P1, I1). Participants highlighted that the tutors modified work for them

to enhance their access to resources, 'I just asked my tutor could you re-do it because I couldn't read it because the writing was small and it was also bold' (P1, I1). In relation to reading comprehension skills, participants noted that adults underlined or highlighted key information to ensure important text stood out which, participant 1 noted, helped him to answer correctly. Other strategies that adults were reported to use included reading and scribing for students when they find work challenging. One participant noted that it was helpful for him when staff copied work from the whiteboard for him as he struggled to access this, 'they wrote things down for me that were on the big whiteboard' (P3, I1). Adults were also reported to use modelling and repeated practice to support young people's literacy skills, with participants finding it helpful when they are shown what to do. Participant 3 suggested that he also uses online videos for work when he is finding it challenging. Helpful strategies for students also included when adults used their interests as motivation 'it helps if I can get into it...whether it's work or not (P1, I1).

### *Environmental Strategies*

Participants also spoke of different environmental strategies that were available to them in college. These included, using a quiet room, small group sizes, listening to music and reading aids. Two participants used reading rulers in college to put over passages to support their reading skills 'they give you a yellow strip thing so you can read it better' (P1, I1). Another helpful environmental modification for students was when they used a quiet room. This seemed to serve two purposes; providing a quiet space where students can concentrate alongside students accessing privacy 'sometimes you can go off into a different room, like this room, and they'll help you so you're not feeling down about other people hearing that you can't spell' (P1, I1). Additionally, two participants found it helpful when they could listen to

music to help them to concentrate on what they were reading ‘when I’ve got music on, I normally concentrate more’ (P3, I1).

### *Exams*

Exams were of importance within one of the interviews. Participant 1 seemed to experience some difficult feelings with regards to exams highlighting that this is ‘when I don’t feel confident...I feel I have to get it all right, otherwise I’m going to fail’. Exam strategies were a key feature of support for this participant. He highlighted that he found it difficult to read his GSCE exams and that he didn’t receive any support with this ‘well no, I don’t think I did’ (P1, I1). However, within FE, questions are presented to him differently which enables his access to exams, for example ‘it would ask questions within the paper and within the page of writing’ (P1, I1). He suggested that this helped to ‘break up’ the reading and indicated ‘what question goes with what section instead of just reading one whole section and trying to pick it out’.

### 3.1.2 Additional Avenues of Support

#### *Coping Strategies*

A number of self-coping mechanisms were mentioned by the participants. One participant noted that he uses punctuation such as capital letters to identify place names within text. Another participant noted that he uses resources such as dictionaries if he requires help with spelling ‘if there was a dictionary available, maybe I’d look in the dictionary’ (P2, I1). Other supportive spelling strategies were trial and error and the use of spell-checking facilities within technology. Finally, Participant 2 felt supported when he wrote draft versions of his work ‘I have to write it out on a scrap piece of paper and present it to the teacher first to make sure that it’s all right so it can go in’ (P2, I1).

### *Technology*

All participants spoke of their use of technology to support their literacy skills, particularly their spelling skills. Spell-checking facilities featured heavily within the transcripts with participants preferring to use a computer for this reason, 'because you can just spell check...it will always tell you when you've made a mistake' (P2, I1). Participants also reported using their phones 'I've got WhatsApp so I can spell it on there and copy it down' (P3, I1). One participant suggested that adults used their phones to support students when they didn't know how to spell a word. This seemed to underpin participants' preference for using the computer, however in addition to this, they felt they were able to see text more clearly on a computer and use the internet to search for the words they wanted to use in their writing. One participant identified that this was the most helpful strategy that adults use to support him with his literacy skills.

### *Interventions*

The interviews illuminated a sense of uncertainty across all participants as to whether they accessed group or individual interventions specifically related to their literacy needs. Participants were also unclear as to whether such intervention groups existed, 'I don't know if there are any groups really' (P1, I1) and 'I don't know to be honest' (P2, I1). One participant highlighted that he thought there probably were groups within college but that 'they would probably ask you to do it if they thought you needed help with your reading and writing, but they wouldn't actually force you to do it' (P1, I1).

### *Peer Support*

Peer support for participants was related to both adult support and confidence. Participants felt that they were able to rely on their peers if there wasn't



a staff member who could help them, ‘if a member of staff is busy and you can’t get support from them, you can always ask one of your friends (P1, I1). Participant 2 also identified that he would just ask a peer if unsure about a spelling. According to another participant, his confidence increased when he was with peers that he knew ‘mostly I feel confident when I’m in front of people who I know, like my class...if I make a mistake they’re not going to judge me on it’ (P1, I1).

### *Confidence*

Participants talked about their general confidence and self-esteem in relation to literacy alongside comparing this to how they perceived their ability when they were in secondary school. One participant mentioned that he was made to feel small in secondary school because of his ability and this was due to the manner in which adults said things to him. The same participant highlighted that this was different in FE. For another participant, the feelings of low self-esteem and confidence remained in FE as he reported that he could not think of a time where he felt confidence with his writing skills. A factor that impacted on confidence in literacy was the perception of other people. One of the participants noted that he would be uncertain about reading in front of people that he didn’t know due to a fear of being judged by them. Participant 1 felt most confident around adults and peers that he knew however, he appreciated being able to go into a different room ‘so you’re not feeling down about other people hearing that you can’t spell’ (P1, I1). Another participant suggested that if he felt unsure about a reading or writing tasks, he would make sure that he asked an adult quietly about this.

### *3.2 Dream / Design*

For research question two, the Dream and Design stage, four superordinate themes were presented to the participants based on the four key outcomes for young

people from Preparing for Adulthood (2013). Each had three subordinate themes which were also presented to the participants through the nature of the questions asked by the researcher; aspirations, required literacy skills and current and future college preparation. These are again presented visually in Figure 5 below.

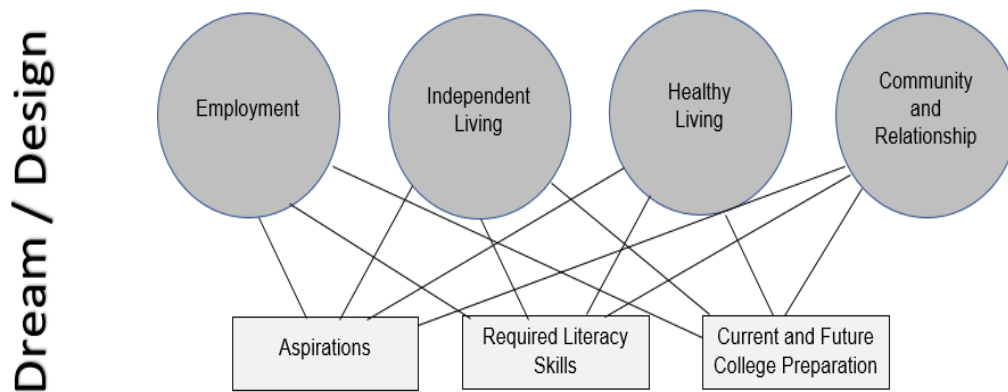


Figure 5: Dream / Design thematic map

### 3.2.1 Employment

#### *Aspirations*

When asked to describe their aspirations for the future in relation to employment, all were able to do so. One participant was already employed and hoped that he would remain in this job and possibly receive a promotion. Participant 3 had similar aspirations which involved gaining employment in the technology sector, such as gaming, computers or phone repairs. Participant 2 noted that he wishes to gain a practical or manual job, for example, within construction. Participants spoke of the qualities of a job that interested them, for example, being able to interact with others ‘I like getting out there and telling people about games, talking to them (P1,I2). and a job that would take them to different places in the world (P3).

### *Required Literacy Skills*

Participants named a number of tasks related to literacy skills which were essential to achieving their employment aspirations. All participants talked in some way about the process of gaining employment and the literacy skills involved with this, for example compiling and writing a curriculum vitae (CV), reading job descriptions, and reading and writing job applications. Participants also noted that their aspirational goals might include using literacy skills to communicate with others, for example, writing emails. One participant mentioned that employers or customers would ‘probably email you, so you’d have to be able to read the email and possibly write back’ (P1, I3). A common suggestion was the use of literacy skills in gaining and updating knowledge, for example, having to read information about how to perform tasks or use equipment correctly ‘It’s knowledge on how to perform tasks in construction, say for example, you were learning how to mix cement’ (P2, I2). One participant seemed unsure about how literacy skills related to his job ‘most of the roles, I don’t think they use writing and barely reading’ (P1, I2) however, then also spoke about equipping himself with knowledge through reading so that he can then convey this to customers.

### *Current and Future College Preparation*

This was the main area in which participants believed college had enabled preparation and development of their literacy skills, ‘I’d say the work and employment is probably the one we’ve gone through the most’ (P1, I3). Examples of specific preparation included, work experience to develop real life skills, such as, office administration. Participants also mentioned that they had received significant support in developing and writing their CVs which included specific core parts of courses, being shown examples of well-written CVs and support to identify best

examples. Participants also talked about the support from adults for example, scribing CVs and applications ‘I tell her what is it and she writes it down’ (P3, I2) alongside adults helping to put work within real life contexts. Referring to avenues for further support, participants indicated that they would like more time and support focused on how best to write a CV or job application.

### 3.2.2 Independent Living

#### *Aspirations*

The aspiration to live independently was a common theme among the participants, all of whom wanted to live on their own in the future ‘live on my own at some point, I don’t want to live at home for the rest of my life’ (P2, I2). One participant also felt strongly with regards to moving away from the current area ‘I just try to get out every morning away from it’ (P1, I2).

#### *Required Literacy Skills*

Various literacy skills associated with participants’ independent living aspirations were identified within the data. For example, participants suggested that living independently would require them to read information in order to manage paying rent and ‘manage all sorts of bills, shopping bills and budgeting’ (P1, I2) associated with living alone. Another activity that participants identified as requiring literacy skills related to cooking, for example, being able to read instructions about food and read food packets for nutritional information. Participants described skills such as, reading and signing forms as appropriate and gaining knowledge about a house from those who were already living there or the estate agent, ‘you would need to be able to read the information about the house; (P2, I2). Additionally, participants felt that living independently involved reading letters, for example, letters about bills, letters from health services, or letters about the house, for example, from the

council, 'write letters to the council or write a letter to whoever is in charge' (P2, I2). Finally, one participant noted that most activities involved with independent living would require some element of literacy skill, 'pretty much everything, everything includes reading something or writing something' (P2, I1).

#### *Current and Future College Preparation*

During the interviews, it was acknowledged that the preparation that participants had received in this area was limited, 'nothing too much or too serious, just the basics' (P1, I3). Participant 2 highlighted that he didn't feel that any support or preparation had taken place in this area but that he would appreciate further support focused on the literacy skills involved in the process of renting or buying a house. In line with this, all participants highlighted that they would like to receive more literacy support from college for independent living, 'more help with what it is you have to read' (P3, I2).

#### 3.2.3. Healthy Living

##### *Aspirations*

The main aspiration for the participants related to healthy living was to ensure that they continued to access the health services that they needed to, 'you need to always have access to a health service, otherwise, there's nothing that can really be done if you're ever in trouble or have an accident' (P2, I2).

##### *Required Literacy Skills*

Participants generated various essential literacy skills indicating that they would have to read information about the health services available to them and possibly write information themselves about medical conditions if necessary. Another participant highlighted that he might be asked personal views of a service, 'they might send you a form to see what your view is about the service that you've

acquired' (P1, I2). Two participants noted that an important literacy skill for the future related to reading key information for safety, for example, being able to accurately read information on prescriptions, 'read everything and then read it again, because...you might not know what it is, it might be the wrong prescription' (P1, I2). For another participant who aspired to stay physically healthy by maintaining his commitment to the gym, literacy skills were essential to use the equipment safely, 'different notes in the book, it teaches you how to use the machines' (P3, I2).

#### *Current and Future College Preparation*

Support for the literacy skills involved in healthy living seemed limited in college. Participants were not able to name any specific support with regards to this other than services coming to meet with them at college and handing out information. They were also not able to identify or name the additional support that might be appropriate often citing 'I don't know' in response to questioning.

### **3.2.4 Community and Relationships**

#### *Aspirations*

All participants suggested their aspiration to give back to the community or help within the community in the future, 'I'd like to be involved in the community, so if there is, you see I don't live in a community, but I'd probably like to do something' (P2, I2). Participants spoke of possible volunteering opportunities associated with this, for example, working with children in schools or at youth clubs. One participant highlighted that he would like to maintain the relationships that he has already formed in the future.

#### *Required Literacy Skills*

The essential literacy skills involved in aspirations for community and relationships were less clear. The limited responses included using reading and

writing skills to communicate with friends and maintain relationships, for example, through text messaging. Another participant mentioned concerns regarding travelling independently and how literacy skills may impact on this. Additionally, one participant suggested that he might have to read news or information about the community if he wanted to help, for example 'if you had a to read a public notice, or a newspaper or something' (P2, I2).

#### *Current and Future College Preparation*

With regards to community and relationships, the participants found it difficult to name specific preparation they had received in relation to their functional literacy skills. One avenue of provision they named was support to use written communication with different audiences, for example, writing letters to different people and about issues within the community:

How to word a letter properly, the difference between formal and informal writing...letters to the council, letters to a job position, or letters to a newspaper...mainly about issues in the community and things like that (P2, I2).

This was also something that they noted they may require further support with to increase their independence. With this exception, participants were not able to identify additional avenues of support that may be helpful.

## **4. Discussion**

This study aimed to explore student views as to the ways in which an FE college supported their literacy skills. It also endeavoured to discover how young people relate literacy skills to their aspirations for adulthood and how the college are currently supporting these skills. It appears that the study was successful in

ascertaining student voice in relation to the first research question with the findings highlighting the supportive role of adults and the accommodations made to primarily enable literacy access rather than their literacy development or improvement. This supports suggestions presented in previous research conducted in different contexts such as secondary schools (Francois, 2013; Santa, 2006). Participants felt strongly about the way staff made them feel, for example, feeling respected and treated as an equal. Both Francois (2013) and Santa (2006) highlighted that key supporting factors to young people's literacy development involved being treated equally by adults and practitioner-student relationships. Santa (2006) further emphasised this opinion and stated:

Adolescents, particularly those students who struggle, need to connect with their teachers...the content and the teaching techniques we use play second fiddle to human relationships (p 467-468).

The impact of this connection with staff members effected the participants' feelings of confidence and self-esteem within the current study. They noted feeling comfortable approaching tasks involving literacy when they were with adults or peers whom they knew well. Whilst these relationships may be important, the statement above would suggest that once these relationships have been developed, it is only then that content and teaching techniques can be implemented and established. The findings of this study indicated that in addition to high quality relationships, participants valued the role of adults in providing a range of supportive strategies enabling them to access literacy tasks; participants viewed adults as key facilitators enabling their access to literacy (Bolt et al., 2011). Strategies related to literacy access included, TAs reading text aloud, use of scribes, modified text, using word processors with spell checking capabilities and the use of dictionaries.



Participants were also beginning to use self-coping strategies noting that they used the computer or their phone applications to support spelling skills as these ‘always tell you when you’ve made a mistake’ (P2, I1). This focus on technology such as mobile phones and word processors, seemed to bear great significance for the participants in this study when compared to other research articles. This may be due to inclusion of an older participant sample as they may be both allowed and encouraged to use their phones, an idea that may not be tolerated in the secondary schools. Furthermore, although participants reported the use of word processors in Bolt et al. (2011) study, the participants were required to complete questionnaires based on a set of pre-selected literacy accommodations, therefore, use of a mobile phone may not have appeared as criteria. Other observed differences to previous research included the suggestion of supportive environmental strategies such as, the use of a quiet space and small group sizes.

Noticeably absent from the findings were reflections on how adults support development and improvement of literacy skills. There were minimal references to specific strategies that had been acquired through direct teaching or support. Alongside this, the students were not able to identify any specific literacy support groups or intervention groups that were available in college. This may raise questions as to the nature of the literacy support that young people received and whether it is truly preparing them for adulthood and independence or simply enabling their access to tasks in that specific context. Previous research in the area of effective deployment of TAs within the primary and secondary phases of learning outlined that the typical use of TAs in UK classrooms, can lead to over-prompting and a focus on task completion (Sharples, Webster & Blatchrod, 2015). This was reported to be ineffective in contributing to overall skill improvements or academic

outcomes. The typical use of support staff would appear to be congruent with how participants portrayed support from adults within this study. There was, however, significant evidence for utilising TAs to deliver structured, evidence-based interventions to young people in the aforementioned study. Whilst relationships may therefore lay the foundations for learning, what is apparent from this study is that there appears to be a lack of skill development to enable growth on these foundations. This suggestion has been further corroborated, for example Lyon (2016) noted FE colleges could “create a situation where someone becomes overly dependent therefore cannot fully develop the skills needed to function independently” (p.100). Santa (2006) advocated for the use of meta-cognitive strategies with young people to internalise the philosophy of learning, alongside direct instruction and teacher modelling. In the current study, enabling literacy access seems to be inherent to participants’ self-esteem, sense of competence and satisfaction in college, but to what extent does this equate to effective literacy support and metacognitive awareness? One might question whether this matters if the young people perceive it to be helpful, however, if FE colleges are in the business of preparing young people for adulthood then it will indeed matter greatly when learners are required to apply these skills outside of their college environment to fulfil their aspirations. In order to develop a true sense of agency, as Francois (2013) suggests, it is necessary for young people to feel confident and competent in utilising literacy skills independently.

In relation to aspirations, participants provided insight into the range of literacy skills that they may be required to use in the future related to employment, independent living, healthy living and community and relationships. These corresponded with various avenues of support that college was already providing to

prepare them for these literacy skills. It seemed a significant amount of preparation had focused on supporting students to create CVs. For the other areas, the information obtained from participants was less clear and perhaps less related to literacy specifically, for example, little preparation seemed to be provided for the literacy skills involved in independent living or health, although participants did suggest that health services had visited college to supply information about different services available. Finally, with regards to community and relationships, staff within the college were reported to have worked with students to develop their letter writing and communication skills. These statements paralleled the avenues for further support that the young people identified such as, more support for developing literacy skills associated with job applications and independent living. The focus on aspirations in this study was in line with recommendations and national legislation (DfE/ DoH, 2015; UNCRC, 1989).

The Functional Skills Support Programme states that functional literacy skills should endeavour to prepare students to apply and transfer skills ‘in ways that are appropriate to their situation’ (Qualifications & Curriculum Authority, 2008, p.5). The current study was successful in providing additional research evidence as to how older students perceive literacy skills as relevant to their aspirations for adulthood and the ways in which they are currently being supported with these skills. However, what the interviews did not uncover was an in-depth understanding or awareness of how this could be further improved. This may be as a result of a number of factors, for example, participants seemed satisfied and happy with the support that they were receiving and therefore may currently feel equipped and competent in completing such literacy tasks in this context. On the other hand, a combination of heavily differentiated tasks, appropriate accommodations, adult relationships and subsequent

increased confidence may create perceived competence rather than actual competence; resulting in a skewed awareness of the additional avenues of support that may be necessary for them to accurately carry out these tasks independently from the adult support that they receive. This once again links back to the importance of metacognitive awareness and whether the young people have been able to internalise any strategies that would support them with this endeavour. To complement the Functional Skills Support Programme agenda and for students to apply and transfer skills in ways that are appropriate to their situation, it would be necessary for colleges to discover student motivations and aspirations in relation to different skills such as literacy and subsequently implement the appropriate support. This echoes sentiments expressed by Ivanic, Edwards, Satchwell and Smith (2007) regarding the importance of contextualising and relating literacy preferences, rather than, for example participating in specific tasks and going about these in certain ways in order to qualify from courses. It is imperative to making learning meaningful to these students. Ivanic et al., (2007) conclude ‘when students see literacy practice to be associated with their sense of who they are or who they want to become, they participant in them wholeheartedly’ (p.11).

The focus on gaining a qualification and ‘academic’ literacy skills versus literacy skills for life and adulthood resonates with suggestions made by the Literacy Study Group (2008) who noted that the impact of accreditation and summative assessment on post-compulsory education establishments can result in provision that is dominated by a ‘one-size-fits-all’ (p.446) model. Additionally, when considering the limited research base, FE staff may feel neither equipped nor perceive literacy development to be part of their role. Equally, from some staff, there may be the expectation that older learners should already have established these basic literacy

skills. Statements made by teacher participants in post-compulsory education settings acknowledged the genuine developmental needs of their students but were confined in the support mechanisms available due to both the structure and priorities of the establishment and their feelings of preparedness to support these learners (Literacy Study Group, 2008). From the data in the current study, participants are receiving support to access tasks across a range of literacy skills including reading fluency (modification of text and reading aloud), comprehension (highlighting key information and presentation of questions) and writing (access to spell checking and scribes). The first paper in this thesis provided some insight into the limited range of interventions apparent in the literature that can support these literacy skills for this age range. These may provide an initial starting point when considering effective interventions, however, these interventions focused mainly on developing “academic” or qualification based literacy skills and further consideration would be necessary as to whether such an intervention could be applied to literacy for life skills, for example, a reading comprehension programme utilising materials focused on real life contexts relevant to the young person’s aspirations. This resonates with the conclusions from authors involved with the *Literacies for Learning in FE project* as Barton (2005) states literacy ‘may also be for making sense of life, for community participation, for active citizenship’ (p. 96).

There is very little research focused on building literacy skills for life, which, when referring back to the statistics related to literacy skills within the UK is concerning. This may suggest that the balance between a focus on academic literacy, the skills to support young people through academic qualifications and the literacy skills that are meaningful and involved in their aspirations for adulthood requires further reflection. It is likely that this would also be dependent on each individual

learner and the nature of their experience with literacy difficulties involving ‘systematic engagement with the student, the backgrounds and needs they bring with them’ (The Literacy Study Group, 2008, p.447).

## 5. Limitations of the Current Study

The nature of this research, including the epistemological position of the author, resulted in some limitations to the study that should be considered when interpreting the data that is presented. The data is ultimately associated with the specific context in which it was collected. Whilst other colleges may be similar in some respects, there will be different approaches to supporting literacy skills in all settings. This makes it difficult to generalise the findings of this research to other provisions. All participants were recruited from the Skills for Life cohort that the researcher was signposted to. It would have been useful to access participants undertaking other courses who might experience difficulties with literacy but may not receive focused support from adults for this or indeed preparation for adulthood. It is possible that a different group of participants may have enabled increased access to data reflecting ideas for further improvements or suggestions for support. Moreover, this was a small sample of male participants; consequently, different data may have been obtained from a larger sample or female participants. Due to the small sample size of the study the types of data available were limited. Inclusion of observational data or further interviews with key adult stakeholders may have been informative contributions. However, due to certain constraints within the research context this was not possible. The small sample size and the imbalances within the sample (male participants from a certain cohort group) threaten the external validity of the study and whether conclusions can be drawn beyond this context and sample. The sample cannot be viewed as representative of all 16-25 years old young people

and therefore it should not be assumed that the themes created in this research can be applied to other young people or indeed FE contexts. However, tentative suggestions have been made regarding the findings of this research in the hope that it may serve as a basis for continued research in this area. The study offers an initial exploration of one context from the perspectives of a small group of participants.

The methodology of this study relied on the participants reporting their views accurately. It is possible that they may have attempted to conform with what they perceived the researcher's expectations to be. Attempts to limit this were incorporated into the interview sessions such as relationship building and discussions centred on confidentiality. It is possible that participants may have also been influenced by the expectations of college staff, for example, by overinflating their reports of positive experiences. Finally, clarification of the definition of literacy that the author was using did not occur within the context of the interview. It could be questioned whether participants' constructs were the same as the researcher, however, more general language associated with literacy such as reading, writing and spelling were utilised in an attempt to combat this limitation. Furthermore, one of the key features of AI informed interviews is all-encompassing definitions that allow participants to infer their own meaning from questions. Whilst the researcher did attempt to support the trustworthiness of the data through a process of member checking with participants and collaboration with the research supervisor, it should be acknowledged that the credibility of the codes and subsequent themes could be undermined. It may have been useful for the researcher to utilise a second coder who was more distanced from the data.

## 6. Implications

This study aimed to provide an initial exploration into the perceptions of young people about the literacy support that they receive in FE and how this support relates to their aspirations. Considering the limited research in this area and the exploratory nature of this study, alongside the above limitations, it would be useful to undertake further research to continue to reduce the gaps in knowledge and contribute to the research evidence for supporting older learners in FE. An in-depth case study of a particular context would be beneficial to illuminate a whole-college approach to supporting literacy skills for all students. Multi-site research exploring young people's perspectives will also be crucial in attempting to generalise findings alongside providing increased depth to the study and awareness of potential differences between settings. This will enable researchers and practitioners alike to consider best practice in this area. Consequently, this may result in professionals, such as EPs, developing training or approaches when working with staff to increase competence and expertise if considered appropriate and necessary. Based on the lack of specific intervention reported in this study and the outlined importance of this (OFSTED, 2013; Santa, 2006), further research should explore the implementation of a literacy intervention, for example, those reported in the first paper of this thesis to consider whether these would transfer to a UK setting. Such interventions should focus on the level of metacognitive awareness promoted within the programmes to ensure support of independent learning. Furthermore, if appropriate to the cohort of students, it may be useful to focus such interventions on the specific aspirations for adulthood that learners express to ensure they are both tangible and meaningful for those involved. Further implications and the proposed dissemination strategy are outlined in greater detail within the final paper presented in this thesis.



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## Paper 3

### The Dissemination of Evidence to Professional Practice

Word Count: 5292

*“Not everything that can be counted counts and not everything that counts  
can be counted”*

(Albert Einstein)

## 1. Definitions and Evidence-Based Practice and Practice-Based Research

The roots of Evidence-based practice (EBP) stem from that of the medical sciences where the term ‘evidence-based medicine’ was first introduced by Guyatt, Cairns and Churchill (1992). This was an attempt to alter the prominence of clinical decision making based on personal intuition to a more scientifically robust research based method of decision making. EBP was defined by Sackett, Rosenberg, Gray, Haynes and Richardson (1996) as “the conscientious, explicit, and judicious use of current best practice evidence in making decisions about the care of individual patients” (p.71). In a further detailed definition, Hoagwood and Johnson (2003) state that:

*The term EBP refers to a body of scientific knowledge, defined usually by reference to research methods or designs about a range of service practices (e.g. referral, assessment, case management, therapies, or support services) ...the knowledge base is usually generated through application of particular inclusion criteria ...it generally describes the impact of particular service practices on child, adolescents, and family outcomes...EBP is a shorthand term denoting the quality, robustness, or validity of scientific evidence as it is brought to bear on these issues. (p.5).*



The EBP approach aims to remove inconsistencies in service delivery both internationally and within the United Kingdom (UK) (Department of Health, 1998; Fox, 2003), in an attempt to ensure that professional and practitioner approaches are based in sound, systematically researched literature demonstrating clear outcomes. This is in contrast to methods and interventions that are based on the personal preferences or judgements of a single practitioner (Dunsmuir, Brown, Iyadurai & Monsen, 2009). EBP is not confined to the medical professions and in the last decade has spread over a number of professions including, social work, counselling, and educational psychology.

Central to EBP are the principles of the research hierarchy (illustrated in Figure 6) which stipulate that the quality of research and “best evidence” can be determined by the research design chosen to investigate phenomena. This research hierarchy identifies randomised controlled trials (RCTs) as the “gold standard” of research (Slavin, 2002).

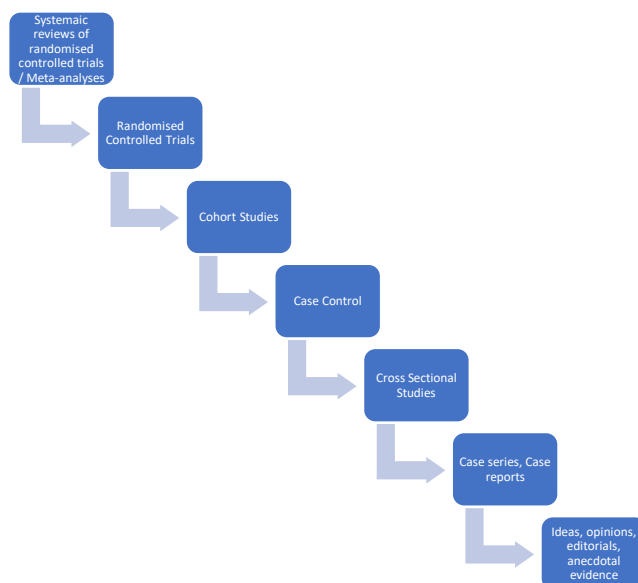
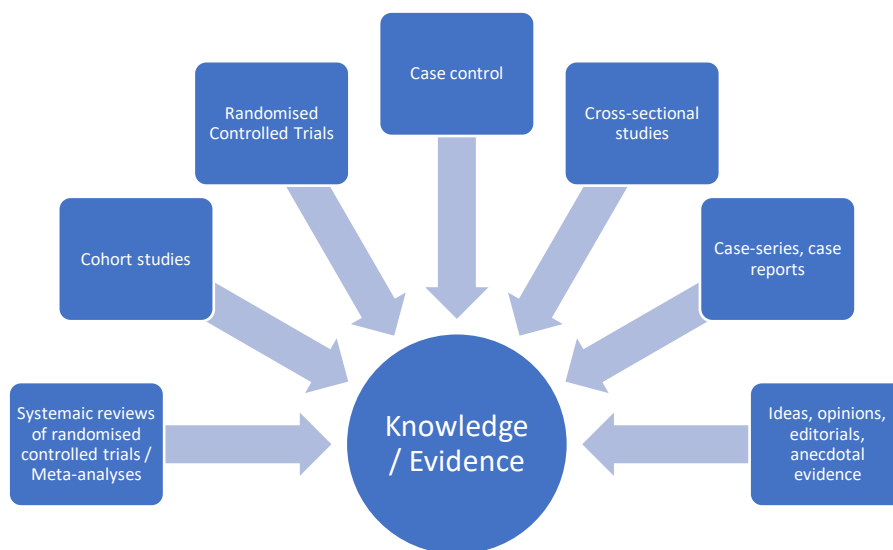


Figure 6: Traditional Hierarchy of Research Design (Slavin, 2002)

This is in contrast to the idea of practice-based evidence (PBE) which would advocate for the trialling of a range of alternative and contrasting research designs and techniques in natural settings in order to build a rich and inclusive picture from which an evidence or knowledge base can be drawn. This would entail using any number of the research approaches highlighted in Figure 7 rather than focusing on a “gold standard” (Barkham, Hardy & Mellor-Clark, 2010); transforming Figure 6 into a diagram resembling Figure 7.



*Figure 7 Hypothetical illustration of PBE*

Swisher (2010) argues that in the real and complex world “people...don’t readily fit the ‘cause and effect’ model of science” (p.4) this is echoed in many research articles debating the appropriateness of EBP to some professions (Campbell et al., 2000; Fishman, Penuel, Allen, Cheng & Sabelli, 2013). Further questions have been raised as to whether the use of “gold standard” research in education is both restrictive and restricted as it does not take into account the context in which interventions take place or indeed the perceptions of those involved (Fishman et al., 2013; Lendrum & Humphrey, 2012).

The purpose of the current paper is to review the concepts highlighted above within the educational psychology profession alongside discussion of how research evidence is best disseminated to appropriately targeted audiences in order to have both proximal and distal impact. Consideration to both these areas will be provided alongside relating this to recent research undertaken by the researcher focused on supporting literacy skills in Further Education (FE). Reflections regarding the implications of this research will also be considered alongside an illustration of the dissemination approach and strategy. Subsequently, the process for evaluating both the dissemination and the impact of the research will be presented.

## 2. Evidence-Based Practice and Practice-Based Evidence in Educational Psychology

EBP in the sphere of educational psychology is not a new or novel concept, in fact, the proposal that the profession should be grounded in EBP was suggested by researchers over a decade ago (Frederickson, 2002). Indeed, the American Psychological Association (APA, 2006) stated that “EBP in psychology is the integration of the best available research with clinical expertise in the context of patient characteristics, culture and preferences” (p. 273). For the field of educational psychology, EBP may have become more prominent following the report presented by the Department for Education and Employment (2000) which observed “examples of schools receiving very different services from individual educational psychologists working in the same service. (p. 40).

This relates to EBP as this would advocate for the use of consistent “best evidence” across a service by all EPs in order to ensure the best evidence-based outcomes for children and young people. Moreover, the use of EBP is a standard

professional requirement of the Health, Care and Professionals Council (HCPC) (HCPC, 2012) in order to qualify as an Educational Psychologist (EP). However, despite this clear link between EBP and the EP role, the relationship has been met with criticism and subsequently resistance from the profession. This resistance bears resemblance to the differences between EBP and PBE highlighted previously. A number of these criticisms were described by Fox (2003), for example, the use of the research hierarchy would be inappropriate within much of EP practice. The day to day work of an EP involves working with people, who each have individual differences and do not reside within a research vacuum of controllable variables. They are educated in settings, each different from one another and have personal and familial circumstances that represent the complexities of real life. Therefore, due to the difficulties finding homogenous groups of participants, experimental designs become far more challenging. EPs and the education field more generally may perceive greater benefit in research that utilises case study design (van Daal, 2015) which provides perhaps a more in-depth and holistic view of a specific context or “problem”. A challenge to “gold standard” EBP also presents when considering the epistemological position of the EP profession (Fox, 2003). Does the profession as a whole advocate that for all families and professionals there is essentially a real world with objective facts and predictable cause and effect relationships or that there is no one single objective reality that is congruent for all people, or perhaps, a position that is somewhere between the two, for example Critical Realism? Whichever position EPs adopt will have clear associations with the way in which they define their role and practice (Kelly, 2008). Research has consequently inferred that these differing approaches may be in conflict with scientific perspectives (Norwich, 2000). In challenge to this argument, Fallon, Woods and Rooney (2010) suggested that

stakeholders expect EPs to bring a holistic outlook to problem solving and that this therefore requires them to adopt a position which allows them to consider multiple perspectives. Beyond these points, EPs may see their role as practitioner rather than researcher, Dunsmuir et al (2009) further highlight this point by suggesting that EPs may not have the time to embed EBP into their role or casework. Furthermore, they may also feel that they are not equipped with the necessary skillset in order to be able to critically evaluate a range of different research studies. This should also be considered alongside the time commitment it would require to undertake keeping up to date with the vast amount of relevant research output in the UK alone.

In a study of United States (US) school psychologists, Bramlett, Murphy, Johnson, Wallingsford and Hall (2002) found that 83% of psychologists relied on professional experience to inform suggested interventions. Moreover, only 62% reported using reference books and 47% stated that they used journal articles. Other studies have also uncovered comparable results, for example, Nelson and Macheck (2007) note similarly that self-reported knowledge of evidence-based interventions for literacy amongst American School Psychologists was low. In this study, 90% of respondents indicated further training was necessary as to reading interventions and assessment. It should be noted however, that in the aforementioned study, there was no attempt to show which school psychologists used multiple methods to inform their intervention suggestions. Beyond international studies, this view of EBP is still very much apparent within the UK. In a self-selecting group of seven EPs, Burnham (2013) found that participants did not acknowledge or indeed believe that a more scientific approach offered more accurate or reliable accounts than professional experience. The study offered concurring accounts with previously mentioned

research (Fallon, Woods & Rooney, 2010; Norwich, 2000) as participants suggested that EPs are in search of solutions that are ‘more pragmatic than possibly evidence-based’ (p.26). Although debate continues as to the appropriateness of EBP to EPs, a “bottom-up” approach, PBE may be more aligned with the day to day practice of EPs and allow them to utilise the appropriate and relevant aspects of EBP (Nutall & Woods, 2013). Researchers have argued that the wide gap between research and practice within the educational field needs to be addressed (Lilienfield, Ammirati & David, 2012) as educational practice is currently perceived to be based on experience, or indeed, as Law (2008) suggests, habit. Slavin (2013) identified four barriers as to why the transfer of EBP is challenging for education:

*Too few rigorous evaluations of promising programs; inadequate dissemination of evidence of effectiveness; a lack of incentives for localities to implement proven interventions; and insufficient technical assistants for implementing evidence-based interventions with fidelity. (p.1).*

Interestingly, if professionals such as EPs feel that the implementation of EBP is challenging, it is likely to be even more challenging for teachers who may not be trained to critically evaluate or implement research designs (Heppenstall, 2014). It is therefore a key aspect of the EP role to appropriately disseminate relevant research to the school staff with whom they are working. Reynolds (2011) called for greater scrutiny amongst the EP profession in relation to reviewing papers and research, suggesting that although a paper may be published in a peer-reviewed journal, this does not necessarily mean that this exemplifies “best evidence”. Moreover, given the introduction of a doctoral training programme for EPs, they would seem well placed, within the context of their practice, to share research with the school staff and parents with whom they are working with and indeed further develop knowledge

bases through a bottom-up PBE approach. The APA (2006) supports this view and posits that if an intervention does not currently have an evidence base, this does not mean that it should be viewed automatically as ineffective and consequently not utilised within schools. For example, in relation to supporting literacy skills within the 16-25 age range, there is a dearth of literature that would be described as having scientific rigour. However, that is not to say that interventions do not improve literacy outcomes for these young people. Furthermore, the research is mostly collected within the US, but that does not consequently mean that they could not be trialled and implemented in UK Further Education (FE) colleges. Innovative research related to this age group and their literacy skills is required in order to meet the best possible outcomes for young people within the context of their environment and aspirations for the future. The research described in the current thesis would be best described as contributing to the field of PBE.

### 3. The Effective Dissemination of Research and Notions of Research Impact

Whether or not EP practice is more aligned with EPB or PBE, there is a general consensus that it is necessary to determine ways in which to narrow the gap between research and practice which can be sustained over time. One strategy for narrowing this gap is adopting an approach of sharing research findings with stakeholders. Various terminology exists for this process, however, for the purposes of this paper the term “dissemination” will be utilised. The importance of dissemination is widely recognised and high on the political agenda both internationally and within the UK (Cooksey, 2006; Department for Health, 2006; World Health Organisation, 2004). Watt (1996) defines dissemination as “processes

by which target groups become aware of, receive, accept and utilise information” (p.133). A similar description is offered by Wilson, Pettigrew, Calnan and Nazareth (2010) who refer to dissemination as:

*A planned process that involves consideration of target audiences and the setting in which research findings are to be received and, where appropriate, communicating and interacting with wide policy and health service audiences in ways that will facilitate research uptake in decision-making processes and practice. (P.2)*

Both definitions reference the planned nature of dissemination and the involvement of targeted groups who receive the information. An important element of Watts’ (1996) definition is the *utilisation* of this information which will be the catalyst for bridging the gap between research evidence and implementation in practice. It has been suggested that there are three main purposes of dissemination; awareness, understanding and action (Harmsworth, Turpin, Rees & Pell, 2001). The first of these would suggest that research is shared with those who do not require detailed understanding of the research but that it may be beneficial for them to have an awareness of the research. Dissemination for understanding would suggest directing dissemination efforts at targeted audiences (Watt, 1996; Wilson et al., 2010) who require a more detailed view of the research project. Finally, dissemination for action would require researchers to enhance the awareness and understanding of the project for specific people or groups who have the appropriate skills set and training in order to promote and sustain change from the research. In order for the effective dissemination of research, it is therefore no longer enough for researchers to publish in a peer-reviewed journal in the hope that the appropriate audiences will not only



read but critically evaluate the application of the research into practice. Researchers need to be much more responsible for the wider dissemination of their work.

For this purpose, a valuable strategy would be to generate a dissemination plan or model. Wilson et al. (2010) systematically reviewed studies that had demonstrated the use of a theoretical framework to inform the dissemination plan. A total of 33 frameworks were included, 20 of which were explicitly designed to be used by researchers. From these 33, 28 frameworks were underpinned by one or more of three different approaches; Persuasive Communication, Diffusion of Innovations Theory and Social Marketing. Of these three, the most popular was Persuasive Communication (Mcguire, 1969). This theoretical approach outlines a matrix of five key aspects of dissemination; the source, message and channels of communication alongside the characteristics of the receiver and destination or setting in which the communication takes place. The researcher has chosen a specific framework for dissemination that is aligned with this most popular form of strategy in Wilson et al. (2010). The steps and questions proposed by Harmsworth et al. (2001) are congruent with the source, message and channels, characteristics of the receiver and destination or setting proposed by Mcguire (1969). Harmsworth et al. (2001) demonstrate that their strategy is applicable to authors of education research and can be used to inform and guide the dissemination process. The authors outline a ten-question process which authors of educational research can use to inform and guide the dissemination of their research (Figure 8).



*Figure 8: Ten question dissemination strategy adapted from Harmsworth et al. (2001)*

Harmsworth et al. (2001) highlight that part of an effective dissemination strategy is monitoring and evaluating both the progress of the strategy and also whether or not it is meeting success criteria.

#### 4. A Summary of the Policy, Practice, Research Development and Implications from the Research.

The following section will describe the findings of a recent research project, conducted by the researcher as part of a doctorate programme in Educational and Child Psychology. The research explored the literacy support available for young people aged 16-25 and has been summarised in the two preceding papers. The first paper consisted of a systematic literature review (SLR) which aimed to explore the ways in which post-secondary education settings can support the development of literacy skills for young people aged 16-25. Eleven studies met the inclusion criteria although only seven of these were considered “best evidence” when incorporated into the “Weight of Evidence Framework” (Gough, 2007); these were included in the final narrative synthesis. The SLR found that overall, there were some promising positive outcomes across different literacy interventions in the areas of reading comprehension, reading fluency and orthographic knowledge. However, a number of methodological limitations existed across all studies which provided some insight

and indicators into potential avenues for further research. The second paper highlighted the findings of an empirical study which sought to explore young people's perspectives as to the ways in which FE colleges support the development of literacy skills and how young people perceive literacy skills to be applicable to their goals and aspirations for the future. Three students each took part in three individual interviews, equating to a total of nine interviews; these were informed by an appreciative inquiry framework to explore their views. The qualitative data was analysed using Braun and Clarke's (2006) Thematic Analysis. The data suggested that participants were able to identify a range of supportive strategies that they experienced at college such as use of technology and positive relationships with adults. This was in line with other research within the field. There was a lack of specific interventions targeting literacy skills mentioned alongside a possible over-reliance on adult support. The students were also able to link literacy skills to their aspirations for the future across the four key areas of Preparing for Adulthood (2013). They reported how the FE college was already supporting them with these skills alongside potential avenues for further support. Both papers have implications for a range of different stakeholders at three different levels; the research site, organisational level and finally at a professional level.

#### 4.1 Research Implications at the Research Site

Within the research site there were implications both for the participants and the FE staff. It will be important to provide feedback to the three participants who took part in the empirical study the positive ways in which they felt staff supported their literacy skills. The students identified a number of strategies that FE staff used which were similar to other research studies that have been conducted in the area and so it may be beneficial to share this with the students also. The young people were

open and honest regarding their aspirations for the future and this led to fruitful discussion as to the literacy skills that they felt were necessary to achieve these. Within the interview sessions, these were mapped out visually with the young people and so it may be supportive to also share a copy of these with the young people involved. Finally, the students identified areas where they felt they would benefit from additional support and so it will be important to relay this back to them and inform them that the researcher will be seeking to meet with staff to share these viewpoints. Similarly, there are also implications for the adults who work within the FE. The researcher liaised with members of the learning support service within the college and therefore this would suggest that these members of staff are the most invested within the results of the research. As the students positively reported a number of different strategies that adults use, it would be beneficial to feed this back to the staff who are organising and implementing this support. Some of the findings would suggest that participants rely heavily on the support that they receive from adults which is an interesting discovery considering the results from reports highlighting in what circumstances teaching assistant support appears to be utilised most effectively (Sharples, Webster & Blatchford, 2015). The data suggests that participants made little reference to specific or targeted literacy interventions, and this, coupled with the nature of TA support, would make an interesting discussion with college staff. As result of this, it is likely that the SLR may also be interesting to FE staff. The implications of discussing aspirations and the specific skills participants perceived to be related to these would enable staff to reflect on how these are, or could be, incorporated into the curriculum at college. Finally, it would be useful to share ideas for future research recommendations with the staff group, for

example, a further in-depth case study of the college linking adult voice and college data, or the trialling of a specific intervention with a group of students.

#### 4.2 Research Implications at the Organisational Level

At the organisational level, this research may have implications for different teams across the Local Authority in which this research took place, for example, the Educational Psychology Service (EPS), the Educational Support Service (ESS: pseudonym) and the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Team (SENDT); all of whom are developing their knowledge base of relevant research with this age group since recent legislative changes (Department for Education & Department of Health, 2015). The EPS employs a senior EP for whom this is a specialist area; therefore, it will be important to provide direct feedback of the findings from both the SLR and empirical study to this member of staff. The wider EPS team is also likely to be interested in the findings from both the SLR and the empirical paper. For instance, the SLR may deliver an insight into the type of interventions that are accessible and appropriate for this age range and may provide EPs with a starting point if they are working with a young person with literacy difficulties either through casework or statutory work within the college. Furthermore, on the basis that the studies in the SLR were conducted in the US, it would be useful for the EPS to discuss the range of implementation factors that may be necessary to consider if transferring these to a UK post-secondary education setting and how this may be achieved. A possible natural progression would be to establish a working group within the EPS to discuss how specific interventions could be trialled and evaluated within local colleges to further contribute to the knowledge base. When considering the empirical paper, it would be helpful for different teams within the LA, such as the EPS, ESS and SENDT to have an awareness of the ways in which students

perceive the support they are receiving to be helpful (with the proviso that the research reflects one particular setting). The findings which related to a potential over-reliance on adult support will be important for the EPS to consider and lead to discussion as to how they might explore or indeed gently challenge this when working in FE, for example through statutory work, casework or training. The themes associated with the limited evidence of specific targeted intervention may also be of interest to both the EPS and ESS, as highlighted earlier. These groups of professionals may be best placed to trial and evaluate implementation of any interventions within FE colleges. Sharing how the researcher used the Preparing for Adulthood (2013) outcomes with these young people may also be beneficial for the EPS and SENDT as a medium to stimulate discussion focused on how this could be incorporated into a wider range of work to facilitate aspirational conversations with young people. The use of Appreciative Inquiry (AI) as a guiding framework when working with young people was felt, by the researcher, to provide a safe and positive method to gather their voice, consequently, sharing this may inform further development for the scope of AI within the EPS. Finally, it would also be useful to share ideas related to the recommendations for further research presented in the empirical paper with the EPS to discuss whether this would be of interest or feasible for the service.

#### 4.3 Research Implications at a Professional Level.

At a wider, professional level there also seem to be implications from this research. Due to the legislative developments over recent years, EPs are now working in somewhat unfamiliar contexts and with unfamiliar age groups. It is therefore perceived that the SLR within this research would be of interest to qualified EPs and school psychologists in both the UK and internationally for two

possible reasons, to raise awareness of the range of interventions that have been utilised with an older age group and to promote further discussion with regards to the lack of research evidence within this area given the international statistics presented in paper 1. The second paper is the first study within the UK (to the researcher's knowledge) that has focused on gathering the perspective of older learners with literacy difficulties as to the range of support that they are offered within FE college alongside how these relate to their aspirations for the future. The study highlighted data relating to a limited range of targeted interventions and the potential for students to over-rely on adult support. It may therefore be helpful for the wider professional network to consider how FE colleges can be supported to promote independent learning skills and implement targeted interventions within FE colleges. A key role of EPS is capturing the voice of children and young people and this study may promote further discussion as to the importance of focusing on the aspirations of young people to ensure that the support they are offered relates to this. As the Preparing for Adulthood (2013) key areas were crucial facilitators to this discussion, it will be useful to consider as a profession, how these might be used in a wider array of situations and circumstances with young people. There may also be special interest or working groups in the professional field that this research would be applicable to, for example in areas such as literacy development, 16-25 professional development or indeed promoting the voice of children and young people. It may be beneficial to share this research with Trainee Educational Psychologist's (TEPs) enrolled on professional doctorate courses in Educational and Child Psychology as the recommendations for further research outlined in the second paper may inspire further doctoral projects in this area.

## 5. Strategy for Promoting and Evaluating the Dissemination and Impact of the Research

As suggested previously, debate exists within the educational field centred on the widening gap between research evidence and practice. One of the barriers reported to influence this is the inadequate dissemination of research (Slavin, 2013). In order to address this in relation to the research presented in the aforementioned papers, a strategy for promoting and evaluating the dissemination and impact of the research has been created. In devising the dissemination plan outlined below, consideration has been given to the ten-steps of effective dissemination highlighted by Harmsworth et al. (2001). Moreover, the three main purposes of the dissemination strategy are as follows; to raise awareness of the study participants and college staff, to develop the understanding of college staff, qualified EPs and TEPs in order to inform practice with this age range, and finally, promoting action by informing the understanding of EPs and encouraging further research in the field of post-secondary education and literacy development within the UK. It is hoped that the research findings from both the SLR and empirical paper will be of interest to academic tutors, practicing EPs, TEPs, FE staff and post-16 learners. It may also be of interest to other groups or organisations such as SEN statutory teams and the Department for Education who are leading the Preparing for Adulthood (2013) agenda. Various dissemination methods were selected in order to achieve the aims of the dissemination strategy, including, participant letters, presentations, published journal articles and attendance at the university research commissioning day. The full dissemination strategy is outlined in Table 11 below.





Table 11: Dissemination strategy outline (table adapted from Harmsworth et al., 2001).

<b>Objective of dissemination</b>	<b>Audience</b>	<b>Aim of dissemination</b>	<b>Medium of dissemination</b>	<b>Timing</b>	<b>Who might help in the dissemination strategy?</b>	<b>Success criteria</b>
Student participants will be aware of the findings of the empirical paper.	College students	Awareness raising	Letters	By August 2017	SP – Researcher / TEP	Students will demonstrate an awareness of the research findings of the empirical paper.
College staff will be aware of the main findings of the empirical paper	College staff	Awareness raising	Presentation	By October 2017	SP – Researcher / TEP	College staff will demonstrate an awareness of the main findings of the empirical paper, for example, be able to identify the elements of support that students found helpful.
College staff will demonstrate an understanding of the main findings of the empirical paper	College staff	To facilitate understanding and to explore the potential impact on FE practice.	Presentation	By October 2017	SP – Researcher / TEP	College staff will demonstrate an understanding of the main findings of the empirical paper, for example, will be able to discuss the findings and how these impact on their practices within FE.
The EPS will demonstrate an understanding of the findings from the empirical paper.	EP team	To facilitate understanding and to explore the potential impact on EP practice.	Presentation	By October 2017	SP – Researcher / TEP Local Authority EPS day	The EPS will be able to discuss the findings of the empirical paper and how these findings might relate to and impact on their practice, for example, in casework, statutory work or further training.
The EPS will demonstrate an understanding of the SLR findings.	EP team	To facilitate understanding and to explore the	Presentation	By October 2017	SP – Researcher / TEP	The EPS will be able to discuss the findings of the SLR and how these findings might relate to and impact on their practice, for

		potential impact on EP practice.			Local Authority EPS day	example, in casework, statutory work or further training.
EPs will demonstrate an understanding of the findings of the empirical paper.	Qualified EPs	To facilitate understanding and to explore the potential impact on EP practice.	Peer-reviewed journal articles. Non peer-reviewed journal articles Attendance at conferences	By January 2018	SP – Researcher / TEP JS – co-author / course tutor	EPs will be able to describe some ways in which the findings of the empirical paper will impact on their practice with the 16-25 age range.
EPs will demonstrate an understanding of the findings of the SLR	Qualified EPs	To facilitate understanding and to explore the potential impact on EP practice.	Peer-reviewed journal articles. Non peer-reviewed journal articles Attendance at conferences	By January 2018	SP – Researcher / TEP JS – co-author / course tutor	EPs will be able to describe some ways in which the findings of the SLR will impact on their practice with the 16-25 age range.
Wider professional groups such as FE, Preparing for Adulthood (Department of Education) staff will demonstrate an understanding of the SLR and the empirical paper.	FE staff Preparing for Adulthood (Department of Education), Special interest groups	To facilitate understanding and to explore the potential impact FE practice.  To promote action and new research in the area.	Peer-reviewed journal articles. Non peer-reviewed journal articles Attendance at conferences	By January 2018	SP – Researcher / TEP JS – co-author / course tutor	Wider professional groups will be able to describe the findings of both the SLR and empirical paper and consider how the research may impact on FEC practices.
TEPs will demonstrate an understanding of the	TEPs studying on initial doctoral	To facilitate understanding and to explore the	Peer-reviewed journal articles.	By July 2018	SP – Researcher / TEP	TEPs will be able to summarise the main research findings as to the types of

interventions that are available to support	training courses	potential impact FE practice.	Non peer-reviewed journal articles  Course tutor presentations at university		JS – co-author / course tutor	interventions currently available for the 16-25 age range.
TEPs will use the recommendations in the papers to consider further research in the area.	TEPs studying on initial doctoral training courses	To promote action and new research in the area.	Peer-reviewed journal articles.  Non peer-reviewed journal articles Attendance at Manchester University research commissioning day.	By July 2018	SP – Researcher / TEP JS – co-author / course tutor	Future research linked to the recommendations in both the SLR and empirical paper will be considered by doctoral candidates.
Researchers within the wider educational field will use the recommendations in the papers to conduct further research in this area.	TEPs studying on initial doctoral training courses	To promote action and new research in the area.	Peer-reviewed journal articles.  Non peer-reviewed journal articles  Attendance at conferences	By July 2018	SP – Researcher / TEP JS – co-author / course tutor	Future research linked to the recommendations in both the SLR and empirical paper will be considered by researchers in the field.

The researcher considered a range of media to discuss the research findings with participants, including a group meeting, presentations, written correspondence and phone conversations. Following this, it was determined that the most effective and efficient method to disseminate the research to participants would be written correspondence in the form of letters. These letters highlighted the findings related to what they perceived to be most helpful in supporting their literacy skills, which literacy skills they felt were important in achieving their aspirations alongside the further support they hoped for. The letters also outlined the plan for dissemination with college staff. In order to feedback to college staff, the researcher plans to deliver a presentation outlining the main findings. This will include discussion points and activities to promote reflection amongst the staff group about how the research might impact on the college and practice. The researcher will also be prepared to facilitate the creation of an action plan, if this is something the staff would perceive as helpful; enabling the completion of the AI cycle and moving the research into the final stage of “Destiny/Delivery”. A presentation will also be given as part of the Continuing Professional Development input of the EPS team day as a method to disseminate the research findings amongst the wider EP team. This presentation will also include activities to promote discussion focused on how the research may enable professional development and how the findings might impact on the work of individual EPs or the EPS as a whole. In order to reach a wider professional audience, it is hoped that the research will be published in peer-reviewed journals. The relevant audience of this research can be considered to be both FE staff and EPs. Capturing the attention of relevant post-

secondary educational professionals will be important and so the researcher will endeavour to publish in journals that will maximise the reading potential of such an audience. Research in Post-Compulsory Education has been identified as an appropriate example of a peer-reviewed journal where this research could be published (author guidelines for this journal are provided in Appendix I). The researcher may also consider publishing in non peer-reviewed journals to target the EP audience such as The Psychologist or DECP Debate. As part of the dissemination strategy, the researcher plans to present to different audiences in 2017 and 2018, for example, at the Local Authority EPS day and possible conferences including the International School Psychology Association (ISPA) conference. The final objective of the outlined dissemination strategy is to promote action and ideas for new research in the area of post-secondary literacy development. It is hoped that researchers in the field and doctoral students will reflect on the recommendations for future research in both papers in order to devise further research projects in this area. Objectives of further research might focus on:

- Providing an in-depth overview of an FE whole college approach to literacy development.
- Designing and implementing a literacy intervention with the aim to develop literacy skills related to young people's aspirations for adulthood and increase metacognitive awareness.

## 6. Concluding Remarks

Although debate may continue as to the appropriateness of EBP or indeed PBE to the EP profession, what remains clear is the importance of research dissemination. The transfer and implementation of knowledge to practice is dependent on researchers' motivations to create an effective dissemination strategy that goes beyond publishing an article in a peer-reviewed journal. As has been highlighted throughout this paper, practitioners such as EPs and teachers do not, as a matter of course, consistently use up-to-date research articles to inform their practice (Burnham, 2013). The critical appraisal of EBP in the educational field has informed the approach taken within this paper. The outlined dissemination strategy, not only adheres to a particular dissemination framework (Harmsworth et al., 2001), but advocates for and focuses on discussion with key stakeholders to promote reflection about how the research findings might impact on practice for those particular people residing in a particular context or set of circumstances. Ultimately, the goal of research in education is to benefit the staff, families and the children and young people. It is hoped, therefore, that the first two papers presented in this small-scale thesis, provided some insight into international research focused on the interventions that are available to support older learners develop literacy skills, the perceptions of young people in FE colleges within the UK as to the support they receive for their literacy skills and how literacy relates to their aspirations for the future. Paper three has presented a strategy in which to disseminate this information to appropriate audiences. The implementation of the dissemination strategy is currently ongoing and will

continue to be monitored. Evaluation and impact of the dissemination strategy will utilise the stipulated success criteria which can be found in Table 10.



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## Appendices

### Appendix A – Prisma Guidelines

Section/topic	#	Checklist item
<b>TITLE</b>		
Title	1	Identify the report as a systematic review, meta-analysis, or both.
<b>ABSTRACT</b>		
Structured summary	2	Provide a structured summary including, as applicable: background; objectives; data sources; study eligibility criteria, participants, and interventions; study appraisal and synthesis methods; results; limitations; conclusions and implications of key findings; systematic review registration number.
<b>INTRODUCTION</b>		
Rationale	3	Describe the rationale for the review in the context of what is already known.
Objectives	4	Provide an explicit statement of questions being addressed with reference to participants, interventions, comparisons, outcomes, and study design (PICOS).
<b>METHODS</b>		
Protocol and registration	5	Indicate if a review protocol exists, if and where it can be accessed (e.g., Web address), and, if available, provide registration information including registration number.
Eligibility criteria	6	Specify study characteristics (e.g., PICOS, length of follow-up) and report characteristics (e.g., years considered, language, publication status) used as criteria for eligibility, giving rationale.
Information sources	7	Describe all information sources (e.g., databases with dates of coverage, contact with study authors to identify additional studies) in the search and date last searched.
Search	8	Present full electronic search strategy for at least one database, including any limits used, such that it could be repeated.
Study selection	9	State the process for selecting studies (i.e., screening, eligibility, included in systematic review, and, if applicable, included in the meta-analysis).
Data collection process	10	Describe method of data extraction from reports (e.g., piloted forms, independently, in duplicate) and any processes for obtaining and confirming data from investigators.

Data items	11	List and define all variables for which data were sought (e.g., PICOS, funding sources) and any assumptions and simplifications made.
Risk of bias in individual studies	12	Describe methods used for assessing risk of bias of individual studies (including specification of whether this was done at the study or outcome level), and how this information is to be used in any data synthesis.
Summary measures	13	State the principal summary measures (e.g., risk ratio, difference in means).
Synthesis of results	14	Describe the methods of handling data and combining results of studies, if done, including measures of consistency (e.g., $I^2$ ) for each meta-analysis.

Section/topic	#	Checklist item
Risk of bias across studies	15	Specify any assessment of risk of bias that may affect the cumulative evidence (e.g., publication bias, selective reporting within studies).
Additional analyses	16	Describe methods of additional analyses (e.g., sensitivity or subgroup analyses, meta-regression), if done, indicating which were pre-specified.
<b>RESULTS</b>		
Study selection	17	Give numbers of studies screened, assessed for eligibility, and included in the review, with reasons for exclusions at each stage, ideally with a flow diagram.
Study characteristics	18	For each study, present characteristics for which data were extracted (e.g., study size, PICOS, follow-up period) and provide the citations.
Risk of bias within studies	19	Present data on risk of bias of each study and, if available, any outcome level assessment (see item 12).
Results of individual studies	20	For all outcomes considered (benefits or harms), present, for each study: (a) simple summary data for each intervention group (b) effect estimates and confidence intervals, ideally with a forest plot.
Synthesis of results	21	Present results of each meta-analysis done, including confidence intervals and measures of consistency.
Risk of bias across studies	22	Present results of any assessment of risk of bias across studies (see Item 15).
Additional analysis	23	Give results of additional analyses, if done (e.g., sensitivity or subgroup analyses, meta-regression [see Item 16]).
<b>DISCUSSION</b>		

Summary of evidence	24	Summarize the main findings including the strength of evidence for each main outcome; consider their relevance to key groups (e.g., healthcare providers, users, and policy makers).
Limitations	25	Discuss limitations at study and outcome level (e.g., risk of bias), and at review-level (e.g., incomplete retrieval of identified research, reporting bias).
Conclusions	26	Provide a general interpretation of the results in the context of other evidence, and implications for future research.
<b>FUNDING</b>		
Funding	27	Describe sources of funding for the systematic review and other support (e.g., supply of data); role of funders for the systematic review.

From: Moher, D., Liberati, A., Tetzlaff, J., & Altman, D.G. (2009). Preferred reporting items for systematic reviews and Meta-analyses: the PRISMA Statement. *BMJ*, 339,



## Appendix B: List of Excluded Studies and Justifications

Reference	Reason for Exclusion
Akkakoson, S. (2013). The relationship between strategic reading instruction, student learning of LS-based reading strategies and LS reading achievement. <i>Journal of Research in Reading</i> , 36(4), 422-450.	Designed for students learning English as a foreign language.
Ari, O. (2011). Fluency interventions for developmental readers: repeated reading and wide reading. <i>Research and Teaching in Developmental Education</i> , 28(1), 5-15.	Commentary / discussion paper.
Armstrong, S.L. & Newman, M. (2011). Teaching textual conversations: Intertextuality in the college reading classroom. <i>Journal of College Reading and Learning</i> , 41(2), 6-21.	Commentary / discussion paper.
Atkinson, T.S. & Williams, S.C. (2006). Building their stories: Electronic case studies of struggling readers. <i>Reading Horizons</i> , 47(1), 25-46.	Study involved increasing teachers understanding of assessment and instructional approaches and examining the learning of literacy educators.
Bellomo, T.S. (2009). Morphological analysis as a vocabulary strategy for L1 and L2 college preparatory students. <i>The Electronic Journal for English as a Second Language</i> , 13(3), 1-27.	Designed for students learning English as a foreign language.
Burzynski-Bullard, S., & Anderson, N. (2014). "I'll take commas for \$200!": an instructional intervention using games to help students master grammar skills. <i>Journalism &amp; Mass Communication Educator</i> , 69 (1), 5-16.	Did not include post-secondary learners who had difficulties with literacy.
Butler, A. & Christofili, M. (2014). Project-based learning communities in developmental education: A case study of lessons learned. <i>Community College Journal of Research and Practice</i> , 38(7), 638-650.	Study considered the implementation factors of a project. Considered what made the project successful rather than a specific focus on improving literacy skills.

Choo, T., Eng, T., & Ahmad, N. (2011). Effects of reciprocal teaching strategies on reading comprehension. <i>The Reading Matrix</i> , 11(2), 140-149.	Designed for students learning English as a foreign language.
Dabarera, C., Renandya, W.A., & Zhang, L.J. (2014). The impact of metacognitive scaffolding and monitoring on reading comprehension. <i>System</i> , 42, 462-473.	Age range 12 – 15 years old. Designed for students learning English as a foreign language.
Fathy, S., Said, E., Fattah, A. (2015). The effectiveness of using WhatsApp messenger as one of mobile learning techniques to develop students' writing skills. <i>Journal of Education and Practice</i> , 6(32), 115-127.	Designed for students learning English as a foreign language.
Friend, R. (2001). Effects of strategy instruction on summary writing of college students. <i>Contemporary Educational Psychology</i> , 26(1), 3-24.	Study took place as a pre-enrolment course. Study focused on a strategy to write a summary rather than developing or improving literacy skills.
Grandstaff-Beckers, G., Saal, L.K. & Cheek, E. (2013). Investigating treatment fidelity and social validity of a peer-mediated postsecondary reading intervention. <i>Reading Psychology</i> , 34(4), 336-354.	Study focused on treatment fidelity and social validity of measures and a programme.
Harreveld, B., Baker, K., & Isdale, L. (2008). Teachers' work in reading literacy across the curriculum in the senior phase of learning. <i>The Curriculum Journal</i> , 19(2), 105-118.	Year 11 participants.
Harris, A. (2016). Integrating written communication skills: working towards a whole of course approach. <i>Teaching in Higher Education</i> , 21(3), 287-300.	Focused on English language proficiency and developing a policy and strategy for English writing. development of policy and strategy for English writing.
Hartman, K.A. & Stewart, T.C. (2001). It's a WRAP. Reading, and art projects for developmental college students. <i>Research and Teaching in Developmental Education</i> , 18(1), 79-87.	Does not indicate an intervention or strategy to improve student literacy development

Hoskin, J., & Fawcett, A. (2014). Improving the reading skills of young people with Duchenne muscular dystrophy in preparation for adulthood. <i>British Journal of Special Education</i> , 41(2), 172-190.	Primary school age range 5 years old up to 12 years old.
Jalilifar, A. (2010). The effect of cooperative learning techniques on college students' reading comprehension. <i>System</i> , 38, 96-108	Designed for students learning English as a foreign language.
James, I., Okpala, C. (2010). The use of metacognitive scaffolding to improve college students' academic success. <i>Journal of College Teaching &amp; Learning</i> , 7, 46-49.	No indication of age range. Study focused on developing teachers understanding of strategies.
Levy, R. (2011). Literature circles go to college. <i>Journal of Basic Writing</i> , 30(2), 53-83.	Commentary / discussion paper.
Levy, R., Dickerson, C., & Teague, J. (20. Developing blended learning resources and strategies to support academic reading: a student centered approach.	Study focused on academic reading a Masters level no improving literacy skills. No indication of age range of participants. No indication of literacy difficulties for the students.
Linderholm, T., Therriault, D.J. & Kwon, H. (2014). Multiple science text processing: Building comprehension skills for college student readers.	Developing student reading of academic science text books rather than difficulties with literacy.
Martinez, G. (2011). Literacy success fifty students from areas throughout the United States share their stories. <i>Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy</i> , 55(3), 221-231.	Student views in what contributing to their success at college generally rather than the ways that developing literacy skills contributed to their success
Mehdian, N. (2009). Teacher's role in the reading apprenticeship framework: Aid by the side or sage by the stage. <i>English Language Teaching</i> , 2(1), 3-12.	Pre-college. Designed for students learning English as a foreign language.
Mellard, D.F., Woods, K.L., & McJunkin, L. (2015). Literacy components model for at-risk young adults enrolled in career and	Investigating components of literacy and which of these best predict success with functional reading.

technical education. <i>Journal of Research in Reading</i> , 38, (3), 249 – 271.	
Miller, L.C., Russell, C.L., Cheng, A., & Skarbek, A.J. (2015). Evaluating undergraduate nursing students' self-efficacy and competence in writing: Effects of a writing intensive intervention. <i>Nursing Education in Practice</i> , 15, 174-180.	Strategy or intervention was not designed for use with young people experiencing difficulties with literacy. No indication of the age of participants.
Morris, D. & Price, D. (2008). Transformative teaching in a developmental reading program. <i>Journal of College Reading and Learning</i> , 39(1), 88-93.	Commentary / discussion article.
Mongillo, G., & Wilder, H. (2012). An examination of at-risk college freshmen's expository literacy skills using interactive online writing activities. <i>Journal of College Reading and Learning</i> , 42 (2), 25-70	Designed for students learning English as a foreign language.
Pilotti, M., Martinez, E., Broderick, T., Caballero, S. & LaGrange, L. (2012). Reading acceleration program: The effect of concentrated practice on reading skills. <i>Journal of Hispanic Higher Education</i> , 11(4), 351-365.	Designed for students learning English as a Foreign Language.
Rochford, R. (2013). Service-learning for remedial reading and writing students. <i>Community College Journal of Research and Practice</i> , 37(5), 345-355.	Designed for students learning English as a foreign language.
Shaffer, S.C., Eshbach, B.E., Santiago-Blay, J.A. (2015). A dual approach to fostering under-prepared student success: Focusing on doing and becoming. <i>InSight: A Journal of Scholarly Teaching</i> , 10, 79-91.	Focused on general academic success rather than fostering literacy development.
Smith, B.L. Holliday, W.G., & Austin, H.W. (2010). Students' comprehension of science textbooks using a question-based reading strategy. <i>Journal of Research in Science Teaching</i> , 47(4), 363-379.	Strategy or intervention was not designed for use with young people experiencing difficulties with literacy. Study utilised strategies to improve reading of science textbooks in an introductory biology course.
Smith, R., & Wright, V. (2015). The possibilities of re-engagement: cultures of literacy education and so-called NEETs.	Did not take place in a full-time post-secondary education setting.

<i>Research in Post-Compulsory Education</i> , 20 (4), 400-418.	
Stack-Cutler, H.L., Parilla, R.K., Jokisaari, M. & Nurmi, J. (2015). How university students with reading difficulties are supported in achieving their goals. <i>Journal of Learning Disabilities</i> , 48(3), 323-334.	Exploring the goals of young people with reading difficulties. These goals were for the future in general, not related to literacy.
Wexler, J., Reed, D.K., Mitchell, M., Doyle, B. & Clancy, E. (2015). Implementing an evidence-based instructional routine to enhance comprehension of expository text. <i>Intervention in School and Clinic</i> , 50(3), 142-149.	Commentary and discussion article.
Willingham, D. & Price, D. (2009). Theory to practice: Vocabulary instruction in community college developmental education reading classes: What the research tells us. <i>Journal of College Reading and Learning</i> , 40(1), 91-105.	Commentary / discussion of theoretical frameworks.
Woods-Groves, S., Therrien, W.J., Hua, Y., Hendrickson, J.M., Shaw, J.W. & Hughes, C.A. (2012). Effectiveness of an essay writing strategy for post-secondary students with developmental disabilities. <i>Education and Training in Autism and Developmental Disabilities</i> , 47(2), 210 – 222.	Article did not include an intervention to improve literacy skills. Study was focused on implementing a writing frame strategy for organisational quality of work.
Woods-Groves, S., Hua, Y., Therrien, W.J., Kaldenberg, E.R., Hendrickson, J.M., Lucas, K.G. McAninch, M.J. (2014). An investigation of strategic writing instruction for post-secondary students with developmental disabilities. <i>Education and Training in Autism and Developmental Disabilities</i> , 49(2). 248-262.	Article did not include an intervention to improve literacy skills. Study was focused on implementing a writing frame strategy for organisational quality of work.
Yang, Y. (2010). Developing a reciprocal teaching/learning system for college remedial reading instruction. <i>Computers &amp; Education</i> , 55, 1193-1201.	Designed for students learning English as a foreign language.
Yang, Y. (2012). Blended learning for college students with English Reading Difficulties. <i>Computer Assisted Language Learning</i> , 25, (5). 393-410.	Designed for students learning English as a foreign language.

## Appendix C: Full Scoring Frameworks for 11 Studies Considered for Weight of Evidence A

### Review framework for quantitative evaluation research

**Author:** Hua, Y., Therrien, W.J., Hendrickson, J.M., Woods-Groves, S., Ries, P.S., & Shaw, J.W

**Title:** Effects of a combined repeated reading and question generation intervention on young adults with cognitive disabilities

**Reference:** Hua, Y., Therrien, W.J., Hendrickson, J.M., Woods-Groves, S., Ries, P.S., & Shaw, J.W. (2012). Effects of combined repeated reading and question generation intervention on young adults with cognitive disabilities. *Education and Training in Autism and Developmental Disabilities*, 47 (1), 72-83.

Criterion	1 / 0	Comment
Use of a randomised group design	0	The study included three participants but there was no evidence of random assignment and no control group was implemented.
Focus on a specific, well defined disorder or problem	1	The study aimed to discover whether a combined repeated reading intervention and question generation intervention would improve the reading skills of three young adult with learning difficulties. An Oral Reading Fluency curriculum based measure was used to determine the students' instructional reading abilities.
Comparison with treatment as usual, placebo or less preferably, standard control	0	The study included three participants but there no comparison to treatments as usual, placebo or standard control.
Use of manuals and procedures for monitoring and fidelity checks	1	The details of the programme used and administrative controls adopted are identified within the research article.
Sample large enough to detect effect (Cohen, 1992)	0	Small sample size of three participants / no comparison group. No reference to Cohen (1992) provided within the article.

Use of outcome measures that has demonstrably good reliability and validity (2 if more than one measure used)	0	The only outcome measure referred to is the Oral Fluency curriculum based measure. There is no indication of what this instrument measures specifically or reliability and validity data.
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## Review framework for quantitative evaluation research

**Author:** Hua, Y., Woods-Groves, S., Ford, J.W., & Nobles, K.A.

**Title:** Effects of the paraphrasing strategy on expository reading comprehension of young adults with intellectual disability

**Reference:** Hua, Y., Woods-Groves, S., Ford, J.W., & Nobles, K.A. (2014). Effects of the paraphrasing strategy on expository reading comprehension of young adults with intellectual disability. *Education and Training in Autism and Developmental Disabilities, 49* (3), 429-439.

Criterion	1 / 0	Comment
Use of a randomised group design	1	The study utilised a randomised group design “we randomly assigned students to both experimental and control groups” p.431.
Focus on a specific, well defined disorder or problem	1	The study focused on using a paraphrasing strategy to improve expository reading comprehension with a group of young adults with additional learning needs.
Comparison with treatment as usual, placebo or less preferably, standard control	1	Participants were assigned to either an experimental group or control group Participants assigned to the experimental group received the intervention (comprehension strategy instruction) and those in the control group attended a life skills class.
Use of manuals and procedures for monitoring and fidelity checks	1	Details of programme and administrative control are identified in the article. p. 433 provides a script to ensure assessment integrity.
Sample large enough to detect effect (Cohen, 1992)	0	Small sample size of ten participants. No reference to Cohen (1992) provided within the article. However, based on Cohen (1992) this sample size in both groups would not be large enough to detect effect.
Use of outcome measures that has demonstrably good reliability and	0	The only outcome measure referred to is the Oral Fluency curriculum based measure. There is no indication of



validity (2 if more than one measure used)		what this instrument measures specifically or reliability and validity data.
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## Review framework for quantitative evaluation research

**Author:** Atkinson, T., Zhang, G., Zeller, N., & Phillips, S.F

**Title:** Using word study instruction with developmental college students

**Reference:** Atkinson, T., Zhang, G., Zeller, N., & Phillips, S.F. (2014). Using word study instruction with developmental college students. *Journal of Research in Reading*, 37 (4), 433-48.

Criterion	1 / 0	Comment
Use of a randomised group design	1	The study utilised a randomised group design. Participants were randomised by a toss of a coin. “By a toss of the coin, one section of 19 students enrolled in the courses were designated as control, and second section were selected as treatment group” p.436-437.
Focus on a specific, well defined disorder or problem	1	The study investigated the effect of a word study strategy on the orthographic knowledge of college students on a developmental reading course.
Comparison with treatment as usual, placebo or less preferably, standard control	1	39 students participated in the study, 19 were randomly designated as the control group and 20 students for the treatment group. The study utilised a comparison with treatment as usual control.
Use of manuals and procedures for monitoring and fidelity checks	1	Details of programme and administrative control are identified in the article. The study utilised the <i>Words Their Way</i> programme.
Sample large enough to detect effect (Cohen, 1992)	0	Small sample size of 39 participants (19 and 20 in groups). No reference to Cohen (1992) provided within the article. However, based on Cohen (1992) this sample size in both groups would not be large enough adequately to detect effect.
Use of outcome measures that has demonstrably good reliability and	1	Full details of the outcomes measures are indicated within the article. Full details can be found on p. 437 of the

validity (2 if more than one measure used)		article. High reliability of the Upper Level Spelling Inventory .91 overall reliability.
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## Review framework for quantitative evaluation research

**Author:** Gaddy, S.A., Bakken, J.P., & Fulk, B.M.

**Title:** The effects of teaching text-structure strategies to post-secondary students with learning disabilities to improve their reading comprehension on expository Science text passages.

**Reference:** Gaddy, S.A., Bakken, J.P., & Fulk, B.M. (2008). The effects of teaching text-structure strategies to post-secondary students with learning disabilities to improve their reading comprehension on expository Science text passages. *Journal of Postsecondary Education and Disability*, 20 (2), 100-119.

Criterion	1 / 0	Comment
Use of a randomised group design	1	The researchers used a randomised group design. With a total of 40 participants, 20 students were randomly assigned to either a text-structure strategy condition or a traditional instruction condition.
Focus on a specific, well defined disorder or problem	1	The authors wished to determine whether a text-structure strategy improved the reading comprehension of expository text passages in science for post-secondary learners with additional learning needs.
Comparison with treatment as usual, placebo or less preferably, standard control	1	With a total of 40 participants, 20 students were randomly assigned to either a text-structure strategy condition or a traditional instruction condition.
Use of manuals and procedures for monitoring and fidelity checks	1	Details of programme and administrative procedure are outlined in the article.
Sample large enough to detect effect (Cohen, 1992)	1	Sample size would be large enough to detect a large effect size, at Power 0.80 for $\alpha = 0.10$ based on Cohen (1992).
Use of outcome measures that has demonstrably good reliability and validity (2 if more than one measure used)	0	Outcome measured referred too, however, no discussion of what the outcome measure was or reliability/validity information, therefore, no score given.

### Review framework for quantitative evaluation research

**Author:** Ari, O.

**Title:** Fluency gains in struggling college readers from wide reading and repeated readings

**Reference:** Ari, O. (2015). Fluency gains in struggling college readers from wide reading and repeated readings. *Reading Psychology*, 36 (3), 270-297.

Criterion	1 / 0	Comment
Use of a randomised group design	1	In this study participants were randomised assigned to groups.
Focus on a specific, well defined disorder or problem	1	The study focused on examining the effects of two fluency interventions on struggling college readers' silent reading rate and reading comprehension skills.
Comparison with treatment as usual, placebo or less preferably, standard control	1	Struggling readers were randomly assigned to either the repeated reading, wide reading or vocabulary strategy group.
Use of manuals and procedures for monitoring and fidelity checks	1	a detailed step by step procedural integrity check list was written for the experimenter to follow during the implementation of each strategy. P. 279.
Sample large enough to detect effect (Cohen, 1992)	0	Sample was not large enough to detect effect based on Cohen (1992).
Use of outcome measures that has demonstrably good reliability and validity (2 if more than one measure used)	1	The study utilised the Nelson Denny Reading Test. This measure is widely used to assess reading comprehension skills of adolescents and adults within the United States. Alternate forms reliability has been reported at $r = 0.68$ for reading rate and $r = 0.81$ for reading comprehension.

**Review framework for quantitative evaluation research**

**Author:** Snyder, V

**Title:** The effect of course based reading strategy training on the reading comprehension skills of developmental college students.

**Reference:** Snyder, V. (2002). The effect of course based reading strategy training on the reading comprehension skills of developmental college students. *Research and Teaching in Developmental Education*, 18 (2), 37-41.

<b>Criterion</b>	<b>1 / 0</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Use of a randomised group design	0	There is no indication as to whether participants were randomly assigned.
Focus on a specific, well defined disorder or problem	1	The study examined the use a course based reading strategy on the development of reading comprehension skills.
Comparison with treatment as usual, placebo or less preferably, standard control	1	The authors used a control group to compare with the treatment group. P. 38.
Use of manuals and procedures for monitoring and fidelity checks	0	
Sample large enough to detect effect (Cohen, 1992)	1	Sample size would be large enough to detect a Medium effect size, at Power 0.80 for a = 0.05 based on Cohen (1992).
Use of outcome measures that has demonstrably good reliability and validity (2 if more than one measure used)	1	The study utilised the Nelson Denny Reading Test. This measure is widely used to assess reading comprehension skills of adolescents and adults within the United States. Alternate forms reliability has been reported at r = 0.68 for reading rate and r= 0.81 for reading comprehension. However, there is ambiguity amongst researchers as to the reliability and validity of this measure.

**Review framework for quantitative evaluation research**

**Author:** Hsu, H., & Wang, S

**Title:** The impact of using blogs on college students reading comprehension and learning motivation

**Reference:** Hsu, H., & Wang, S. (2010). The impact of using blogs on college students reading comprehension and learning motivation. *Literacy Research and Instruction, 50* (1), 68-88.

<b>Criterion</b>	<b>1 / 0</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Use of a randomised group design	0	No indication in the research article as to how participants were assigned to groups.
Focus on a specific, well defined disorder or problem	1	The study attempted to explore the impact of using blogs on college students reading comprehension skills and motivation to learn.
Comparison with treatment as usual, placebo or less preferably, standard control	1	Comparison with treatment as usual
Use of manuals and procedures for monitoring and fidelity checks	0	Little reference as to the procedure of the intervention and there was no reference as to a manual that was used by teachers or instructors.
Sample large enough to detect effect (Cohen, 1992)	1	No reference to effect size calculations. However, the sample size would have been large enough to detect a Large effect size at Power = 0.80 for a = .05 (Cohens, 1992).
Use of outcome measures that has demonstrably good reliability and validity (2 if more than one measure used)	2	More than one outcome measure was used in the study, for example, COMPASS reading test and Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire. Reliability and validity scores were reported for outcome measures that were used. Original manual for COMPASS assessment provides ‘ psychometric evidence for reliability and validity’.

## Review framework for quantitative evaluation research

**Author:** Perin, D., Bork, R., Peverly, S.T., & Mason, L.H

**Title:** A contextualised curricular supplement for developmental reading and writing

**Reference:** Perin, D., Bork, R., Peverly, S.T., & Mason, L.H. (2013). A contextualised curricular supplement for developmental reading and writing. *Journal of College Reading and Learning*, 43(2), 8-38.

Criterion	1 / 0	Comment
Use of a randomised group design	0	No indication in the research article as to how participants were assigned to groups.
Focus on a specific, well defined disorder or problem	1	Use of summarization in a developmental reading and writing class to improve scores against comparison control
Comparison with treatment as usual, placebo or less preferably, standard control	1	Comparison with treatment as usual
Use of manuals and procedures for monitoring and fidelity checks	0.5	Some indication of the units and procedure of the intervention, however, there was no reference as to a manual that was used by teachers or instructors.
Sample large enough to detect effect (Cohen, 1992)	1	No reference to effect size calculations. However, the sample size would have been large enough to detect a Medium effect size at Power = 0.80 for $\alpha = .05$ (Cohens, 1992).
Use of outcome measures that has demonstrably good reliability and validity (2 if more than one measure used)	1	More than one outcome measure was used in the study, for example, Science Summarisation Test, and the Nelson Denny Reading Rest. However, no reliability or validity information was provided. The study utilised the Nelson Denny Reading Test. This measure is widely used to assess reading comprehension skills of adolescents and adults within the United States. Alternate forms reliability has been reported at $r =$



		0.68 for reading rate and $r = 0.81$ for reading comprehension. However, there is ambiguity amongst researchers as to the reliability and validity of this measure.
--	--	---

## Review framework for quantitative evaluation research

**Author:** Caverly, D.C., Nicholson, S.A., & Radcliffe, R

**Title:** The effectiveness of strategic reading instruction for college developmental readers

**Reference:** Caverly, D.C., Nicholson, S.A., & Radcliffe, R. (2004). The effectiveness of strategic reading instruction for college developmental readers. *Journal of College Reading and Learning*, 35 (1), 25-49.

Criterion	1 / 0	Comment
Use of a randomised group design	0	The research design used to answer research question 1 did not use a control group. However, the research design used to explore research question two utilised a control group but gave no indication whether participants were randomly assigned to these groups.
Focus on a specific, well defined disorder or problem	1	The study examined the short and longitudinal impact of teaching strategic reading to developmental readers.
Comparison with treatment as usual, placebo or less preferably, standard control	1	The intervention group was compared to a treatment as usual group for the second research question.
Use of manuals and procedures for monitoring and fidelity checks	1	There is some indication in the article as to the different sections and units of the intervention. The authors highlight the procedure that took place alongside the PLAN strategy utilised. There is not reference to an intervention manual.
Sample large enough to detect effect (Cohen, 1992)	0.5	No reference is made to effect size calculations. No control group utilised in the first research design to explore research question 1. Sample size for research question 2 would have been large enough to detect effect.
Use of outcome measures that has demonstrably good reliability and	0.5	More than one outcome measure used- these outcome measures were developed by the researcher and

validity (2 if more than one measure used)		therefore no validity or reliability information is provided.
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**Review framework for qualitative evaluative research**

**Author:** Caverly, D.C., Nicholson, S.A., & Radcliffe, R

**Title:** The effectiveness of strategic reading instruction for college developmental readers

**Reference:** Caverly, D.C., Nicholson, S.A., & Radcliffe, R. (2004). The effectiveness of strategic reading instruction for college developmental readers. *Journal of College Reading and Learning*, 35 (1), 25-49.

<b>Criterion</b>	<b>1 / 0</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Appropriateness of research design	1	Researchers interviewed participants to determine their views on the intervention. This provided additional information to the quantitative data from the intervention.
Clear sampling rationale	1	18 participants were included in the telephone interviews based on their involvement in the intervention.
Well executed data collection execution	1	Telephone interviews were conducted by a researcher
Analysis close to the data	0	It is unclear how close to the data the analysis was. No thematic maps were reported or a procedure for the analysis.
Emergent theory related to the problem	1	There appears to be some emergent theory related to the problem, for example, the importance of transfer or reading strategies and the impact of teaching metacognitive awareness.
Evidence of explicit reflexivity	0	No indication or evidence of explicit reflexivity from the researcher
Comprehensive ness of documentation	0	No information as to the nature of the questions asked within the interview / type of interview for example semi structures / structures etc.
Negative case analysis	0	The authors did not report or discuss elements of the data that did not support or fit with their pattern of explanation.
Clarity and coherence of reporting	1	The report was coherent.
Evidence of researcher – participant negotiation	0	There was no explicit mention of researcher participant negotiation for

		example, how the data was going to be utilised or consent.
Transferable conclusions	0	There do not seem to be transferable conclusions from the qualitative aspect of this research.
Evidence of attention to ethical issues	0	There was little evidence of attention paid to ethical issues.

## Review framework for quantitative evaluation research

**Author:** Savery, N.

**Title:** Targeted reading comprehension strategies instruction for raising reading levels in tertiary contexts

**Reference:** Savery, N. (2012). Targeted reading comprehension strategies instruction for raising reading levels in tertiary contexts. *Journal of Academic Language and Learning*, 6 (1), 32-47.

Criterion	1 / 0	Comment
Use of a randomised group design	0	No control or experimental group were utilised in this study. Therefore, students/ participants could not be randomly assigned to groups.
Focus on a specific, well defined disorder or problem	1	The overall aim of the study was to improve learner reading skills and provide participants with knowledge and understanding of reading strategies that they could transfer into further learning.
Comparison with treatment as usual, placebo or less preferably, standard control	0	No control or experimental group were utilised in this study. Therefore, students/ participants could not be randomly assigned to groups.
Use of manuals and procedures for monitoring and fidelity checks	1	The author reported a use of a manual for the intervention – Teaching Adults to Read with Understanding (TEC, 2008)
Sample large enough to detect effect (Cohen, 1992)	0	The sample was not large enough to detect effect and there was no comparison between groups.
Use of outcome measures that has demonstrably good reliability and validity (2 if more than one measure used)	0.5	More than one outcome measure used however there was no information as to the reliability or validity of these measures.

## Review framework for qualitative evaluative research

**Author:** Savery, N.

**Title:** Targeted reading comprehension strategies instruction for raising reading levels in tertiary contexts

**Reference:** Savery, N. (2012). Targeted reading comprehension strategies instruction for raising reading levels in tertiary contexts. *Journal of Academic Language and Learning*, 6 (1), 32-47.

Criterion	1 / 0	Comment
Appropriateness of research design	1	The researcher adopted an Action Research design to explore the intervention implementation within a specific context.
Clear sampling rationale	1	There seemed to be a clear sampling rationale for the study, however, they were sampled from a music course.
Well executed data collection execution	1	The data collection was well executed and thorough utilising open ended questions to determine the student views. This supplemented quantitative data gathering methods.
Analysis close to the data	0	No thematic maps or procedure for the analysis were reported
Emergent theory related to the problem	0.5	There seemed to be some emergent theory based on the views that the students provided, for example, positive evaluation of the learner focused pedagogical approaches utilised.
Evidence of explicit reflexivity	1	Reflexivity in terms of adapting intervention to suit the time constraints of those involved.
Comprehensive ness of documentation	1	The student survey is provided at the end of the research article.
Negative case analysis	0	There was no mention of negative case analysis. This was notable particularly as three students commented that they did not feel that their reading had improved.

Clarity and coherence of reporting	1	There is evidence of clarity and coherent in the reporting of this research.
Evidence of researcher – participant negotiation	0	There was no explicit mention of researcher participant negotiation for example, how the data was going to be utilised or consent.
Transferable conclusions	0	Based on the qualitative data, there were limited transferable conclusions drawn.
Evidence of attention to ethical issues	0	There was little evidence of attention paid to ethical issues.



## Review framework for qualitative investigative research

**Author:** Lesley, M

**Title:** Refugees from reading: students' perceptions of "remedial" literacy pedagogy

**Reference:** Lesley, M. (2004). Refugees from reading: students' perceptions of "remedial" literacy pedagogy. *Reading Research and Instruction*, 44 (1), 62-85.

Criterion	1 / 0	Comment
Appropriateness of research design	1	The researcher conducted the research in an accessible environment where she was a teacher. The aim was to explore the remedial teaching practice within the researchers teaching environment.
Clear sampling rationale	1	Convenience sample. Utilised
Well executed data collection execution	0	There is not real evidence of the data collection process throughout the article.
Analysis close to the data	0	No thematic maps or procedure for the analysis were reported
Emergent theory related to the problem	1	There seemed to be an emergent theory connected to the problem as the views of the participants that being included in interventions made them feel like "incapable learners" and of the importance of developing metacognition.
Evidence of explicit reflexivity (reflecting on own role in the research)	0	There was no evidence of explicit reflexivity. The was particularly apparent as the author did not reflect on how her own role as a teacher may have influenced the participants' response.
Comprehensive ness of documentation (interview questions, maps, tables of data)	0	Very limited information is included in the appendices, only the pre/post test reading interest survey and the "passing criteria rubric for reading 100". These do not impact on the understanding of the data collection methods or analysis procedure.
Negative case analysis	0	No mention
Clarity and coherence of reporting	1	There is evidence of clarity and coherent in the reporting of this research.

Evidence of researcher – participant negotiation	1	Evidence of researcher-participant negotiation included the researcher sharing data with the class to receive feedback and verification of her interpretation.
Transferable conclusions	.5	There appeared to be some transferable conclusions from the research, for example, the importance of metacognitive strategy development.
Evidence of attention to ethical issues	0	There was little evidence of attention paid to ethical issues.

Appendix D: Interview Schedules

A1 Interview 1		
Time in Minutes	Activity	Description
0-5	Introduction	<p><b>Explaining:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The purpose of the interview</li> <li>• What is likely to happen today</li> <li>• That their involvement will be anonymous and confidential</li> <li>• That they can stop at any time</li> <li>• The ground rules</li> </ul> <p><b>Asking:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whether they give verbal and written consent to participate.</li> <li>• Whether they consent for the AI interview to be audio-recorded</li> </ul>
5-15	Ice-breaker activity	To increase the confidence of the young person to ensure they are relaxed and to develop rapport.
15-40	Discovery Stage Visual map	<p>To ask questions related to the Discovery phase of the AI framework. Questions outlined below are prompts and will be used flexibly in order to allow for the emerging dataset to the develop in line with the participant's perceptions. Questions may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tell me about what activities you do in college for reading and writing?</li> <li>• Tell me about reading / writing / spelling in college?</li> <li>• What are the best parts of the reading and writing activities that you do in college?</li> <li>• Tell me about any groups that you're involved with in college?</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can you tell me about somebody who has helped you with your reading and writing? What were the best things about that persons help?</li> <li>• Tell me about a time when you felt confident when you were reading and writing.</li> <li>• Tell me about the help you had at secondary school with your reading and writing.</li> </ul>
40-45	Summary	<p>Ensure the young person understands the research and the ethical protection that they have.</p> <p>Opportunities to add any information if the young person would like to.</p> <p>Opportunity for the young person to ask any questions that they might have.</p> <p>Asking if it's OK to continue with this in the next session.</p>

A1 Interview 2		
Time in Minutes	Activity	Description
0-5	Recap	<p><b>Explaining:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The purpose of the interview</li> <li>• What is likely to happen today</li> <li>• That their involvement will be anonymous and confidential</li> <li>• That they can stop at any time</li> <li>• The ground rules</li> </ul> <p><b>Asking:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whether they still give verbal and written consent to participate.</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Whether they still consent for the AI interview to be audio-recorded</b></li> </ul>
5-10	Ice-breaker activity	<p><b>To increase the confidence of the young person to ensure they are relaxed and to further develop rapport.</b></p>
10-50/55	<p>Dream Stage: Visual map Preparing for Adulthood resources</p> <p>Supporting activities could include: Scaling / ideal self</p>	<p><b>To ask questions related to the Dream phase of the AI process. Questions outlined below will be used flexibly in order to allow for the emerging dataset to develop in line with the participant’s perceptions. Questions may include:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>What would you like to do in the future?</b></li> <li>• <b>What are your goals for the future?</b></li> </ul> <p><b>Prompts</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Employment/job</b></li> <li>- <b>Where will you live?</b></li> <li>- <b>Would you like to join in the community?</b></li> <li>- <b>What about your health?</b></li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>What will you have to be able to do in terms of reading and writing for those things?</b></li> <li>• <b>What are you already doing at college to help with those things? (Prompts – recap from previous week Discovery phase)</b></li> <li>• <b>If you woke up in 5 years time and your reading and writing was just how you wanted it to be, what would you be doing? What would be different for you?</b></li> <li>• <b>If you had three wishes to make college a better place to learn and work, what would they be?</b></li> </ul>

55-60	Summary	<p><b>Ensure the young person understands the research and the ethical protection that they have.</b></p> <p><b>Opportunities to add any information if the young person would like to.</b></p> <p><b>Opportunity for the young person to ask any questions that they might have.</b></p> <p><b>Asking if it's OK to continue with this in the next session.</b></p>
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A1 Interview 3		
Time in Minutes	Activity	Description
0-5	Recap	<p><b>Explaining:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The purpose of the interview</li> <li>• What is likely to happen today</li> <li>• That their involvement will be anonymous and confidential</li> <li>• That they can stop at any time</li> <li>• The ground rules</li> </ul> <p><b>Asking:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whether they still give verbal and written consent to participate.</li> <li>• Whether they still consent for the AI interview to be audio-recorded</li> </ul>
5-10	Ice-breaker activity	<p><b>To increase the confidence of the young person to ensure they are relaxed and to further develop rapport.</b></p>
10-50/55	<p>Design Stage: Visual map Preparing for Adulthood resources</p> <p>Supporting activities could include: Scaling / ideal school/college</p> <p>Stickers</p>	<p><b>To ask questions related to the Design phase of the AI process. Questions outlined below are only prompts and will be used flexibly in order to allow for the emerging dataset to develop in line with the participant's perceptions. Questions may include:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recap of last week's discussion, dreams that were identified.</li> <li>• What do you think college or you could do more of or add in to what you're already doing to help?</li> <li>• How could reading and writing be even better at college?</li> <li>• Can you tell me about the most important things that you think will help you achieve your goals?</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>What could you do to make these steps forwards happen?</b></li> <li>• <b>What could college do to make these first steps happen?</b></li> </ul>
55-60	Summary	<p><b>What is going to happen to the research.</b></p> <p><b>Ensure the young person understands the research and the ethical protection that they have.</b></p> <p><b>Opportunities to add any information if the young person would like to.</b></p> <p><b>Opportunity for the young person to ask any questions that they might have.</b></p> <p><b>Debriefing / what is going to happen to the research.</b></p> <p><b>Finishing activity.</b></p>



## Appendix E: Ethical Approval Confirmation and Related Documentation

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**From:** Ethics Education  
**Sent:** 14 October 2015 09:29  
**To:** [REDACTED]  
**Cc:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** Ethics Approval Application - CONFIRMATION for Medium Risk

Dear Stephanie  
Ref: PGR-7182338  
Project Title: Exploring Young People's Views on their Experiences of Additional Literacy Support in a Further Education Provision Using an Appreciative Inquiry Framework.  
I am pleased to confirm that your ethics application has now been approved by the School Research Integrity Committee (RIC) against a pre-approved UREC template.  
If anything untoward happens during your research then please ensure you make your supervisor aware who can then raise it with the RIC on your behalf.

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### Research Risk and Ethics Assessment

#### Manchester Institute of Education, University of Manchester

The Manchester Institute of Education is committed to developing and supporting the highest standards of research in education and its associated fields. The *Research Risk and Ethics Assessment* (RREA) resource has been created in order to maintain these high academic standards and associated codes of good research practice. The research portfolio within the Manchester Institute of Education (MIE) covers a wide range of fields and perspectives. Research within each of these areas places responsibilities of a differing nature on supervisors and students subject to course, level, focus and participants. The aim of the *Research Risk and Ethics Assessment* is to assist supervisors and students in assessing these factors.

The Manchester Institute of Education has determined three levels of *Research Risk* each of which has a number of associated criteria and have implications for the degree of ethical review required. In general, the research risk level is considered to be:

**High** IF the research focuses on groups within society in need of special support, or where it may be non-standard, or if there is a possibility the research may be contentious in one or more ways.

**Medium** IF the research follows standard procedures and established research methodologies and is considered non-contentious.

**Low** IF the research is of a routine nature and is considered non-contentious.

The form guides you in assessing the research against each of these risk levels in turn. Agreement to proceed with research at each of these levels is provided by an appropriate University Research Ethics Committee, a MIE Research Integrity Committee member, or by the supervisor/tutor respectively.

How to complete the Research Risk and Ethics Assessment (RREA) form.

This form should be completed, in consultation with the MIE *Ethical Practice Policy Guidelines*, by Manchester Institute of Education students and their supervisors in all cases, except where a pre-approved assignment template currently exists. A separate Fieldwork Risk Assessment (FRA) form must be completed if you will be making fieldwork visits but are not able to agree with ALL the criteria in the LOW Risk Fieldwork Statement (Section C). This is so you can plan how safety issues will be responded to during fieldwork visits. The FRA form is available on the MIE ethics intranet. Instructions on this and subsequent stages of the RREA process are provided within each of the following sections.

ANY student

Section A – Summary of Research Proposal (page 1)

Section B – Description of Research (page 2)

Section C – LOW risk Fieldwork Declaration (page 3)

Sections D.0-D.1 – Criteria for HIGH risk research (page 6)

Section D.2 – Criteria for MEDIUM risk research (page 7)

Section D.3 – Criteria for LOW risk research (page 8)

LOW Risk UG / PGT / Doctorate Pilot studies/Research Papers only

Section E.1 – Criteria for LOW risk ethical approval (page 10)

Supervisors and tutor approvals of LOW risk student research

Section E.2 – Supervisor confirmation that research matches LOW risk criteria (page 11)

Minor amendments to MEDIUM OR LOW risk approvals

Section F.1 – Minor Amendments to MEDIUM OR LOW risk approvals (page 12)

It may be appropriate for supervisors and students to review and discuss responses to these questions together from the outset.

Research Risk and Ethics Assessment

Manchester Institute of Education, University of Manchester

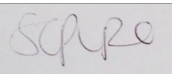
*To be completed by AEF administrator*

<i>RIA reference</i>			
<i>Date received</i>		<i>Date approved</i>	

**SECTION A - SUMMARY OF RESEARCH PROPOSAL**

This section should be completed by the person undertaking the research.

A1. Name of Person/Student:	Stephanie Pipe		
A2. Student ID (quoted on library/ swipe card):	XXXX		
A3. Email Address:	XXXX		
A4. Name of Supervisor:	XXXX		
A5. Supervisor email address:	<a href="#">XXXX</a>		
A6. Programme (e.g. PhD, MEd, MSc, PGCE, BA etc):	Profdoc		
A7. Year of Study	1	A8. Full/Part-time	Full
A9. Course Code/Study type (tick)	EDUC D.Ed.Ch.Psychol	Dissertation	Assignment / Research Paper
			X
A10. Title of Project:	<u>Exploring Young People's Views on their Experiences of Additional Literacy Support in a Further Education Provision Using an Appreciative Inquiry Framework.</u>		
A11. Project Submission Date:	May 2017		
A12. Fieldwork visit dates	Start Date: Upon Ethical Approval	Completion Date: May 2016	

A13. Geographic location(s) where the project will be carried out:	Further Education premises within placement LA
A14. Student Signature:	

The following section to be completed by the SUPERVISOR

A15. Assessed Risk Level	<input type="checkbox"/>	Low	<input type="checkbox"/>	Medium	<input type="checkbox"/>	High	<input type="checkbox"/>	HRA reqd.
A16. Supervisor Signature								
A17. Date								

## SECTION B – DESCRIPTION OF RESEARCH

This section should be completed by the person undertaking the research.

B1. Provide an outline description of the planned research (250 words max).

<p>Principal Research Question(s):</p> <p>What are young people’s perceptions of what works well to support their literacy at college? In what ways do the young people perceive the additional literacy support to be successful? What additional literacy support do the young people identify as important in achieving their aspirations for the future?</p> <p>Academic justification:</p> <p>The UK is reported to have one of the lowest literacy levels for 16-25 age range when compared to over 30 other countries (OECD, 2012), however there is little guidance on best practice in supporting learners in this area or young people’s perceptions on the literacy provision that they receive. This exploratory study will use a multiple case study design to obtain the views of young people at a further education provision about their perception of the best parts of literacy provision and what additional support they might need with literacy to achieve their aspirations. These views will be obtained through an AI informed approach to explore the best of what is and what could be in the future. The researcher will</p>
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B2. The principal research methods and methodologies are (250 words max):

**Project Design:**

The research will use an exploratory multiple case study design with multiple units of analysis. These will be informed by an Appreciative Inquiry (AI) approach.

**Data Collection Methods:**

Semi structured interviews with young people aged 16-25 following an Appreciative Inquiry framework will be used to explore these research questions. It is anticipated that each individual AI interview will last between 50 minutes and one hour and will take place over four sessions. The interviews will be audio taped using a digital audio recorder and the researcher will produce a typed transcript which will be anonymised. The data will be stored on an encrypted data stick, which will be securely stored. There will also be an interview with a member of staff for contextual information

**Sampling:**

Young people in the setting will be recruited to the study by using an opt-in approach. Staff will advertise and explain the study to relevant groups of young people who will then volunteer to take part. Participants will be sent a participant information sheet and an informed consent form alongside the discussion points. These information sheets and consent forms will be provided in a non-written accessible format on an audio file (CD, MP3 etc). Staff at the provision will be asked to read the information sheets to the participants if necessary and play the audio recordings.

**Method(s) of Analysis:**

NB: If your research methods include collection of image or video data, you must complete the Video And Still image REsearch (VASTRE) document (regardless of research risk). See

<http://www.seed.manchester.ac.uk/studentintranet/miestudenthome/integrityethics/stillimageresearch/>

B3. Please indicate which of the following groups are expected to participate in this research:

- |                          |  |
|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Children under 16, <u>other than</u> those in school, youth club, or other accredited organisations. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Adults with learning difficulties, <u>other than</u> those in familiar, supportive environments.     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Adults who are unable to self-consent  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Adults with mental illness/terminal illness/dementia/residential care home                           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Adults or children in emergency situations   |

- Those who could be considered to have a particularly dependent relationship with the researcher
- Prisoners
- Young Offenders
- Other vulnerable groups (please detail)

OR

- None of the above groups are involved in this study

B4. Total number of expected research participants.

Number of different participant groups

(e.g. Teacher, parents, pupils = 3 groups requiring differentiated information/consent sheets)

3
1

B5. The research will take place (tick all that apply):

- within the UK
- within the researcher's home country if outside the UK
- wholly or partly outside the UK and not in the home country of the researcher\*

\* You must complete a separate Fieldwork Risk Assessment form

C. LOW Risk Fieldwork Statement and Declaration

If you are making fieldwork visits, BUT CANNOT TICK ALL the low risk fieldwork criteria in the Statement below, YOU MUST COMPLETE THE SEPARATE FIELDWORK RISK ASSESSMENT (FRA) FORM.

C.1 Fieldwork visits (If you will not make any fieldwork visits, tick the alternative items in C.2)

Fieldwork Statement

I confirm:

X	I will not travel outside the UK or my home nation.
X	I will not visit any country where the Foreign and Commonwealth Office has issued a warning against travel
X	the fieldwork does not require overnight stays in hotels or other types of public temporary accommodation.
X	public and private travel to and from the research location(s) are familiar to me and offer no discernable risk.
X	I will not travel through, or work in research locations which have known hazards to health or safety such as unlit areas, derelict areas, cliffs, or local endemic diseases.
X	I will carry only necessary personal items when travelling to, and within, research locations.
X	no specific vaccinations are required / I have had specific vaccinations required to undertake this research.
X	first aid provision and a trained first aider are available where appropriate.
X	I will only operate machinery / electrical equipment / workplace vehicles, or handle / work with animals, at the research location(s) where I have clear competence to do so / will be under close supervision from a qualified person.
X	the fieldwork will be carried out within normal working hours at a time convenient to participants.

X	I will not give out personal telephone information to participants, or owners of secondary data resources, in relation to the research project
X	I am fully aware of, and sensitive to cultural and religious practices of participant groups, and will act accordingly.
X	this research will not involve fieldwork visits to private homes, other than to those of friends or relatives.
X	this research will not involve fieldwork visits to organisations' premises, other than those with which I have an existing established relationship through placement, employment or volunteering.
X	I will provide a regularly updated fieldwork visit schedule to a nominated University contact, unless visits <u>only</u> involve travel to the homes of friends or relatives.
X	I will carry a Manchester Institute of Education Emergency Contact Information Card during all fieldwork visits, unless visits <u>only</u> involve travel to the homes of friends or relatives.

OR

	I am making fieldwork visits but I am unable to tick ALL the criteria above, I have therefore completed a separate full Fieldwork Risk Assessment (FRA). Go to Section D page 6
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## C.2 No Fieldwork visits

### Fieldwork Statement

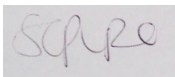
I confirm:

	this research <u>does not</u> involve fieldwork visits of any kind
X	I will not give out personal telephone information to participants, or owners of secondary data resources, in relation to the research project

LOW Risk Fieldwork Declaration:



Students and Supervisors please complete C.3 / C.4 respectively

<b>C.3 Student Declaration:</b>	
By signing this declaration, I declare that the completed statement above is accurate to the best of my knowledge and that I will complete any actions that I have indicated I will complete.	
Signature: 	
Name (in capitals): STEPHANIE PIPE	Date: 01.06.2015
<b>C.4 Supervisor Declaration:</b>	
By signing this declaration, I confirm that I have reviewed the health and safety aspects of this research with this student and that the completed statement above is accurate to the best of my knowledge.	
Signature:	
Name (in capitals):	Date:

## SECTION D – RESEARCH RISK ASSESSMENT

The following sections should be completed by the person undertaking the research in discussion with their supervisor/tutor.

### D.0 – Criteria for research classified as HIGH RISK – Health Research Authority (HRA) review

- |                          |  |
|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | The study involves primary research with adults who are unable to self consent |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | The study involves primary research with NHS patients                          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | The study involves primary research with prisoners/young offenders             |

Students - If any of these options apply, you should complete an HRA application. See your supervisor for further guidance.

Supervisors – Forward this RREA form to [ethics.education@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:ethics.education@manchester.ac.uk) when you are satisfied that the project requires approval through the HRA operated Integrated Research Application System (IRAS).

---

### D.1 – Criteria for research classified as HIGH RISK (tick any that apply)

I confirm that this research:

- |                          |   |
|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | involves vulnerable or potentially vulnerable individuals or groups as indicated in B3  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | addresses themes or issues in respect of participant's personal <i>experience</i> which may be of a sensitive nature (i.e. the research has the potential to create a degree of discomfort or anxiety amongst one or more participants) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | cannot be completed without data collection or associated activities which place the participants at <i>personal</i> risk   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | requires participant informed consent and/or withdrawal procedures which are not consistent with accepted University practice   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | addresses an area where access to personal records (e.g. medical), in collaboration with an authorised person, is not possible  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | involves data collection on an area of public or social objection (e.g. terrorism, paedophilia)   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | makes use of video or other images captured by the researcher, and/or research study participants, where the researcher cannot guarantee controlled access to authorised viewing.   |

If ONE OR MORE of the HIGH risk criteria have been selected DO NOT COMPLETE FURTHER SECTIONS OF THIS FORM. Ethical approval must be sought from a UREC committee. In all other cases, go on to Section D.2.

#### ACTIONS – HIGH RISK RESEARCH

You and your supervisor should first agree this risk assessment.

You should then complete the University Research Ethics Committee (UREC) form (available on the MIE (RIC) ethics intranet site ) and all supporting documents, and give these to your supervisor for review and feedback.

When satisfied with the application, your supervisor will submit:

This completed RREA form

Your completed UREC form – appending ALL supporting documents.

Your completed and approved Fieldwork Risk Assessment (FRA) form - where indicated

These documents should be submitted by your supervisor to:

[Ethics.Education@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:Ethics.Education@manchester.ac.uk)

In doing so, supervisors confirm that they have agreed the assessed risk level and that the documents are complete and correct. The Ethics Administrator will arrange School authorisation for your documents to be submitted to UREC.

D.2 – Criteria for research classified as MEDIUM RISK (tick any that apply)

---

I confirm that this:

X	is research involving children or other vulnerable groups which involves direct contact with participants.
X	study is on a subject that a reasonable person would agree addresses issues of legitimate interest, where there is a possibility that the topic may result in distress or upset in <u>rare</u> instances.
	is research which involves substantial direct contact with adults in non-professional roles (eg parents).
	is research which focuses on data collection from professionals responding to questions <u>outside</u> of their professional concerns.
	is research with practitioners involving topics of a sensitive nature which are not personal to these participants.
	involves visits to site(s) where a specific risk to participants has been identified, and the researcher may not be closely supervised throughout

If ONE OR MORE of the MEDIUM risk criteria have been selected, DO NOT COMPLETE FURTHER SECTIONS OF THIS FORM. Ethical approval must be sought from the Manchester Institute of Education (MIE) Research Integrity Committee (RIC). In all other cases, go on to Section D.3.

**ACTIONS – MEDIUM RISK RESEARCH**

You and your supervisor should first agree this risk assessment.

You should then complete the MIE Ethical Approval Application form (available on the MIE Ethics Intranet) and all supporting documents, and give these to your supervisor for review and feedback.

When satisfied with the application, your supervisor will submit:

This completed RREA form

Your completed MIE form – appending ALL supporting documents.

Your completed and approved Fieldwork Risk Assessment (FRA) form - where indicated

These documents should be submitted by your supervisor to:

[Ethics.Education@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:Ethics.Education@manchester.ac.uk)

In doing so, supervisors confirm that they have agreed the assessed risk level and that the documents are complete and correct. The Ethics Administrator will arrange review of your documents to be undertaken by a member of the MIE Research Integrity Committee and approval against our UREC Ethics Templates.

### D3 – Criteria for research classified as LOW RISK

---

#### D 3.1 NO human participants

I confirm that this research (tick as appropriate):

is Secondary research (i.e. it will use material that has already been published or is in the public domain).

is Secondary data analysis (i.e. it will involve data from an established data archive)

If you have ticked one of the options in D3.1 above, and D3.2 does not apply, you should now complete section D3.3 below.

#### D3.2 Human participants

I confirm that this (tick as appropriate):

research does not constitute high nor medium risk to the participants, as indicated by the criteria provided in sections D.0, D.1 and D.2 respectively.

a reasonable person would agree that the study addresses issues of legitimate interest without being in any way likely to inflame opinion or cause distress

- is research on my practice (involving data collection on issues relating to my professional role, or for comparison against national or other targets or standards) in a setting where I am employed or on a placement.
- is research on the professional practice of others in professional roles and is conducted in my work / placement setting.
- is Market research (i.e. the research may involve data collection from the general public approached or observed in public locations for the purposes of market investigation).
- is research using a questionnaire completed and returned by participants who will have no direct contact with me.
- is part of a research methods course and participant groups are limited to peers, colleagues, family members and friends.
- is a Pilot Study

### D 3.3 Research context

I confirm (tick as appropriate):

- I am not in a position to coerce potential participants/secondary data owners
- the research involves no vulnerable group (as indicated in question B3).

Doctoral THESIS Students ONLY

*UG / PGT / Doctorate Pilot study or  
Research papers involving ONLY LOW  
RISK CRITERIA, go to Section E.1.*

If ONE OR MORE of the LOW risk criteria above have been selected, ethical approval must be sought from the Manchester Institute of Education (MIE) Research Integrity Committee (RIC).

#### ACTIONS – LOW RISK DOCTORAL RESEARCH

You and your supervisor should first agree this risk assessment.

You should then complete the MIE Ethical Approval Application form (available on the MIE Ethics Intranet) and all supporting documents, and give these to your supervisor for review and feedback.

When satisfied with the application, your supervisor will submit:

This completed RREA form

Your completed MIE form – appending ALL supporting documents.

Your completed and approved Fieldwork Risk Assessment (FRA) form - where indicated

These documents should be submitted by your supervisor to:

[Ethics.Education@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:Ethics.Education@manchester.ac.uk)

In doing so, supervisors confirm that they have agreed the assessed risk level and that the documents are complete and correct. The Ethics Administrator will arrange review of your documents to be completed by a member of the MIE Research Integrity Committee for approval against our UREC Templates.

#### SECTION E. Ethical Approval Application for LOW risk research

UG / PGT Research OR Doctorate Pilot Studies/Research Papers

Section E.1 to be completed by students. Section E.2 to be completed by supervisors/tutors

#### E. 1 Research ethics criteria

Tick as appropriate and/or indicate NA against items in bold where they do not apply to this research.

I confirm:

Codes of Practice

- |                          |   |
|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | I have read and understood the Manchester Institute of Education Ethical Practice and Policy Guidelines |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | I will abide by the Manchester Institute of Education's Ethical Protocol detailed therein               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | I am aware of and will abide by any organisation's codes of conduct relevant to this research           |

Researcher skills/checks

- |                          |   |
|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | all necessary training procedures for this research have been completed   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | all appropriate permissions have been obtained to use any database or resource to be analysed in Secondary research |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | all relevant enhanced DBS or other checks have been completed   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | I will inform the Ethics Administrator if my DBS (or related) status changes  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | permission to be on the site to conduct research has been received  |

Rights of participants

- |                          |  |
|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | participant information sheets (PIS), consent forms, questionnaires, and all other documentation relevant to this research <u>have been discussed with supervisor/tutor named in A.5</u>   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | PIS and consent forms <u>have been confirmed with the supervisor named in A.5</u> , as covering required headings illustrated in the MIE Participant Information and consent templates, AND that they are written in an accessible way for <u>each</u> proposed participant group. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | I understand the Data Protection Act and the University Data Protection Policy and all data will be handled confidentially and securely, including storage on encrypted devices.   |

Research Integrity

- |                          |  |
|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | no data will be collected before ethical approval of the study is confirmed by my supervisor/tutor |
|--------------------------|--|



	I will immediately report any issues arising during the course of the study that conflict with the MIE protocol, to my supervisor who has signed the ethics approval, and suspend data collection pending advice from that supervisor/tutor
	I will report any proposed deviation from the research specification outlined in this assessment to my supervisor/tutor to update the current assessment or clarify any need for further approvals BEFORE such changes are made

Research output

	the <u>only</u> publication/output from this <u>research on my practice or research methods study</u> will be my assignment or dissertation.
	the <u>only</u> publication/output from this <u>research on professional practice / market research / questionnaire survey</u> will be my assignment or dissertation <u>unless</u> consent has been obtained from participants for further dissemination.

ACTION: LOW RISK RESEARCH

You should email your final, completed RREA form (with ALL required supporting documents appended to it, including your research proposal, or equivalent document giving full details of the research) to your supervisor.

Your supervisor will first agree that this is LOW risk research. They will then, confirm that your proposed research matches our LOW RISK ethics criteria and that in doing so, that it is approved under our UREC ethics templates.

Your supervisor will send you an email to confirm this assessment.

The ethics administrator will send formal confirmation of approval once all relevant documents have been received.

E.2 Supervisor confirmation that research matches LOW risk criteria above.

---

When satisfied that the assessment is correct, supervisors should complete this section.

**SUPERVISOR ACTION: LOW RISK RESEARCH**

1. Confirm items in bold by ticking or marking as NA if not applicable to this research, and one or more of the specific research criteria as appropriate.

I confirm:

- This submission has been discussed and agreed with the student undertaking the research.
- The student has had appropriate training and has the skills to undertake this study, or has close, qualified supervision in place.
- The research activities outlined in the proposal involve no substantive risks to the student researcher or potential participants.

AND one or more of the following as appropriate:

- This research will not address issues of public or social objection, or of a sensitive nature.
- Information giving and consent taking processes follow Manchester Institute of Education guidance.
- Where fieldwork visits do not correspond to ALL items in the LOW Risk Fieldwork Declaration, a separate Fieldwork Risk Assessment form has been completed and approved.
- This secondary research assignment/project has appropriate resource or database access permissions.
- I will act as custodian for data used for any study that results in a publication (Masters/PhD dissertation or other output) and will arrange for archiving of data with MIE for a minimum period of 5 years.

Confirm that the proposed research matches the low risk ethics criteria (indicated in E.1) and that the documents supplied are complete and correct.

<i>Please specify:</i>	
Number submitted	Documents

1	Completed RREA form
1	Student research proposal, or equivalent, on which the assessment is based
	Completed and approved Fieldwork Risk Assessment form - <i>where indicated</i>
	Supporting documents:
	Draft questionnaire / interview topic guide / other data collection tools
	Recruitment email / advertisement
	Participant Information Sheet / page / letter (PIS) for each group
	Consent form (or alternative) for each participant group

<i>Supervisor's signature:</i>		<i>Date:</i>	
--------------------------------	--	--------------	--

3. Submit for confirmation of Approval to [ethics.education@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:ethics.education@manchester.ac.uk) :

To validate this confirmation of approval a full set of documents must be submitted electronically for archiving and audit.

NB: The Ethics Administrator can only provide formal confirmation of ethical approval via email to both student and supervisor when a complete set of documents are supplied. Copies of all documents should be retained by the supervisor.

## F.1 Minor amendments to LOW risk research design

<i>RIA reference</i>			
<i>Date received</i>		<i>Date approved</i>	

Any minor amendment to low risk approved research submissions should be detailed below.

LOW risk research amendments should be checked and agreed by the supervisor as constituting a ‘minor’ change then signed-off below. Substantial changes to research will require a reassessment and revised ethical approvals. This revised copy of the RREA showing the approved amendments, and any amended/additional supporting documents, should be forwarded electronically to the ethics administrator at [ethics.education@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:ethics.education@manchester.ac.uk).

The Ethics Administrator will provide formal acknowledgement of approval of the change by email. A copy should be retained by the supervisor.

To be completed if/when applicable:

<i>Minor amendment to assessed research agreed (1):</i>			
<i>Details of amendment</i>			
<i>This section will record any applications made during the life time of the Project regarding minor changes from what was approved.</i>			
<i>Supervisor's signature:</i>		<i>Date:</i>	

Manchester Institute of Education

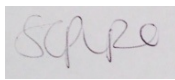
Ethical Approval Application Form

This ethical approval application form has been revised to incorporate changes made to the new University Research Ethics Committee (UREC) Form. It has been

designed to incorporate prompts for information needed to ascertain whether the proposed research matches MIE's research template pre-approved by UREC and to facilitate completion of the form to a standard that will allow speedier review, and approvals, by RIC members. Please follow all directions contained in this document.

Section 1: Student Details / Identification of the person responsible for the research.

Name of Student:	Stephanie Pipe
Student ID (quoted on library/ swipe card):	XXXX
<i>Email Address:</i>	<a href="#">XXXX</a>
<i>Name of Supervisor:</i>  <i>Supervisor email:</i>	XXXX  <a href="#">XXXX</a>
<i>Programme (PhD, Prof Doc, MEd, PGCE, MSc, BA etc):</i>	Prof Doc
Year of Study	2014 (1)
Full/Part-time	Full
Title of Research Project:	<u>Exploring Young People's Views on their Experiences of Additional Literacy Support in a Further Education Provision Using an Appreciative Inquiry Framework.</u>
Recruitment and Data Collection	Start Date: <i>On receipt of confirmation of ethical approval</i> End Date: May 2016
Location(s) where the project will be carried out:	Further Education premises within placement LA.

Student Signature:	
Supervisor Signature:**  Date:	

\*\* Supervisor signature confirms that the student has the relevant experience, knowledge and skills to carry out the study in an appropriate manner

## Section 1: Project Details

### *1: Aims and Objectives*

#### 1.1 Research Question

1. What are young people's perceptions of what works well to support their literacy at college?
2. In what ways do the young people perceive the additional literacy support to be successful?
3. What additional literacy support do the young people identify as important in achieving their aspirations for the future?

#### 1.2. Academic justification

The extension of the Educational Psychologist's role into 16-25 education provision represents 'one of the most significant developments the profession has ever experienced (Atkinson et al, 2015, p. 159). There is very little evidence of the provision that FE colleges offer for learners with additional needs, more specifically for this study 16-25 learners with additional literacy needs. The UK is reported to have one of the lowest literacy levels for 16-25 age range when compared to over 30 other countries (OECD, 2012), however there is little guidance on best practice in supporting learners in this area. Furthermore, legislation highlights that it is now imperative that young people's views are at the centre of their educational provision and experiences (SEN Code of Practice, DfE/DoH, 2015). There is also limited research exploring young people's perceptions on the literacy provision that they receive in education. This exploratory study will obtain valuable qualitative data regarding these topics in order to develop themes around young people perceive are the best parts of the literacy provision that FE offers and what additional support they might need with literacy to achieve their future aspirations. The study will serve to develop knowledge and inform practice in a local context of educational professionals and educational psychologists.

## 2. Methodology

### 2.1 Project Design:

The research will use an exploratory case study design with multiple units of analysis informed by Yin (2009) to investigate young people's perceptions of current FE practices used to support their literacy needs. Yin (2009) highlights that case studies can be used to allow in-depth study of a particular instance, in this case, perceptions of additional literacy provision. Robson (2002) also advocated for the use of case studies in the exploratory stages of research. The units of analysis will be informed by an Appreciative Inquiry (A1) approach and will involve AI interviews with 3 young people aged 16-25 and a contextual interview with a key member of staff.

### 2.2 Data Collection Methods:

Describe the research procedures/activities as they affect the study participant and any other parties involved. Which of the following will your research involve and what will you be asking your participants to do.

#### 2.2.1. *Interviews*

Yes

No

Semi structured interviews with young people aged 16-25 following an Appreciative Inquiry framework will be used to explore these research questions. Interviews allow participants to discuss and explore their own perspectives and allow for a deeper understanding of the topic. In line with a critical realist perspective, semi structured interviews will be utilised as this method allows the researcher to collect information regarding the context alongside gathering perspectives of participants (Robson, 2002). AI is a useful framework when a researcher is asking questions such as ‘what’s going on here that can be appreciated’ (Robson, 2001). This is in line with the current project’s aims in appreciating what is already happening in FE contexts from young people’s perspectives. Cooperrider, Whitney and Stavros (2003) indicate that AI ‘can make a difference with a single person or with any collective human system’. The main model that has come to be associated with AI is the 4-D cycle (Cooperrider & Whitney 1999, Cooperrider et al, 2005)/ Cooperrider et al (2005) define the four phases of this cycle as:

- **Discovery** – *exploring the best of what is and what has been.*
- **Dream** – *Imagining what could be.*
- **Design** – *Determining what should be.*
- **Destiny/Delivery** – *Creating what will be.*

The AI process aims to identify strengths that exist in a system, locate possible change within and emphasises examples of best practice which may illuminate avenues to enable positive change to occur (Coglan et al, 2003). It is anticipated that each individual AI interview will last between 50 minutes and one hour and will take place over three sessions. The fourth session will involve feeding back to professionals at the college. The interviews will be audio taped using a digital audio recorder and the researcher will produce a typed transcript which will be anonymised.

2.2.2. Questionnaires

Yes

No

*If Yes, how will these be delivered to and collected from participants? (Append your draft questionnaire(s)):*

2.2.3. Observations

Yes

No

*If Yes, describe the context for the observation and what participants will be engaged in. (Append copy of any observation framework or other data collection guide to be used):*

2.2.4. Diary

Yes

No



*If Yes, describe the context for use of the diary and what participants will be asked to do. (Append copy of the Diary instructions and format):*

2.2.5. *Intervention* Yes  No

*If Yes, describe the intervention and what participants will be asked to do. (Append a detailed description and any images necessary to support the description):*

2.2.6. *Assessments* Yes  No

*If Yes, give full details of the assessment(s) and what participants will be asked to do. (Append a copy of the assessment schedules to be used):*

2.2.7. *Other* Yes  No

2.2.8. Does data collection use video or still image? Yes  No

If Yes, complete the VASTRE documentation - Available from:

<http://www.seed.manchester.ac.uk/studentintranet/miestudenthome/integrityethics/stillimageresearch/>

2.2.9 Research Experience

Interview techniques have been studied and used before by the researcher within the D.Ed.Ch.Psychol course. The researcher has also studied this data collection method and analysis during a Masters qualification (M.Ed Psychology of Education). The researcher also has practical experience conducting interviews for research purposes (undergraduate degree) and of interacting with and gathering data and information from children and young people in a work related capacity both during and prior to the D.Ed.Ch.Psychol qualification. The research has just completed an A1 assignment for the D.Ed.Ch.Psychol qualification involving interviews and

### 2.3 Sampling

What type of sampling method do you propose to use?

2.3.1. Statistical

Yes  No

*If Yes, describe the type, your justification for taking this approach and proposed sample size:*

2.3.2. Other

Yes  No

#### *Purposive Sampling.*

Purposive and opportunistic sampling will be used as an experienced senior EP with responsibility for 16-25 develop within the LA will signpost the researcher to provisions and professionals who are currently supporting additional literacy needs and who are seen to show examples of best practice within the area. Upon ethical approval, potential participants will be invited to participate in the study through the use of an advertisement which will be shown to potential participants by staff. Those interested in participating in the interviews and sent a participant information sheet and an informed consent form alongside the discussion points. These information sheets and consent forms will also be provided in accessible formats e.g. audio recordings. The data that is collected through the interviews will be transcribed and analysed using thematic analysis. A maximum of 4 participants will be recruited (including 1 participant for pilot study)

### 2.4 Analysis method

What type of analyses do you propose to use to explore this data?

2.4.1. Quantitative analyses

Yes  No

*If Yes, please give details:*

2.4.2. Qualitative analyses

Yes  No

For the AI interview process, themes will be generated through collaboration between the young people and the researcher in the hope that these be co-constructed in order to remain close to the data and reflect the perspectives of the participating young people. This will allow for transparency within process and provide a narrative of the AI interviews. Utilising visuals such as post-it notes, memo writing and mind maps the researcher will clarify and summarise themes as the participants are talking within the AI interview. These will then be revisited at the end of each AI interview and recorded. This will also allow for member checking of the themes that are created throughout the process. This information will then be used to inform the following AI interviews to ensure that previous narratives are taken into consideration. This process is in line with other research that has been conducted applying an AI framework to working with young people on an individual basis (Harris, 2012). One of the phases of the AI process will then be chosen for the thesis write up due to the nature and scope of the thesis assignment. This focus element will be transcribed and analysed using thematic analysis alongside the participant generated themes.

## 2.5 Ethical Issues

All participants will be given an information sheet describing the nature of the research at least 2 weeks before requiring consent for the study. This will allow them the opportunity to ask questions or express any concerns to the researcher. This will be enabled through an identified key liaison member of staff within the provision. Due to the literacy demands that may be involved in reading the consent forms and information sheets, the researcher will ensure this key adult goes through these with the participants. The researcher will also provide an audio recording of the information sheet to ensure access. Participants will be informed of their right to withdraw without having to give a reason at any point during the proceedings. Informed consent will be collected from all participants who participate in the study. Consent will be viewed as an on-going process rather than a singular process and will be referred to at the beginning of each AI interview with each participant. The researcher will ensure that participants are aware of issues surrounding confidentiality and anonymity and that any case examples should be given anonymously. In rare instances the topics of conversation probed by the research questions may incur upset, if this were to occur, the research is equipped to handle this situation in a sensitive manner due to previous and current professional experience. The researcher will develop scripts to support student distress or issues of negative self image and will be prepared to signpost to various other channels of support for the young person. If something were to arise outside the scope of the researcher's experience, the researcher will seek supervision from university supervisor and the placement supervisor where appropriate. If the researcher feels that distress is being caused through the interview process, it will be immediately ceased. The researcher will be equipped to signpost to any appropriate agencies or professionals if the participant requires any further support. Considering that AI is a 'strengths based' framework and design, it is not anticipated that this will cause upset, distress or risk.

## Participant details

### 3.1 Characteristics of participants

Please specify the characteristics of the participants you wish to recruit.

number	4
sex	m/f
age group(s)	16-25
Location(s)	FE provision where the young people attend

### 3.2 Vulnerable groups

3.2.1. Will your project include participants from either of the following groups?

(Tick as appropriate)

- Children under 16 in school, youth club or other accredited organisation.
- Adults with learning difficulties in familiar, supportive environments
- NONE OF THE ABOVE (go to item 4.)

### 3.2.2. Inclusion of vulnerable groups

*Please describe measures you will undertake to avoid coercion during the recruitment stage.*

### 3.2.3. Research in UK with vulnerable groups

Please confirm you have relevant clearance for working with vulnerable groups from DBS and/or other relevant sources.

DBS*	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	NA	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Other	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	NA	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

*If Other, please describe*

\*NB: You will need a DBS application through the University. Any work related DBS clearance is not valid for your University research.

3.2.4. Please confirm that you will notify the Administrator for Ethics and Fieldwork (AEF) immediately if your DBS status changes.

I will immediately notify the AEF if my DBS status changes

NA

#### 4. Recruitment

##### Permissions

Do you have permission to collect data from an organisational fieldwork site from...

4.1.1. The organisation where the research will take place

(e.g. School head etc)? Yes  NA

4.1.2. Sub-settings within the organisation (e.g. class teacher etc)? Yes  
NA

If Yes, append letter/email confirming access to this application

*Permission has not yet been sought. After ethical approval is granted, the researcher will seek permission of the relevant staff to conduct this research.*

4.2.1. How will your pool of potential participants be identified? (tick all that apply)

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Letters/ emails and follow up phone calls to organisations
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Posters / Advertisements
<input type="checkbox"/>	Website/Internet (including Facebook/other social media)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Known or named client groups (students, etc).
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Networks and recommendations
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Person in a position of authority in organisation
<input type="checkbox"/>	Directory/database/register in public domain

Following confirmation of ethical approval letters/emails will be sent FE provisions via the LA. Upon ethical approval participant information letters and consent forms and audio recordings will be provided to the key liaison professional to supply to participants. Follow up phone calls to the provision will be made via the local authority 2 weeks after participant information and consent forms have been sent.

Participant recruitment

4.2.2. Who will the potential participants be?

<input type="checkbox"/>	Persons unknown to the researcher
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Client groups (students, etc) within an organisation known by the researcher
<input type="checkbox"/>	Persons accessed through networks and recommendations
<input type="checkbox"/>	Persons nominated by a position of authority
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (describe here) :
None	

4.2.3. How will you approach potential participants? (tick all that apply)

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Letter
<input type="checkbox"/>	Email
<input type="checkbox"/>	Website/internet (including Facebook/other social media site)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Presentation at meeting or similar
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (describe here):

Indicate how information about your study will be delivered to potential participants and how they will (directly or indirectly) let you know they would like to take part in your research.

Information sheets and consent forms will be given to potential participants and they will be given 2 weeks to read over these and ask any questions or raise any concerns with the researcher via the key liaison adult or directly via the email supplied on the information sheets. The researcher will also go to the FE provision on an assigned day to speak to potential participants about the study and answer any questions they may have. If participants consent to being involved in the study, the key adult will collect consent forms and the researcher will pick them up directly.

Append text of letters / emails/ posters / advertisements / presentation etc



Information giving will be undertaken by:

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	the researcher
<input type="checkbox"/>	someone in a position of authority
<input type="checkbox"/>	a neutral third party to known or named client groups
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (describe here):

#### 4.2.4

Contact will be made from the researcher and to the researcher via email.

How will you ensure those interested in the research are fully informed about the study and what will be expected of them if they take part?

Information giving will be undertaken through:

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Letter
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Email
<input type="checkbox"/>	Website/internet (including Facebook/other social media site)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Telephone
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Information sheet (covering headings in University template)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Presentation at meeting or similar
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (describe here):

Append text of recruitment letters / emails / information sheet to this application

Participants will be provided with information sheets and consent forms 2 weeks prior to being asked to send their consent. The researcher will also be available via email through liaison with the key adults in the provision to answer any questions that participants may have in regards to the study. The participants may also contact the researcher directly via the email provided if they prefer. The researcher will also attend the college to present the research and answer any questions young people might have. A further explanation of this will take place at the beginning of each interview reminding participants of what they have consented for and giving another opportunity to ask any questions.

#### 4.2.5 Information accessibility

Information sheets are clearly and appropriately worded. However, if participants need the information to be presented in a different format, this will be arranged as necessary. Information sheets will also be audio recorded and given to participants to ensure access. Participants will receive the information and consent forms 2 weeks in advance, to enable them to be fully informed about the nature of the study. The researcher will be available to answer questions over the phone (via the LA office) or by email through the key adult at the provision or directly from the participants themselves.

Please confirm:

- |                                     |   |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | I have supplied information relevant to each participating group  |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | The information provided follows the guidance provided in the University of Manchester Participant Information Sheet Template |

#### 4.2.6 Decision period

How long will the participant have to decide whether to take part in the study?

At least two weeks to ensure informed consent.

#### 4.2.7. Incentives

State any payment or any other incentive that is being made to any study participant. *No incentive will be given.*

4.2.8 Avoiding coercion

Participants will be invited to participate 2 weeks before being asked for consent. They will be given an information sheets indicating the research process and topic and highlighting the researchers contact details. Participants will be able to ask questions to the researcher via email at any point. Participants will be made aware that they are in no way required to participate and they are free to withdraw at any part of the process. This will again be repeated at the beginning of each interview.

The information sheet will be clear in stating that participation in the study is voluntary and that they are under no obligation to participate in the study.

4.3. Consent

4.3.1 How will participants’ consent to take part be recorded?

- Implied consent - return/submission of completed questionnaire
- Written consent form matching University template
- Verbally (give details of how this will be recorded)
- Other method (give details here):

Append text of consent forms/consent taking procedure to this application.

Please confirm:

- My consent taking procedures are relevant to each participating group
- The consent taking procedures follow the guidance provided in the University of Manchester Consent Form Template

4.3.2 Special arrangements

Please outline **any special consent taking arrangements** relevant to your research study.

The researcher will read the consent form out to each participant at the beginning of each AI interview to ensure consent is an ongoing process. This verbal consent will be recorded via the digital recording device used within each AI interview.

## 5. *Participation in the research*

### Duration

The interviews will last appropriately 50-60 minutes.

The staff interview will last approximately 30 minutes.

### Benefits to participation

Benefits to the participants may include information sharing and knowledge development that may influence practice. Increased awareness of the Local Authority to the support that young people identify as best practice and additional support they might need. Advocating for the voice of young people and their contribution to their own educational experience. Allowing time to talk about their own experiences and aspirations.

### Deficits to participation

It is possible that the young people involved in the study will miss something important at the FE provision. However, the interviews will take place at a time and place that is most convenient to the participants in an attempt to avoid this. The discussion points may also bring up issues or problems for the participants around their literacy difficulties.

## 6. *Risks and Safeguards*

Please outline any adverse effects or risks for participants in respect of the methods you have indicated in Section 2B [Interview; Questionnaire; Interventions; Assessments; Observation; Diary keeping; Other activity]

### Physical risks

#### 6.1.1 Potential

Risk assessments for the room where the interview will take place will be conducted to ensure the location is suitable. A time and place that is convenient to all/the majority of participants will be arranged.

#### 6.1.2 Safeguards

What **precautions or measures** have been taken to minimise or mitigate the risks identified above?

Risk assessments as outlined above. The time and place for the interview will be arranged so as to have the least impact as possible on the participants' schedule.

### 6.2 Psychological risks

#### 6.2.1 Potential

Will any topics discussed (questionnaire, group discussion or individual interview) **potentially** be sensitive, embarrassing or upsetting, or **is it possible** that criminal or other disclosures requiring action could take place during the project?

There is a small possibility that participant's previous experiences of literacy difficulties or literacy support may be sensitive or upsetting. Appreciatively Inquiry is focused on exploring the best of what is ultimately strengths based. The dream stage also allows participants to think about the future and what could be, therefore it is hoped that this will be a positive experience for participants. If upset or distress were to occur the researcher will be prepared to handle this in a sensitive manner through experience prior to commencing the D.Ed.Ch.Psych and also experience in her current training as a trainee educational psychologist. This role involves discussions that are sensitive in nature and can involve topics that are upsetting for others. If a participant was to become distressed the interview will be terminated immediately. The researcher will be develop scripts to support student distress or issues of negative self image and will be prepared to signpost to various other relevant agencies or professionals to offer channels of support for the young person .

### 6.2.2 Safeguards

What **precautions or measures** have been taken to minimise or mitigate the risks identified above?

Participants will be reminded prior to each interview of their right to withdraw at any point during the research process. All transcripts and quotes from the interview will be transcribed anonymously. The researcher will be available after the interview if any participant wishes to raises concerns or questions. The information sheet will also provide information if participants wish to seek any advice after reading the information or after the interview has taken place. The researcher is equipped to handle potentially upsetting situations in a sensitive manner due to professional experience both currently and prior to admission on to D.Ed.Ch.Psychol. The researcher will also be equipped to signpost participants to other agencies or professionals for support.

Participants will be made aware that although anonymity is assured, confidentiality may be breeched under certain circumstances (i.e. if a disclosure to the person's or someone else's safety is encountered).

### 6.3 Risks for you as researcher

It is important that the potential for adverse effects, risks or hazards, pain, discomfort, distress, or inconvenience, of a physical or psychological nature to you as the researcher have been assessed. This is a requirement by law. Risks to you are identified as part of the RREA/FRA process. Ensure this assessment has been completed by either:

a completed and approved Fieldwork Risk Assessment (FRA), or

a signed Low Risk Fieldwork Declaration in Section D of RREA form.

Briefly state here the conclusions of your assessment and append a copy of your approved FRA form (if required), in addition to your RREA, to this application:

There are not considered to be any fieldwork risks however the research agrees to follow all identified procedures to ensure their own and participants' safety on fieldwork visits.

#### 6.4 Early termination of the research

##### 6.4.1 Criteria

What are the criteria for electively stopping the research prematurely?

Although not anticipated, the research will be terminated immediately if the participant becomes distressed or upset.

6.4.2 Please confirm, by ticking here, that:

any adverse event requiring radical change of method/design or abandonment will be reported in the first instance to your research supervisor and then to the MIE RIC Chair

#### 7. *Data Protection and confidentiality*

### 7.1 Data activities and storage of personal data

Will the study use any of the following activities at any stage?

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Electronic transfer by email or computer networks
<input type="checkbox"/>	Use of personal addresses, postcodes, faxes, e-mails or telephone numbers
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Publication of direct quotations from respondents
<input type="checkbox"/>	Publication of data that might allow identification of individuals
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Use of audio/visual recording devices
<input type="checkbox"/>	Sharing data with other organisations
<input type="checkbox"/>	Export of data outside EU

Will the study store **personal** data on any of the following?

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Manual files
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Home or other personal computers
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Laptop computers

### 7.2 Confidentiality of personal data

What measures have been put in place to ensure confidentiality of personal data? *Give details of whether any encryption or other anonymisation procedures have been used and at what stage?*

Data transcription and any written information will be fully anonymised. Audio recordings of the interviews group will be stored in a secure location (a locked cupboard) and destroyed after transcription. Any electronic copies of this transcription will be stored temporarily in an encrypted file on a password protected laptop or password protected USB stick. Audio recordings and transcriptions will be destroyed after the transcription phase is complete.

Email addresses that are used to liaise with the provision or participants will be stored and kept separately from the data collected and will be deleted upon completion of the research.

### 7.3 Research monitoring and auditing Please confirm:

The student researcher's supervisor(s) will monitor the research

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
-------------------------------------





*If other arrangements apply please specify:*

#### 7.4 Data Protection

Please provide confirmation that you will employ measures that comply with the Data Protection Act and the University Data Protection Policy (UDPP)?

Data Protection Act: I confirm that all Data collected will be:

- |                                     |  |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Fairly and lawfully processed  |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Processed for limited purposes as outlined in this application and only used in the way(s) for which consent has been given. |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Adequate for the purpose, relevant and not excessive   |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Accurate   |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Not kept longer than necessary   |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Processed in accordance with the participant's rights  |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Secure – on an encrypted storage device  |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Only transferred to other settings with appropriate protection.  |

University Data Protection Policy (UDPP): I confirm

- |                                     |  |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | My data and its storage will comply with the UDPP  |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Paper copies of data and encrypted storage devices will be stored in a locked draw or cupboard |

*For UG research:* On completion of my research, the data will be kept until the study has been completed and will then be shredded/destroyed

For PGT/PGR research: On completion of my research, the data will be passed to my supervisor for archiving at the University for a period of 5 years after which it will be shredded/destroyed

7.5 Privacy during data analysis Please confirm:

Analysis will be undertaken by the student researcher

Analysis will take place in a private study area

*If other arrangements apply please describe:*

N/A

7.6 Custody and control of the data Please confirm:

The student researcher's supervisor will have custody of the data

The student researcher will have control of the data

*If other arrangements apply please describe:*

7.7 Access to the data

The student researcher will have access to the data

The student's supervisor(s) will have access to anonymised data

*If other/additional arrangements apply, please describe:*

7.8 Use of data in future studies

Will the data be stored for use in future studies? Yes  No

If Yes, confirm this is addressed in the information giving/consent taking process by ticking here.

## 8. Reporting Arrangements

### 8.1 Dissemination

How do you intend to report and disseminate the results of the study?

*(Tick all that apply)*

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Peer reviewed scientific journals
<input type="checkbox"/>	Book / Chapter contribution
<input type="checkbox"/>	Published review (ESRC, Cochrane)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Internal report
<input type="checkbox"/>	Conference presentation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Thesis/dissertation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Other e.g Creative works (describe here):  Anonymous information will also be feedback to the Local Authority to inform practice within the Educational Psychology Service.

### 8.2 Participant and community feedback

How will the results of research be made available to research participants and communities from which they are drawn? *(Tick all that apply)*

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Written feedback to research participants
<input type="checkbox"/>	Presentation to participants or relevant community groups
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other e.g. Video/Website (describe here):

## 9. Research Sponsorship

### 9.1 External funding

Are you in receipt of any external funding for your study? (tick one)

External Funding       No external funding

If you have funding please provide details:

Organisation	
UK Contact	
Amount	
Duration	

### 9.2 Sponsoring organisation

Who will be responsible for governance and insuring the study? (tick one)

The University of Manchester     

Other organisation     

<p><b>If not UoM</b>, provide details of who will act as sponsor of the research and their insurance details</p>
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## 10. Conflict of Interest

Have any conflicts of interest been identified in relation to this project? (tick at least one option)

Payment for doing this research?

*If so, how much and on what basis?*

Direct personal involvement in the research of a spouse/funder?

*If so, please provide details:*

Does your department/the University receive payment (apart from costs)?

*If so, please provide details:*

NONE of the ABOVE APPLY

Thank you

This is the end of the form

Please use the checklist below to ensure that you append all necessary supporting documents

#### CHECKLIST

Please tick to indicate whether the document is APPENDED OR NOT APPLICABLE for this application.

Documents	Appended	
	Total Number	NA
Data collection instruments		
Draft copy of each data collection instrument named in Q2.2 (Questionnaire, Interview guide, etc)	4	
Video and Still Image Recording Declaration (VASTRE)		
Participant recruitment		
Letter(s) of permission to conduct research within each organisation	1	
Recruitment advertisement(s) specified in Q4.2.1 (poster/email/letter/presentation)	1	
Participant Information giving – one for each participant type specified in Q3.1 (Information sheet/letter/email/script)	1	
Consent taking – one for each participant type specified in Q3.1 (Consent form or alternative procedure)	1	
Fieldwork risk assessment		
Fieldwork Risk Assessment Form (approved)		
RREA form Low Risk Fieldwork Declaration (Section C) completed	X	

### SECTION 3: MINOR AMENDMENT TO RESEARCH PROJECT

Application for Approval of Minor Amendment to a Research Study			
<p><i>Details of proposed amendment (please give as much detail as possible)</i></p> <p>Within initial discussions with the participant college, it was identified that there were a number of different adults within the setting that were responsible for literacy provision who may like to be included within the staff interview for the project. It was therefore suggested that instead of conducting one interview with a key adult, that we conduct a group interview with the adults that are responsible for literacy provision to ensure a full picture is gathered.</p> <p>The proposed minor amendment is therefore the previously mentioned contextual interview with a key member of staff (lasting 30 minutes) will now change to: A contextual interview with a group of key members of staff (lasting approx. 1 hour).</p> <p>Each staff member involved will be provided with a participant information sheet and consent form to ensure informed consent.</p>			
Supervisor Declaration			
<p>I agree that the amendment proposed does not change the character of this research or the participant groups.</p> <p>I confirm that the research risk assessment for the study as MEDIUM remains.</p>			
<i>Supervisor's signature*</i>		<i>Date.</i>	

Please send applications for amendment to ethical approval for MEDIUM risk research to the Manchester Institute Administrator for Ethics and Fieldwork at [ethics.education@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:ethics.education@manchester.ac.uk) who will pass on the request to the RIC member who authorised the original application wherever possible.

**Exploring Young People's Views on their Experiences of Additional Literacy Support in a Further Education Provision Using an Appreciative Inquiry Framework**

**Participant Information Sheet**

**Introduction**

You are being invited to take part in a research study exploring your views on literacy support at college. This project is aimed at understanding the best parts of the literacy support that is available at college and finding ways to think about what could be even better. This project is the final part of my Doctorate Degree in Educational and Child Psychology.

We will follow a framework that is called Appreciative Inquiry – this means we will be looking at things that have worked or been positive in the past to help make decisions about the future. Before you decide it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please ask if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part. Thank you for reading this.

**Who?**

The research will be conducted by me, Steph Pipe.  
I am a Trainee Educational Psychologist at the University of Manchester.

The University of Manchester  
Oxford Road  
Manchester  
M13 9PL

**Why have I been chosen?**

You have been chosen because you are between the ages of 16 – 25 in a further education college and because you are experiencing literacy support, you are one of the best people to talk to about it. The research is looking into what young people's views are on how colleges support young people with reading and writing.

**What?**

**What is the aim of the research?**



I hope that gain an insight into the positive aspects of literacy support at college and your views on this. It is designed to think about what is positive about the situation now and what will feel positive for you in the future.

### **What would I be asked to do if I took part?**

It will involve working with myself (Steph Pipe, Trainee Educational Psychologist) three times. Each meeting will last between 40-60 minutes. Each meeting will be audio recorded to help me remember what we have spoken about. The meeting will take place at your college. When we have finished our meetings, at the end I hope that we will be able to talk to college about what we have found from your views.

### **What Happens Next?**

#### **How will my information stay confidential?**

A report will be written up and will be assessed at the University of Manchester it may also be published as an article in a journal. Your name will not be used and neither will the name of your college. All other personal information about you or direct quotes will be anonymised so that no-body will be able to tell who said them. Somebody that I work with may also help when I write up the project, they will not be able to see any personal information about you.

### **What happens if I do not want to take part or if I change my mind?**

It is up to you whether or not you would like to take part. If you do decide that you would like to take part you will be given this information sheet to keep and will be asked to sign a consent form. If you do decide to take part you are still free to stop at anytime if you would like without giving a reason.

### **Questions?**

If you have any questions about this research, please ask me or tell .... And they can pass the message on to me.

You can also ask me questionson this email address:

Sxxxx@postgrad.manchester.ac.uk

### **What if something goes wrong?**

If something were to go wrong, or you would like to seek advice during our work together, you can contact me and I will aim to help find the right professional to help.Or you may contact the supervisor named below;

XXXX

Jxxxxx@xxxxx.co.uk

### **Letter to Provision**

Dear,,,,,

I am a postgraduate student on the Doctorate in Educational and Child Psychology programme at The University of Manchester. As part of my doctorate students I would like to carry out a study on the perceptions of young people receiving additional literacy support in Further Education. I am writing to you to ask if this is something ..... college would be interested in.

The title of my study is as follows:

**Exploring Young People's Views on their Experiences of Additional Literacy Support in a Further Education Provision Using an Appreciative Inquiry Framework.**

For this research I would like to interview young people between the ages of 16-25 using an Appreciative Inquiry framework. As working with Further Education provision and young people between 16-25 is a fairly new extension to the Educational Psychologist's role, this approach to interviewing will allow a focus on the positive aspects of literacy practice from the young people's perspectives. It will also allow the young people to think about their future aspirations and how these positive aspects can be built on to help them to achieve these goals. I would aim to meet with the young people involved four times (each meeting would be no longer than one hour). I would then hope that the findings from the study will be fed back to professionals within the college and the participants.

It would also be really helpful if there was someone at the college that I could liaise with regularly about this project whilst it is ongoing. I have attached the information sheet for the college and also the participant information sheets and consent forms.

I will be supervised by XXXX at The University of Manchester. I would be very happy to come and discuss my research proposal in more detail if you wish.

Please let me know if you require further information or have any questions.

Thank you for taking the time to read this,

Yours Sincerely

Stephanie Pipe  
Trainee Educational Psychologist

**Exploring Young People's Views on their Experiences of Additional Literacy Support in a Further Education Provision Using an Appreciative Inquiry Framework.**

**Provision Information Sheet**

Your college is being invited to take part in a research study exploring young people's views on their experiences of additional literacy support in a further education provision using an appreciative inquiry framework. This study will be written up as a doctoral thesis for the Doctorate in Educational and Child Psychology at The University of Manchester. The findings from the study will also be fed back to you to inform future developments.

Before you decide it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Please ask if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part. Thank you for reading this.

**Who will conduct the research?**

Stephanie Pipe, Trainee Educational Psychologist  
Manchester Institute of Education, Ellen Wilkinson Building, The University of Manchester, Oxford Road, Manchester, M13 9PL.

**What is the aim of the research?**

I hope to get an insight into how your college supports young people with additional literacy needs through literacy support. The research design will be a case study of your provision through the views of young people between the ages of 16-25. The data will be collected through Appreciative Inquiry interviews. Appreciative Inquiry aims to seek out the positive aspects of a situation and dream of ways forward building on these positive aspects.

**Why have I been chosen?**

You have been chosen as Further Education provision within the LA.

**What would I be asked to do if I took part?**

You would be asked to identify a key member of staff to liaise with the research about this project. Three young people would be asked to participate in the Appreciative Inquiry interviews. Each young person would participate in four interviews, each lasting one hour. As a provision you would therefore be asked to provide a suitable space for these interviews each

week for the duration of the research. It would also be hoped that you would be interested in building on the ideas of the young people in future development of literacy provision.

### **What happens to the data collected?**

The data will be collected on a digital recording device which will then be transcribed by the researcher. Following this I will analyse the data to identify key themes that may have emerged during the discussions with the young people. All transcriptions and themes will remain anonymous throughout this process. Another Trainee Educational Psychologist will assist with the analysis to improve reliability. The other trainee will only have access to anonymised information. This data will then be written up as a doctoral thesis. The findings from the data will be fed back to both the LA and the college that has participated.

### **How is confidentiality maintained?**

Confidentiality will be maintained through the researcher process and following completion of the project. The audio recording of your interview will be transcribed by me and the transcriptions will remain anonymous. The information that has been audio recorded will be kept in a secure place that only the researcher can access. This audio recording will also be stored on an encrypted USB stick and an encrypted file to ensure that the data is secure. This data will be destroyed when it is no longer needed for the purposes of the research and this will be completed in accordance with the University of Manchester's data protection policies. All information given by the participants will be anonymised and kept confidential. All information about the provision will also remain anonymous.

### **What happens if I do not want to take part or if I change my mind?**

It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do decide to take part you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a consent form. If you decide to take part you are still free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason and without detriment to yourself.

### **Will I be paid for participating in the research?**

There will be no payment provided for participation in this research.

### **What is the duration of the research?**

Your participation in this research will consist of four interviews for each participant (12 interviews in total).

### **Where will the research be conducted?**

The interview will be conducted at a location in your provision.

### **Will the outcomes of the research be published?**

The outcomes of this research may be published and included as part of a thesis due for completion in 2017.

### **Disclosure and Barring Service check (if applicable)**

I can confirm that I have undergone a satisfactory criminal records check and can provide evidence of this when visiting your school if required.

### **Contact for further information**

If you would like to discuss this research project further please feel free to contact me by email on:

Sxxxxx @postgrad.manchester.ac.uk

You may also contact my supervisor to raise any questions or concerns regarding the above information.

XXXX  
jxxxxx@xxxxx.co.uk

### **What if something goes wrong?**

If something should go wrong, or you would like to seek help or advice during the research process, you may contact the researcher who will aim to signpost you to the relevant professional bodies.

Or you may contact the supervisor named below:

XXXX  
jxxxxx@xxxxxxx. co.uk

If there are any issues regarding this research that you would prefer not to discuss with members of the research team, please contact the Research Practice and Governance Co-ordinator by either writing to 'The Research Practice and Governance Co-ordinator, Research Office, Christie Building, The University of Manchester, Oxford Road, Manchester M13 9PL', by emailing: [Research-Governance@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:Research-Governance@manchester.ac.uk), or by telephoning 0161 275 7583 or 275 8093



**Exploring Young People’s Views on their Experiences of Additional Literacy Support in a Further Education Provision Using an Appreciative Inquiry Framework.**

**CONSENT FORM**

If you are happy to participate please complete and sign the consent form below

**Please  
Initial  
Box**

- 1. I have read and heard the information sheet on the above study and have had the opportunity to think about the information and ask questions which have been answered.
- 2. I understand that if I take part in in this study it is voluntary and that I can stop taking part at any time without having to give a reason.
- 3. understand that the interviews will be audio recorded.
- 4. I agree that quotes can be used as long as they are anonymous.
- 5. I agree that any data collected may be passed to other researchers (in anonymous form).
- 6. I agree for anonymous information being shared with the Educational Psychology Service and my college to help with future work.
- 7. I agree that any information collected may be published in anonymous form in academic books, journals and will form part of a thesis due for submission in 2017.

I agree to take part in the above project

Name of participant	Date	Signature
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Name of person taking consent	Date	Signature
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Stephanie Pipe



**Exploring Young People's Views on their Experiences of Additional Literacy Support in a Further Education Provision Using an Appreciative Inquiry Framework.**

**Provision CONSENT FORM**

If you are happy for your provision to participate please complete and sign the consent form below

**Please  
Initial  
Box**

1. I confirm that I have read the attached information sheet on the above study and have had the opportunity to consider the information and ask questions and had these answered satisfactorily.
2. I understand that the College's participation in the study is voluntary.
3. I agree to provide and key liaison person for the purposes of this research
4. I understand that the interviews with young people will be audio recorded.
5. I agree to the use of anonymous quotes given by the young people who choose to participate.
6. I agree that any data collected may be passed to other researchers (in anonymous form).
7. I agree for any anonymous data to be shared with the Educational Psychology Service at the LA in order to inform practice.
8. I agree that any data collected may be publishes in anonymous form in academic books, journals or as part of a thesis due for submission in 2017.

I agree to take part in the above project

Name of Provision and	Date	Signature
Name of person taking consent	Date	Signature
Stephanie Pipe		

## Operational Risk Assessment

Risk	Level	Action
A suitable FE provision may not wish to partake in the project.	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The researcher has asked a senior colleague within the placement EPS to identify colleges that may be suitable for this study and equally would be interested in participating.</li> <li>- If an FE college in the area of placement does not wish to participate, the researcher will approach FE provisions outside the placement LA.</li> </ul>
Participants taking part will have to take time out of their working / college day	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Involvement with the staff and also the young people to ensure that they are able to catch up on any missed work.</li> <li>- The researcher will also try and be as flexible as possible to ensure that young people don't miss aspects of the day that they want to or need to attend.</li> <li>- If it is more convenient for staff and the young people participating, the researcher will come at different times each week to ensure participants are not missing the same thing each week.</li> </ul>
Participants may 'drop out' of the project as it continues.	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-The researcher will ensure that all participants are fully briefed and aware of the purpose of the research.</li> <li>- The researcher will ensure that participants are well informed regarding the time commitment of the AI interview process.</li> <li>-The interview will be arranged at a time and place that is convenient for the participants.</li> <li>-The researcher will give both the information and consent forms to participants at least 2 weeks in advance of the interviews. The researcher will also</li> </ul>



		<p>be available through the identified professional at school to answer any questions that the young people may have.</p> <p>-The researcher will try to make the sessions as engaging as possible through the use of activities, rapport building exercises and breaks to ensure maximum participation.</p> <p>-As this research is focused around a ‘strengths based’ model and is not looking specifically at difficulties, it is hoped that the participants will feel more comfortable discussing the provision at college in this way and will engage in the process.</p>
Problems regarding gaining the informed consent from enough participants.	Low	<p>- Information sheets and consent forms will be provided both in written and audio recording to ensure that they are accessible to all potential participants.</p> <p>- Within the context of the FE provision and an age range of 16-25 it is hoped that there will a number of potential participants.</p> <p>- The researcher will aim to explain the purpose of the research in full to highlight the ‘strengths based’ nature of the research and the importance of young people’s perspectives in contributing to this. It is hoped that the participants will feel like their contribution is highly valued within the research.</p>
Invitation to Participate sampling strategy may not be appropriate.	Low	<p>If this sampling strategy is not appropriate to obtain opt-in consent from young people, alternative will be utilised. These may include, presentation by the researcher, FE staff speaking to young people directly who they think may be interested in participating in the study.</p>
Difficulty finding a venue each week within the provision for the interviews to take place.	Low	<p>- Arrangements will be made with the staff member who is liaising with the research well in advance of each AI</p>

		<p>interview to ensure that a suitable space is available for the duration of the time.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- It will be made clear at the start of the process that this is a requirement for the research process.</li></ul>
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Invitation to Participate

*Exploring Young People's Views on their  
Experiences of Additional Literacy Support in  
College*

**Are you between the ages of 16 and 25 years old?**

**Have you had experience of receiving support with reading  
and writing at college?**

**Do you consider yourself to be someone who needs help  
with reading or writing?**

**Are you interested in talking about and exploring your views  
about the reading and writing support you receive?**

**Would you like the opportunity to share your experiences  
and participate in research?**

If you have answered YES to the above questions and would like to find out more information, please speak to ..... at college or contact me (Stephanie Pipe) directly on the email address provided. Please tear off an email address slip if you would like to contact me!

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## **Exploring Young People's Views on their Experiences of Additional Literacy Support in a Further Education Provision Using an Appreciative Inquiry Framework.**

### **Key Adult Information Sheet**

Your college is being invited to take part in a research study exploring young people's views on their experiences of additional literacy support in a further education provision using an appreciative inquiry framework. This study will be written up as a doctoral thesis for the Doctorate in Educational and Child Psychology at The University of Manchester. The findings from the study will also be fed back to you to inform future developments.

Before you decide it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Please ask if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part. Thank you for reading this.

#### **Who will conduct the research?**

Stephanie Pipe, Trainee Educational Psychologist  
Manchester Institute of Education, Ellen Wilkinson Building, The University of Manchester, Oxford Road, Manchester, M13 9PL.

#### **What is the aim of the research?**

I hope to get an insight into how your college supports young people with additional literacy needs through literacy support. The research design will be a case study ascertaining the views of young people between the ages of 16-25. The data will be collected through Appreciative Inquiry interviews. Appreciative Inquiry aims to seek out the positive aspects of a situation and dream of ways forward building on these positive aspects.

#### **Why have I been chosen?**

You have been chosen as a key member of staff with responsibility for literacy provision within the FE college.

#### **What would I be asked to do if I took part?**

You would be asked to undertake a short interview with the researcher to provide contextual information about literacy provision within the college. This would take around 30 minutes and arranged at a time most convenient to you.

### **What happens to the data collected?**

The data will be collected on a digital recording device which will then be transcribed by the researcher. The researcher will then make key notes and reflections within a research diary. Rather than being used as data within the analysis process of the study, the information that you provide will be used to inform the narrative of the interview with contextual information.

### **How is confidentiality maintained?**

Confidentiality will be maintained through the researcher process and following completion of the project. The audio recording of your interview will be transcribed by me and the transcriptions will remain anonymous. The information that has been audio recorded will be kept in a secure place that only the researcher can access. This audio recording will also be stored on an encrypted USB stick and an encrypted file to ensure that the data is secure. This data will be destroyed when it is no longer needed for the purposes of the research and this will be completed in accordance with the University of Manchester's data protection policies. All information given by the participants will be anonymised and kept confidential. All information about the provision will also remain anonymous.

### **What happens if I do not want to take part or if I change my mind?**

It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do decide to take part you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a consent form. If you decide to take part you are still free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason and without detriment to yourself.

### **Will I be paid for participating in the research?**

There will be no payment provided for participation in this research.

### **What is the duration of the research?**

Your participation in this research will consist one interview.

### **Where will the research be conducted?**

The interview will be conducted at a location in your provision.

### **Will the outcomes of the research be published?**

The outcomes of this research may be published and included as part of a thesis due for completion in 2017.

### **Disclosure and Barring Service check (if applicable)**

I can confirm that I have undergone a satisfactory criminal records check and can provide evidence of this when visiting your school if required.

### **Contact for further information**

If you would like to discuss this research project further please feel free to contact me by email on:

[Sxxxxxxx@xxxxxxx.ac.uk](mailto:Sxxxxxxx@xxxxxxx.ac.uk)

You may also contact my supervisor to raise any questions or concerns regarding the above information.

Jxxxxxx

Jxxxxx@xxxxx.co.uk

### **What if something goes wrong?**

If something should go wrong, or you would like to seek help or advice during the research process, you may contact the researcher who will aim to signpost you to the relevant professional bodies.

Or you may contact the supervisor named below:

Jxxxxxx

Jxxxxxx@xxxxxxxx.co.uk

If there are any issues regarding this research that you would prefer not to discuss with members of the research team, please contact the Research Practice and Governance Co-ordinator by either writing to 'The Research Practice and Governance Co-ordinator, Research Office, Christie Building, The University of Manchester, Oxford Road, Manchester M13 9PL', by emailing: [Research-Governance@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:Research-Governance@manchester.ac.uk), or by telephoning 0161 275 7583 or 275 8093



**Exploring Young People’s Views on their Experiences of Additional Literacy Support in a Further Education Provision Using an Appreciative Inquiry Framework**

**Key Adult CONSENT FORM**

If you are happy to participate please complete and sign the consent form below

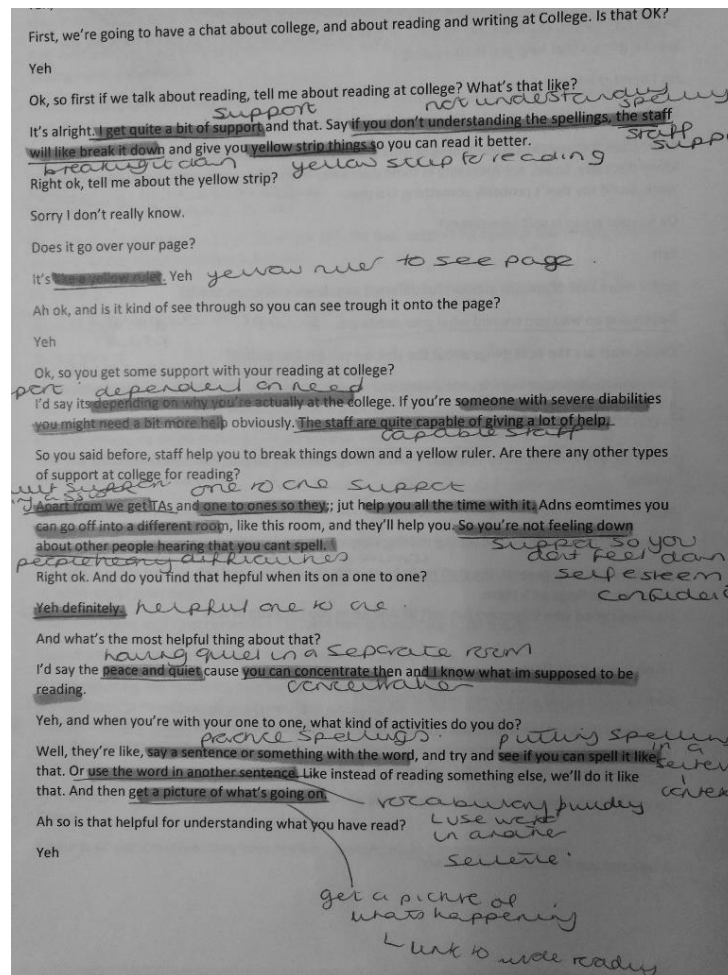
**Please  
Initial  
Box**

- 8. I have read and heard the information sheet on the above study and have had the opportunity to think about the information and ask questions which have been answered.
- 9. I understand that if I take part in in this study it is voluntary and that I can stop taking part at any time without having to give a reason.
- 10. I understand that the interview will be audio recorded.
- 11. I agree that quotes can be used as long as they are anonymous.
- 12. I agree that any data collected may be passed to other researchers (in anonymous form).
- 13. I agree for anonymous information being shared with the Educational Psychology Service and my college to help with future work.
- 14. I agree that any information collected may be published in anonymous form in academic books, journals and will form part of a thesis due for submission in 2017.

I agree to take part in the above project

Name of participant	Date	Signature
Name of person taking consent	Date	Signature
Stephanie Pipe		

## Appendix F: Thematic Analysis Process



9	R: Ok, so first if we talk about reading, tell me about reading at college? What's that like?
11	P1: It's alright. I get quite a bit of support and that. Say if I don't understand the spellings, the staff will like break it down and give you yellow strip things so you can read it better.
12	
13	
14	R: Right ok, tell me about the yellow strip?
15	P1: Sorry I don't really know.
16	R: Does it go over your page?
17	P1: It's like a yellow ruler. Yeh
18	R: Ah ok, and is it kind of see through so you can see through it onto the page?
19	P1: Yeh
20	R: Ok, so you get some support with your reading at college?
21	P1: I'd say it's depending on why you're actually at the college. If you're someone with severe disabilities you might need a bit more help obviously.
22	
23	The staff are quite capable of giving a lot of help.
24	R: So you said before, staff help you to break things down and a yellow ruler. Are there any other types of support at college for reading?
25	
26	P1: Apart from we get TAs and one to ones so they just help you all the time with it. And sometimes you can go off into a different room, like this room, and they'll help you. So you're not feeling down about other people hearing that you can't spell.
27	
28	
29	



Codes

**Code 1: Adult Support**

P1 I1 PG1 L10 It's alright. I get quite a bit of support and that P1 I1 PG1 L11 the staff will like break it down and give you yellow strip things so you can read it better.

P1 I1 PG5 L7 they help you break down words, you get support and that's probably it.

P2 I1 p1 L23 I'd have to write it out on a scrap piece of paper and present it to the teacher first to make sure that it's all right so it can go in.

P2 I1 p1 L31-32 maybe a TA sit with me, and help me write or help me read something.

P2 I1 p2, L22 Yeh the teachers helped.

P2 I2 p3 L15 Assistant teacher, sometimes the teacher. ( helping with what to write)

P2 I2 P3 L3 Just basically telling me what to write and where to write it that's all

P3 I1 P1 L4-5 The teachers helped.

P3 I1 P2 L6 All the teachers have helped me with reading and writing all the time.

P3 I2 P1 L23 Because they use their phones as well(Adults)

P3 I2 P1 L26 I'd look at it and copy it down from them

P3 I2 P3 L12 ask people to help you. Like my teacher X is going to help me do mine after

**Code 2: Difficulty understanding spellings**

P1 I1 PG1 L10 if I don't understanding the spellings, the staff will like break it down

P2 I1 p1 L5-6 Although I will come across a word that I have

trouble spelling.

P3 I2 P1 L 14, 17. There are phone websites that you can use or I've got Whatsapp so I can spell it on there and copy it down onto the paper.

**Code 3: Breaking it down**

P1 I1 PG1 L11 if I don't understanding the spellings, the staff will like break it down

P1 I1 PG3 L8 sentences can be worded really technical but the thing is, he can break them down

P1 I1 PG4 L29 They'd break it down, say a big word like "technology" they'd help you to break that down into "tech" "nol" "ogy"

P1 I1 PG5 L7, they help you break down words, you get support and that's probably it.

P1 I1 p10 L24 Yeh highlighting key information to help you to break it down

P2 I1 p2, L24-25 They would read something for us... talk us through how they wanted us to do the work and what they wanted us to do.

P3 I1 P4 L 22 She writes it down, she explains to me what it is. She explains to other people what it is.

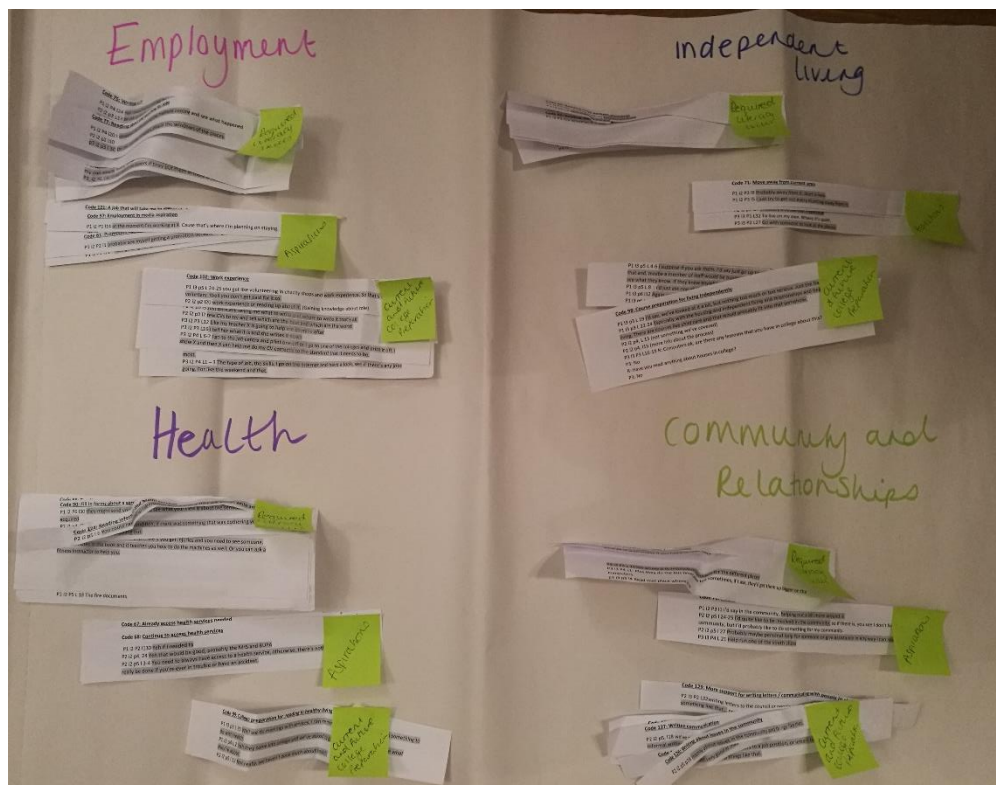
**Code 4: Yellow strip**

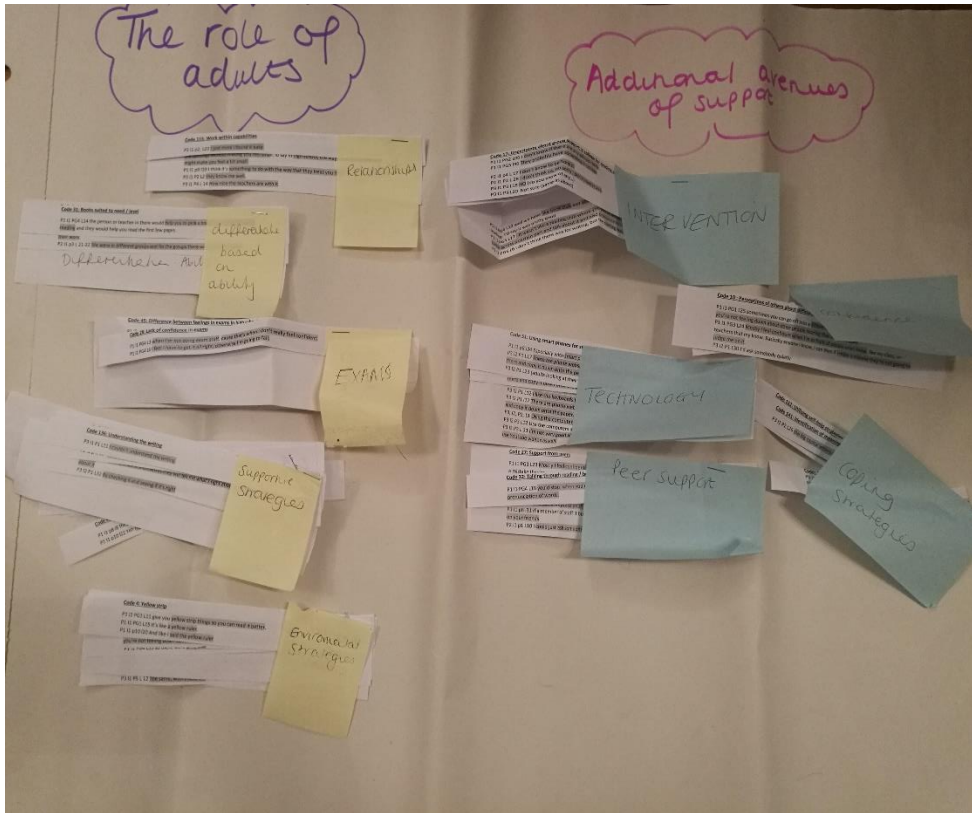
P1 I1 PG1 L11 give you yellow strip things so you can read it better.

P2 I1 PG1 L15 It's like a yellow ruler.

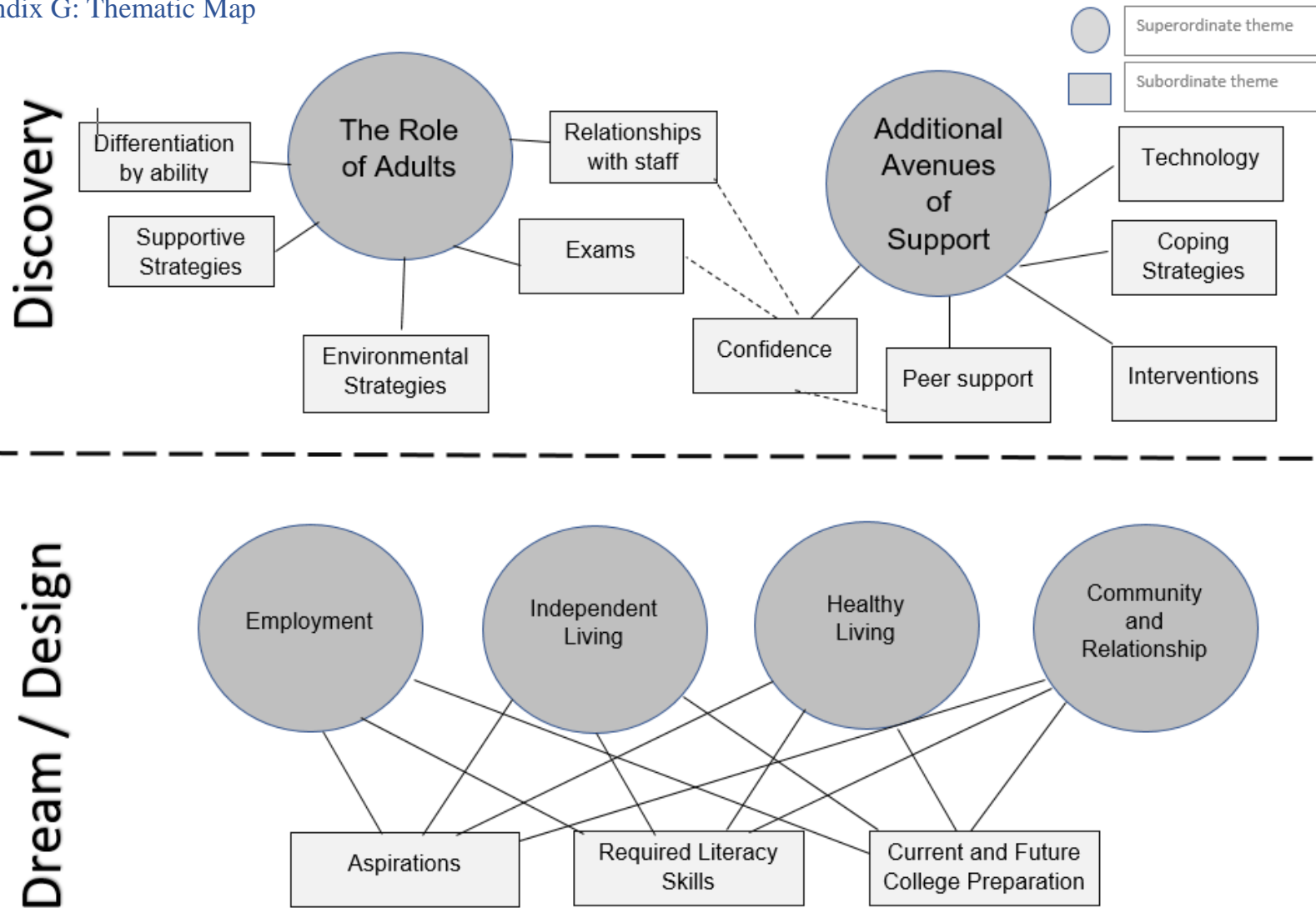
P1 I1 p10 L20 And like I said the yellow ruler

**Code 5: Support dependent on need**

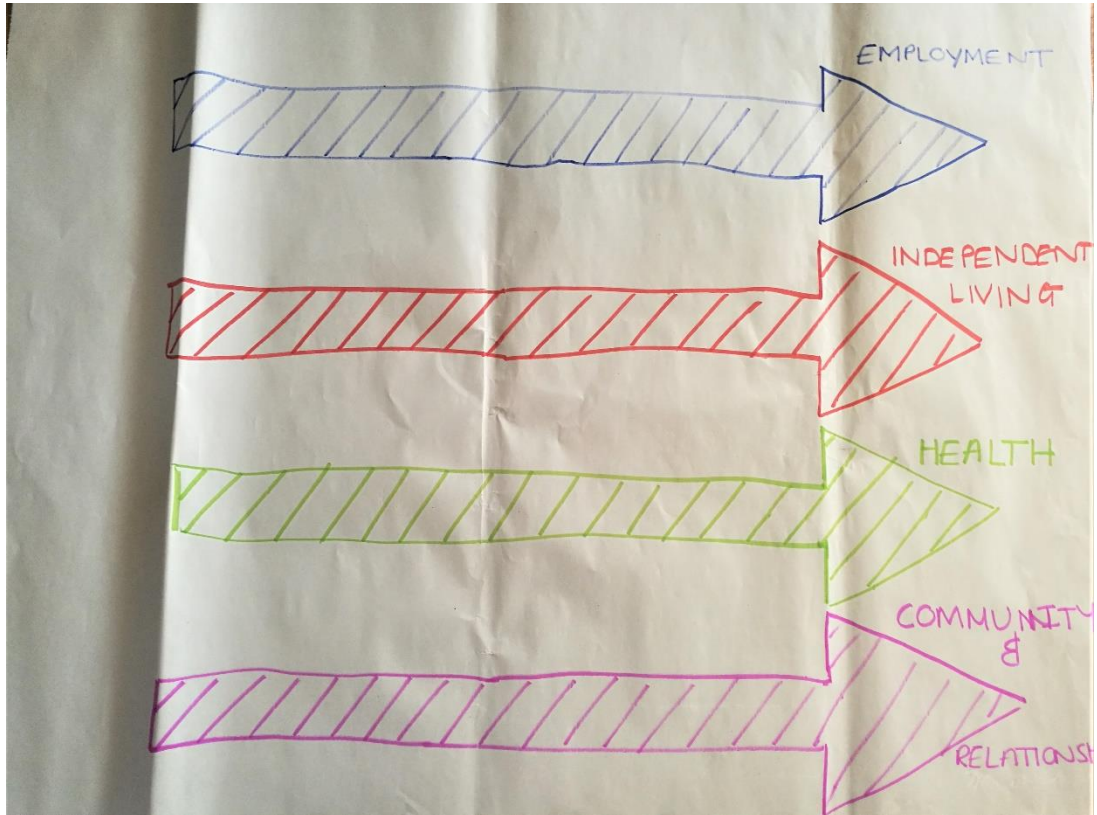




Appendix G: Thematic Map



Appendix H: Visual Theme Presentation



## Appendix I: Research in Post-Compulsory Education Author Guidelines

### Instructions for authors

Thank you for choosing to submit your paper to us. These instructions will ensure we have everything required so your paper can move through peer review, production and publication smoothly. Please take the time to read and follow them as closely as possible, as doing so will ensure your paper matches the journal's requirements. For general guidance on the publication process at Taylor & Francis please visit our Author Services website.



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*Research in Post-Compulsory Education* is an international, peer reviewed journal, publishing high-quality, original research.

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international research and analysis, and the generation of relevant theory in order to identify policy needs and trends as well as priorities in this growing area. While reporting current research, the journal also actively encourages the further development of research for post-compulsory education. Please see the journal's Aims & Scope for information about its focus and peer-review policy.

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### Word limits

Please include a word count for your paper.

A typical manuscript will be between 5000 and 8000 words excluding tables, references, captions, footnotes and endnotes. Manuscripts that greatly exceed this will be critically reviewed with respect to length.

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Please refer to these style guidelines when preparing your paper, rather than any published articles or a sample copy.

Please use British -ise spelling style consistently throughout your manuscript.

Please use single quotation marks, except where 'a quotation is "within" a quotation'. Please note that long quotations should be indented without quotation marks.

Section headings should be concise.

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