

Redefining Student Success in ESOL:

Individual Learning Plans as a Catalyst for Holistic Growth and

Social Justice

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DEDICATION

*For my Mother and Father,
my grandparents and great-grandparents.*

God bless you all.

Author's declaration: This thesis is my own work and has not been submitted in substantially the same form for the award of a higher degree elsewhere. No sections of the thesis have been published, or submitted for a higher degree elsewhere except where specifically indicated.

Signature *Nafisa Baba-Ahmed*

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Abstract

This qualitative study investigates the implementation and effectiveness of Individual Learning Plans (ILPs) in Adult Community English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) education. Employing a multi-method approach, including semi-structured interviews with seventeen participants (ten students and seven staff members), longitudinal surveys of learners (n=54 at the beginning and n=43 at the end of the course), and document analysis of ESOL course files containing ILPs from an Adult Education College in London, this research contextualises the interplay between government policy, educators, and students within recent UK policies emphasising performance metrics, employability and immigrant integration into UK society.

Using the interpretive paradigm within a social constructivism framework, the study highlights the perspectives and transformative learning journeys of ESOL learners in a community learning setting. Applying Nussbaum's Capabilities Approach as a soft lens, the research emphasises the significance of recognising and catering to the uniqueness of community ESOL learners at the entry-level, particularly their "spiky" learner profiles, and the potential of ILPs as tools for Assessment for Social Justice to do so. The findings reveal the acquisition of linguistic, literacy, and soft skills, contributing to both academic competencies and broader social development.

This research advances the academic discourse on ILP effectiveness and the application of the Capabilities Approach to demonstrate the transformative impact of ESOL education and learners' holistic growth. By exploring an underrepresented area in the literature on Assessment for Social Justice, this study provides insights into fostering a more inclusive and empowering learning environment and offers recommendations for restructuring ILPs as dynamic, student-led tools for assessment, thus informing educators, policymakers, and future research in the field.

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List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

AECC	Adult ESOL Core Curriculum
AfL	Assessment for Learning
CCL	Community and Cultural Learning
CEDEPOP	European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training
CEFR	Common European Framework or Reference for Languages
DfE	Department for Education
EAP	English for Academic Purposes
eILP	Electronic Individual Learning Plans
ELT	English Language Teaching
ESL	English as a Second Language
ESOL	English for Speakers of Other Languages
FE	Further Education
GLA	Greater London Authority
HE	Higher Education
ILP	Individual Learning Plans
LSC	Learning Skills Council
LSDA	Learning and Skills Development Agency
NIACE	National Institute for Adult Continuing Education
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
Ofsted	Office for Standards in Education
RARPAP	Recognising and Recording Progress, Achievement and Progression
RQ	Research Question
SMART	Specific Measurable Achievable Realistic and Time-bound

Chapter 1: Introduction and Background

Adult education in the UK is a strong learning tradition which dates back to the early 20th century when trade unions established the Workers' Educational Association in order to provide learning opportunities post compulsory education to the working adult population. This sector of education flourished over the past century, hosting a range of socio-economic issues from individual well-being, short term needs for upskilling the adult workforce to retraining long term out of work adults as well as providing basic skills to young people who left education without qualifications. These benefits continue to be recognised, particularly in relation to the ongoing economic challenges brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Over the past two decades, the government sought to promote widening participation and placed great emphasis on the significance of lifelong learning in the Learning Age green paper (DfEE, 1998). In 2006, the Leitch report highlighted further the urgency of upskilling the workforce who were considered to be lacking in essential skills. The main aim was to make the UK a competitive economic force. In addition to this, the UK has always had migrant communities whose first languages are not English (Visram, 2002). Patterns of this immigration stem mainly from Britain's historic role as a colonialist power and more recently events in international politics (Hamilton and Hillier, 2009). This coupled with the combination of an ageing population, technological advancement and the UK's endeavour to be a global economic competitor amidst increased international competition for work further stimulates the need to promote lifelong learning. The growing evidence of wider benefits to

individual well-being, personal growth and development through adult learning pushed the government to fundamentally recognise why funding adult skills and lifelong learning matters. The need to ensure that adults in the UK can upskill and retrain throughout their lives, specifically now more than ever due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and in essentially aiding the nation's economic recovery, is at the forefront of government policy on adult education. The House of Commons appointed The Education Committee recently to examine the expenditure, administration and policy of the Department for Education (DfE), which recommends that the government must commission analysis in order to ascertain where nation's immediate and longer-term skills lie (House of Commons, 2020). Although it is arguable that adult education has faced various challenges before the 2020 pandemic, much of which relates to funding, the economic effect is undeniable particularly the toll it has taken on major cities' economies within the UK. This is clearly evident in the capital, London, whereby reportedly more than 300,000 jobs lost across the city has negatively impacted on the economy and local communities (Greater London Authority, 2021). In an attempt to begin shaping a better equipped skills and education system with the potential of becoming the most successful and inclusive in the world, The Mayor of London explicitly states that there will be focus on seven priority groups (which are considered the most vulnerable) identified within the Skills for London context. This includes 'Residents who would benefit from training in English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), with a focus on those who are not literate in their first language' (p.2., London Councils, 2019).

This focus emphasises the importance of informal learning in community settings and the ways in which skills developed in these settings can be transferred across many social contexts. In order to now meet the needs of many migrant communities, asylum seekers and refugees, ESOL along with literacy provision is offered in further education contexts as well as in community settings. Herein lies the debate on the terminology and definition as it is unsurprising that the term 'community learning' is hard to pin down. Adult education researchers do not always make clear what they are referring to when using the term 'community'. In addition, it has become harder to define what exactly is meant by the term 'family' when used in family learning.

Merriam, Caffarella and Baumgartner (2007) provide that the wide remit of adult education is a large and amorphous field whereby boundaries and clear categorisation apparent in primary and secondary education are blended, thus further blurring learning delivery, goals and even subjects as well as the breadth and depth of learners' backgrounds. To further amplify this complexity, ESOL teaching and learning to adults trickles down the cracks of social issues to reach the areas adult learners are. In ESOL learning, this encompasses communities of immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers, many of whom access ESOL provision through community adult learning instead of mainstream further education colleges or adult education centres (Pitt, 2005). However, government-funded adult ESOL is mainly provided through further education colleges, as part of local councils' community learning provision as well as by independent training providers (Foster & Paul, 2017). Community

learning, on the other hand, covers a wide range of non-formal courses such as computer courses, employability skills and family learning.

To date, one of the fastest growing sectors of adult education is ESOL which seeks to prepare adult learners for both success in literacy and language by developing English reading, writing, speaking and listening skills which lead to recognised qualifications. In the journey to helping adult learners achieve these qualifications, Individual Learning Plans (ILPs) – a SMART driven means of both formative and summative assessment now play an important role for adult education in basic skills and ESOL since the Learning and Skills Development Agency (LSDA) outlined its aims to encourage wider use of target setting for individual students in the learning and skills sector (Martinez, 2001). The SMART criteria are used in setting objectives mainly to target or results driven projects in order to ensure objectives have been met and to measure success. Although the acronym SMART now varies in terms of what the individual letters stand for, Doran (1981) first introduced it as standing for ‘smart, measurable, assignable, realistic and time-related’. The emphasis on incorporating targets into learning was put forth instead of using what was referred to as ‘value added calculations to compare institutional or departmental performance’ (Martinez, 2001, p.1) which gave rise to the creation of individual targets for learners. The aim of creating individual targets was to focus on the process rather than the mere measurement, even though it is inevitable that the process incorporates measurement of achievement.

The Learning Skills Council (LSC) commissioned the LSDA and the National Institute for Adult Continuing Education (NIACE) for collaboration in

development of the 'Measure to Success' in 2005 which in turn lead to the development of recognising achievement and recording progress (RARPA) for courses which do not result in accreditation or qualification by an examining board or body (Learning Skills Council, 2005). Currently, the RARPA process for ESOL learners is now known as a RARPAP, whereby 'progression' has been added to the acronym (WAES, 2019). It is now a staged process comprising of six stages as presented below in Figure 1.

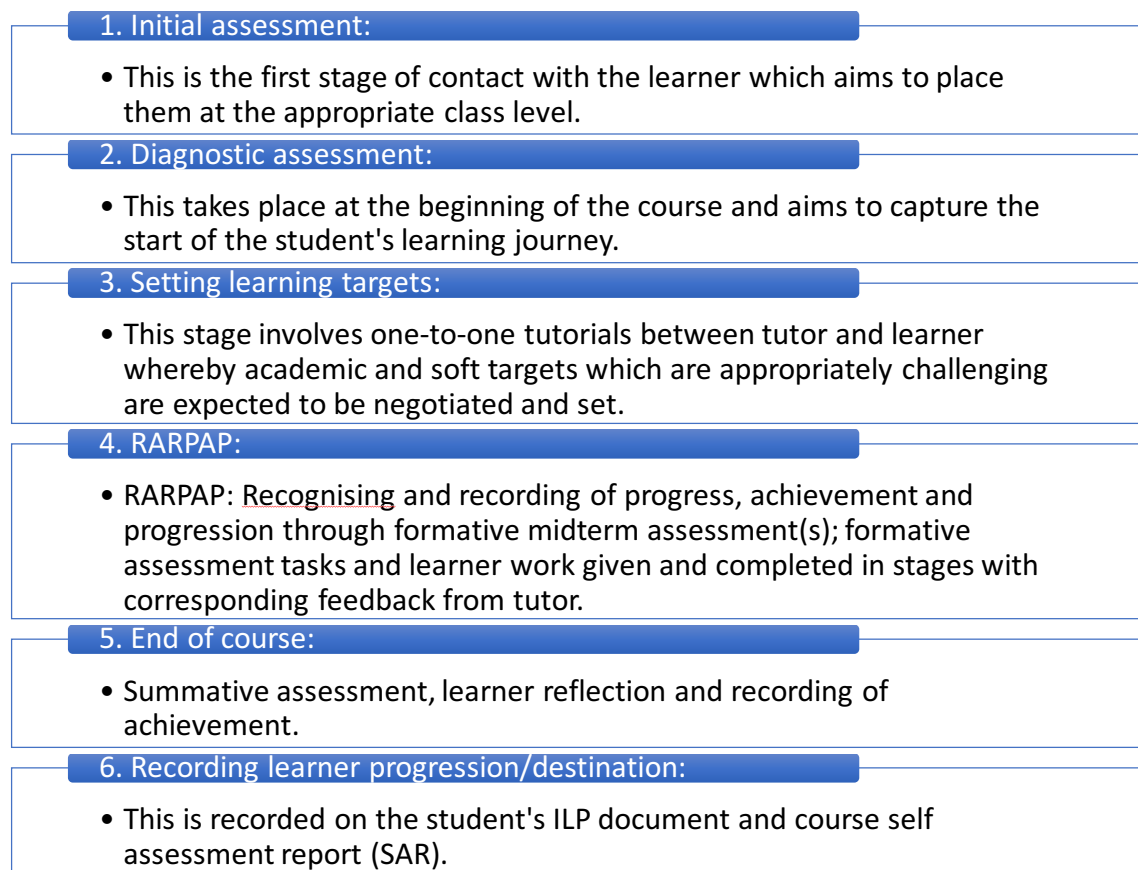


Figure 1: The 6 stage RARPAP process

1.1 Research Issues and Problem Statement

There are claims that SMART targets do not fit into the picture of ESOL learning in practice and that there is a clear disconnect between teachers,

managers, inspectors and inevitably learners (Sutter, 2007). Sunderland and Wilkins (2004) challenge proponents of ILPs to provide a clear evidence for the effective use of SMART target ILPs in language teaching and to provide realistic examples of how ESOL teachers can address the practical issues of developing and using them. Issues such as tedious administrative duties and the pressure to provide favourable results for quality assurance purposes (Shepherd, 2017) are prominent in the arguments against their use. This study therefore explored the value of the RARPAP strategy in ILPs through SMART target setting in ILPs to learners whilst also presenting evidence for its helpfulness in ESOL and literacy teaching and wider social justice concerns.

1.2 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this research is to explore the extent to which the RARPAP process through ILPs contributes to the expansion of capabilities in adult entry level learners of ESOL. This concerns their learning and ultimately their journey to acquiring language and literacy skills as well as wider social and employability skills needed for quality civic life in the UK. This study presents the learners' experiences and perspectives of their progression and insights of their awareness of the assessment process of RARPAP through the use of ILPs. Furthermore, the study draws upon concepts of the human development measure; the Capabilities Approach (Sen, 1980), and Nussbaum's (2002) further development of it to analyse learners' development of competencies through their transformative ESOL learning journeys.

1.3 Research Questions

The main research aim of this study is to explore the utilisation and impact of ILPs within adult community ESOL education. The study aims to contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the implementation and effectiveness of ILPs through a multi-method qualitative approach involving interviews, surveys, and document analysis.

The primary research question is what is the role of ILPs in demonstrating the transformative potential of ESOL education in adult community learning, and how can ILPs contribute to fostering a more inclusive, empowering, and socially just learning environment for students with diverse backgrounds and experiences?

Additionally, the study seeks to address the constraints imposed by government policies that prioritise performance metrics, employability, and immigrant integration over holistic student development. Further, it aims to provide insights into how ILPs can help facilitate a more balanced, comprehensive and student-led approach to Assessment for Social Justice in community ESOL education.

The guiding questions:

1. In what ways can ILPs evidence student learning outcomes and overall development, particularly in terms of academic competencies and broader social skills?
2. How do students and staff view their experiences with ILPs?

-
3. How can selected Nussbaum's Central Capabilities be used to analyse the transformative potential of ESOL education in achieving social justice?
 4. To what extent can ILPs contribute to a more inclusive, empowering, and socially just learning environment, and how can they help address the constraints imposed by government policies?
 5. How can the findings of this study inform future policy and practice within the ESOL educational sphere, particularly in terms of prioritising holistic student development and fostering more balanced and comprehensive approaches to assessment in community ESOL?

1.4 Significance of the Study

This study is based on the growing importance of assessment for social justice and the role ESOL teaching and learning plays in helping learners take more active control of their daily lives living in the UK and widening better employability prospects, wellness and general well-being for civic life. Adult learners of ESOL and literacy are unique in regard to standard assessment practices in the sense that their profiles in terms of both language and literacy are multi-faceted (Schellekens, 2008). From my own extensive experience in teaching such a level, it is common to have students with a high level of fluency and sometimes accuracy in spoken English whose learning aims include developing basic literacy skills. These learners need to be able to develop basic skills in reading and writing for a variety of reasons which affect their daily lives. Such reasons include being able to function independently for real life tasks,

such as filling in forms for job applications, medical prescriptions, housing and local authority documentation, understanding written communication, such as letters, emails, text messages etc. (Hudson, 2017, Cooke, 2006, Chamorro, del Carmen Garrido-Hornos & Vázquez-Amador, 2021).

For the majority of learners, I have encountered, these skills are desperately needed to enable confidence and a sense of dignity and independence, especially when dealing with employability issues, such as referrals from the Jobcentre Plus. Many learners who have traditionally relied upon their family and/or friends express their desire to be able to independently function for themselves. These learners are unique, as other learners of ESOL whose objectives are to learn the English language usually have existing literacy skills from previous formal education or if their first language uses the Roman script. They are more capable of being able to function with tools, such as electronic translators, bilingual dictionaries and strategies of deduction to aid their language learning processes (Yadav, 2021 & Liang, 2018). Many of these learners of ESOL who have language needs rather than literacy, are also engaged in full-time employment and their pre-existing literacy skills facilitate their language learning experience more fluidly.

Finally, this study sheds light on the experiences and perspectives of entry-level ESOL learners in an adult community learning setting, focusing on the external aims of the ILP rather than the linguistic targets negotiated between teacher and learner. It is in this context that this study suggests a framework for more effective use of ILPs for RARPAP and as a tool for assessment for social justice in adult education, ESOL and in helping learners develop both academic and

wider social skills within my own institution of work as well as the wider world of ESOL teaching and concerns.

1.5 Nature of the Study

In this qualitative, exploratory study, data is collected from semi-structured interviews, surveys and document analysis of student ILPs within a large adult education and Further Education (FE) provider in London. This study is based on an interpretivist stance which takes into account human interest in a study (Dudovinkiy, 2018). In addition, this considers my dual role within the research as teacher/researcher. All research participants (teachers, managers, co-ordinators and students) were known to me professionally.

Furthermore, this study employs a triangulation approach, including surveys taken in two stages to gain insights on learners' diverse backgrounds, such as their learning and work experiences, use of English outside class and at home and understanding of assessment terminology. Document analysis of ESOL course files provided for contextually relevant information on ILPs, learner work submitted as evidence of RARPAP, and semi-structured interviews with both students and staff to gather more in-depth information, experiences, and perspectives on the implementation and effectiveness of ILPs in adult community ESOL.

Participants for both student semi-structured interviews both staff and students were nominated and invited to participate by email. The semi-structured interview data collection from semi-interviews was from seven staff and nine students. Staff interviews included the Head of Community and Cultural

Learning, the Community and Cultural Learning Co-ordinator (who also teaches at pre-entry level ESOL classes), the Quality Assurance Coordinator, and Internal Verificator/Moderator for RARPAP (who also teaches ESOL) and three pre-entry level ESOL tutors. Six out of the ten pre-entry level learners' interviews were carried out with the aid of an interpreter in the learner's first language. The interview responses were recorded digitally and stored on Lancaster University's OneDrive for transcription and were then analysed and coded thematically.

Participants were invited to voluntarily take part in a two-stage questionnaire process using convenience sampling. The first-stage questionnaires were informed by the literature review, with 54 participants (n=54) at the beginning of the course. The second-stage questionnaires were developed based on the responses from the first stage, with 43 participants (n=43) at the conclusion of the course.

Student ILPs were also analysed for content and arranged according to categories and themes drawn from a total of three course files from levels pre-entry to entry-level three as illustrated in Table 1. Triangulation methods were used to enhance the creditability of this research study (Salkind, 2010).

Table 1: Summary of the Six ESOL Course Files Analysed, Detailing Course Levels

Course file/name	Course Code	Level
Community ESOL	ES0966CC	Pre-entry/entry 1
Community ESOL	ES0967CC	Entry 1 and Entry 2
Community ESOL	ES1128PS	Entry 2 and Entry 3

1.6 Outline of the Remainder of the Study

This introductory chapter has set out the background context of ESOL in adult education, particularly in adult community learning settings, and introduced the practice of SMART-target driven ILPs and the RARPAP process as an assessment tool and performance measurement indicator. The research problem and consequent research questions guiding the study have also been stated, and the significance of the study has been highlighted, which will be further elaborated in the following chapter – the literature review.

Chapter 2 contains the literature review and further emphasises the importance of this study by identifying gaps in the academic field. Chapter 3 presents the methodology, reiterating the research issue and guiding questions while providing a rationale for the mainly qualitative study with a supplementary quantitative data collection method of surveys.

Chapter 4 provides the contextual findings from the document analysis of ILPs and longitudinal student surveys, which were conducted in two phases.

Following this, Chapter 5 delves into the detailed perspectives and experiences

of both staff and students through interviews, offering a comprehensive understanding of their insights. Subsequently, Chapter 6 presents a discussion of the findings using the Capabilities Approach (Sen, 1980) and Nussbaum's (2002) list of capabilities as a lens to analyse competencies developed by students and further discussions on the salient issues identified in the literature in relation to the study's empirical findings.

Finally, Chapter 7 offers conclusions and recommendations for enhancing professional practice and assessment in adult community learning of ESOL, focusing on both THE PLACE THIS STUDY TAKES PLACE and the broader profession of ESOL teaching and learning.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

The previous chapter provided an avenue to present the broader landscape of adult education, ESOL and governmental policies within which this study is embedded. It also served as an opportunity to present the issue at hand: the role and impact of ILPs as effective assessment tool for adult learners' development in ESOL, how they can effectively contribute to demonstrating transformational experiences among these learners in terms of enhancing linguistic and literacy competencies, as well as fostering the development of soft skills for academic study and broader social skills for civic engagement and community participation.

In this chapter, I undertake a comprehensive review of the existing literature on ILPs within the context of adult community ESOL education. Specifically, I seek to address the key contentions surrounding ILPs. First, I begin with the discourse on government policy in England surrounding performance measurement relating to funding of ESOL courses and goal setting strategies used for assessment, the debate surrounding immigration and integration which ESOL learners are subjects of and the political agenda of employability that fundamentally shapes the provision and practice of ESOL in England (Cooke & Simpson, 2009). I then move onto a comprehensive review of the literature surrounding their implementation, including practices, strengths and weaknesses, effectiveness in facilitating learning outcomes, and challenges faced by educators and learners in their utilisation. Then, turning my focus onto assessment for social justice, I present a discussion on the ILP as a tool for

both learning and assessment within the context of ESOL provision in adult community learning.

Furthermore, to provide a theoretical perspective, I introduce I introduce the Capabilities Approach and Martha Nussbaum's Central Human Capabilities as a flexible and adaptable framework. This is used as a soft lens in my discussion to analyse the development of academic and wider social competencies, demonstrating the potential of ESOL in promoting social justice and human flourishing among adult ESOL learners.

These insights from diverse sources of literature set the stage for a nuanced discussion on the role of ILPs in fostering inclusive and empowering learning environments for adult ESOL learners, ultimately informing the empirical study in subsequent chapters.

2.2 Approach to Literature Search

To ensure a comprehensive and up-to-date literature review, I conducted a systematic search using academic databases and platforms including Web of Science, Lancaster University's OneSearch, and Google Scholar. The search focused on literature published between 2005 and 2024, with particular attention to sources from the past five years to ensure contemporary relevance.

Initial searches used broad terms, such as *"ESOL," "adult education," "assessment,"* and *"social justice in education."* These were subsequently refined through combinations (e.g., *"ESOL assessment and social justice," "individual learning plans in ESOL"*) and by searching for key authors whose

work is central to the field (e.g., Stephen J. Ball, Melanie Cooke, Jan McArthur). Alongside peer-reviewed journal articles and monographs, I also consulted grey literature and open-access versions of key publications located via Google Scholar, which were cross-checked for academic rigour and relevance.

Sources were included on the basis of their relevance to adult ESOL education in the UK, particularly those that critically engaged with educational policy, ILPs, or assessment practices. The themes developed in the literature review chapter emerged inductively through engagement with the literature, particularly around debates on performativity, learner agency, and the role of assessment in promoting social justice.

2.3 Bridging the Gap: Adult Community Learning for Skills Development and Employment

Community learning provision focuses on working with local communities and engaging individuals in learning and its benefits (Greater London Authority, 2022). The learning covers essential skills providing opportunities for adults to improve their lives and gain skills that enable them to make progress into employment, get better jobs or further learning (UK Commission for Employment and Skills, 2008). This community learning is often short in duration but designed and intended to transform people's attitudes and ambitions about the future for themselves and their families, deliver long-term economic benefit, build personal confidence and independence within individual residents (Greater London Authority, 2017). The London Councils' report (2019) which further highlights the need for focus on the seven priority groups include,

‘those working in very low paid work or insecure employment and those falling outside the parameters of the benefits system and seeking a return to work’ in addition to those ‘residents who would benefit from training in ESOL with a focus on those who are not literate in their first language’.

Foster and Paul (2017) highlighted that mainstream ESOL courses in formal settings were not always suitable for non-English speaking residents due to challenges like the lack of childcare facilities, intimidating learning environments, and the distance of colleges from learners' homes. This prompted the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) to introduce a new competition fund for community-based ESOL courses.

Interestingly, discussions of ESOL provision often overlook the role of formal assessments, despite their frequent presence in institutional settings. Such courses tend to be exam-based and lead to qualifications awarded by external bodies. As a result, they follow stricter, more rigid curricula and allow less space to accommodate the needs of learners at the lowest levels, particularly those with limited literacy or study skills. As noted by Baynham and Simpson (2010), ESOL learners, alongside other Skills for Life participants, work towards qualifications aligned with national standards within the National Qualifications Framework (NQF).

These standards are categorised into entry levels (pre-entry, entry 1, entry 2, and entry 3), level 1, and level 2, corresponding to the school national curriculum. Level 2 is equated with achieving grades A to C in GCSE exams.

These levels are also roughly aligned with the CEFR, with entry level 3 corresponding to CEFR level B1. The attainment of these qualifications by learners is paramount for institutions, particularly within the further education sector where most ESOL programmes are located. This emphasis on qualification achievement is driven by funding requirements, compelling institutions to prioritise exam preparation and success for all students, including those in ESOL programmes (Baynham & Simpson, 2010).

Furthermore, adult education extends beyond the confines of the classroom. It involves empowering residents to cultivate broader outcomes in their personal lives, which, in turn, contribute to the enhancement of local communities, businesses, and the local economy (Local Government Association, 2020).

Pat Carrington MBE, Assistant Director for Employment and Skills at Peterborough City Council and Principal of City College Peterborough, argues that adult education has a broader impact beyond the classroom, as it enhances various aspects of individuals' lives and ultimately contributes to the growth and development of local communities, businesses, and the local economy (Carrington, 2023). This perspective emphasises the broader societal impact of adult education beyond individual skill acquisition. It is for these reasons community learning embodies a less rigid approach compared to formal education systems. It prioritises practical skills, personal development, and holistic growth over rigid exam-based assessments. This philosophy aligns seamlessly with the main aims of Skills for Life programmes, which seek to equip individuals, including ESOL learners, with practical competencies to transition into employment, progress in their careers, or pursue further

education opportunities. While community learning may not always culminate in formal qualifications or exam-based achievements, its pivotal role in empowering individuals, nurturing personal development, and bolstering employability prospects resonates with the overarching objectives of Skills for Life programmes, as noted by Baynam and Simpson (2010).

While community learning initiatives offer valuable opportunities for practical skills development and personal growth, it is essential to consider the broader policy landscape that shapes their implementation. In particular, government policies in England play a significant role in guiding performance measurement and goal-setting strategies, especially concerning ESOL funding and assessment practices. Hamilton and Hillier (2006) discuss the changing nature of adult ESOL provision in the UK and emphasise the impact of government policies on its development, implementation, and assessment practices. These policies not only influence the allocation of resources but also shape the frameworks used to evaluate learner progress and programme effectiveness (Cooke & Simpson, 2009).

The implementation and utilisation of performance measurement and goal-setting practices in education are both points of major contention within the literature. To critically examine the implications of government policies on performance measurement and goal-setting in ESOL education, the following section will draw upon the works of Stephen Ball and Jenny Ozga. By engaging with their research on neoliberalism, the political economy of adult literacy policy, and the new skills agenda, I aim to shed light on the complexities and challenges faced by learners and educators alike. This analysis will highlight

the importance of understanding the broader policy context in order to address the potential inequalities and obstacles that may arise with ILP administration within adult ESOL education which I will discuss later on in the chapter.

2.4 Understanding the Neoliberal Perspective: Implications for Adult ESOL Education

Stephen J. Ball's research provides valuable insights into the potential effects of neoliberal policies on various aspects of education, including adult and ESOL education. Here, I first examine how neoliberalism, social class, and globalisation have been argued to shape the landscape of adult ESOL education, focusing on the implications of market-based approaches and performance measurement policies.

From a neoliberal perspective, the marketisation of education, including adult and ESOL education, can lead to increased competition among providers and a focus on efficiency (Ball, 2012). This might affect the quality and accessibility of education for adult learners. In this context, performance measurement policies could be employed to assess and compare the effectiveness of different ESOL programmes, which may have implications for funding and resource allocation (Ball, 2009).

Additionally, Ball's work highlights the potential impact of education policies on social class and inequality (Ball, 2003). In the context of adult ESOL education, policies that prioritise efficiency and market-based solutions might inadvertently perpetuate inequalities among learners from different socioeconomic backgrounds. For example, adult learners with limited financial resources could

face difficulties accessing high-quality ESOL programmes or be adversely affected by performance measurement policies that do not account for their unique circumstances (Ball, 2006). This undoubtedly has an impact on achieving a socially just education.

Furthermore, Ozga's research underlines the significance of policy frameworks in shaping educational practices and outcomes (Ozga, 2009). In the field of adult ESOL education, policies emphasising standardised assessments and qualification attainment may overlook the diverse needs and experiences of learners, particularly those from marginalised communities. For instance, learners with interrupted education or non-traditional learning backgrounds may struggle to meet the criteria set by rigid qualification frameworks, further exacerbating existing disparities in educational attainment (Ozga, 2012). As a result, the pursuit of educational excellence may inadvertently reinforce social stratification and hinder efforts towards inclusivity and equity in adult ESOL provision.

Globalisation, too, has been suggested to play a significant role in shaping education policy (Ball, 2012). In the case of adult ESOL education, international policies and initiatives might influence the design and delivery of language programmes. The growing emphasis on global competencies and communication skills could lead to a greater focus on English language learning, impacting the development of ESOL programmes and performance measurement policies (Ball, 2008).

Evidently, the impact of globalisation on adult ESOL in England is profound, shaping the design, delivery, and assessment of language programmes, consequently influencing the utilisation of ILPs. As Nunan (2003) notes, the demand for English proficiency escalates in the global arena, therefore ESOL programmes are compelled to place greater emphasis on language acquisition within ILPs, which would arguably align them with the development of essential global competencies and cross-cultural communication skills (Risager, 2012).

In addition, this study finds that international education policies and initiatives contribute to this shift by inspiring the integration of innovative teaching methodologies and technology-enhanced learning approaches into ILPs, for instance, supporting greater digital engagement in ESOL contexts and fostering adaptability to diverse learner needs and backgrounds. Moreover, performance measurement and evaluation within ILPs are redefined to encompass not only language proficiency but also critical skills pertinent to a globalised workforce, including collaboration, digital literacy, and intercultural competence (Byram, 2008).

In essence, ILPs in adult ESOL education can be seen to be developed for meeting the demands of a globalised world, reflecting an ideally holistic approach that prepares learners for success in an interconnected and culturally diverse society (UNESCO, 2014). Thus, Stephen J. Ball's research offers a critical perspective on the potential challenges faced by adult ESOL learners within the context of neoliberalism, social class, and globalisation. A thorough understanding of these issues is crucial for the development of more inclusive

and equitable adult ESOL education programmes. However, it is essential to recognise that these are interpretive viewpoints and not definitive facts.

On the other hand, Jenny Ozga's work, particularly those concerning the political economy of adult literacy policy and the new skills agenda, provide a critical perspective on the UK government's leanings towards performance measurement policies in adult education and the influence of globalisation and marketisation (Ozga, 2009; Ozga, 2011). In her research, Ozga frequently examines how broader political and economic factors shape education policies (Ozga, 2009). For instance, in her paper on the new skills agenda, Ozga analyses how the shift towards a knowledge-based economy and the increasing demands for lifelong learning have impacted adult education policies, potentially leading to the adoption of performance measurement policies to evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of adult learning programmes (Ozga, 2009).

Ozga's work on the political economy of adult literacy policy also offers insight into how globalisation and marketisation have affected the way governments approach adult education (Ozga, 2011). This could result in the introduction of performance measurement policies as a means to align adult learning initiatives with broader economic objectives (Ozga, 2011). Although these works may not directly discuss performance measurement policies, they provide valuable context for understanding the broader policy environment in which these developments occur and the potential factors driving these changes in adult education and the push for goal-setting strategies such as ILPs for assessment. (Ozga & Lefstein, 2010).

2.4.1 Neoliberal Influence on Goal-Setting Strategies in Adult ESOL Education

Both Ozga and Ball recognise the influence of neoliberal ideologies and market-oriented policies on education systems, emphasising the impact of globalisation on education policy and the interconnectedness of local, national, and global policy contexts. This recognition of the influence of neoliberal ideologies and market-oriented policies by both Ozga and Ball on education systems is crucial in understanding the push for goal-setting strategies, in particular the utilisation of ILPs in adult ESOL education. As I previously noted, the implementation of such strategies is often driven by broader political and economic agendas.

For instance, Neoliberalism emphasises market competition, efficiency, and individual responsibility (Ball, 2003; Hursh, 2005). In the context of education, this translates to an increased focus on performance measurement, accountability, and outcome-based funding. ILPs can be seen as tools to enhance efficiency, individualise learning goals, and demonstrate progress, which aligns with the broader neoliberal agenda in education (Barton & Hamilton, 1998).

However, while ILPs may serve as a means to align learners' goals with global demands for English proficiency (Nunan, 2003) and provide a structured approach to track progress and achievement (Risager, 2012), it is essential to consider their potential limitations within the context of neoliberal ideologies. Critics argue that an overemphasis on performance and efficiency may lead to a narrowing of the curriculum, overlooking learners' diverse needs and

backgrounds (Apple, 2004). This could potentially undermine the effectiveness of ILPs as tools for personalised learning and social justice.

Thus, while ILPs can be useful in addressing literacy needs and aligning with broader policy contexts, a critical examination of their implementation within neoliberal frameworks is necessary to ascertain how they contribute to equitable and inclusive education practices.

2.5 Critical Perspectives on SMART-Driven Target Setting in ESOL Education

There exists a substantial body of literature that acknowledges the utility of both RARPAP and ILPs as tools for target-setting within ESOL teaching and learning (Day & Tosey, 2011; Ofsted, 2010-12). This alignment with the SMART criteria (as explained in chapter 1) reflects prevalent pedagogical practices within the UK education system, especially in secondary and further education (Shepherd, 2017; Day & Tosey, 2011). Nevertheless, the widespread adoption of SMART-driven target setting raises questions about its underlying motivations and implications. I find it intriguing to consider whether it could suggest a growing emphasis on employability objectives in government education policies, aligning with global labour market demands as put forward by Desjardins (2019). This trend has been noted within the UK education system, particularly in further education, where economic competitiveness plays a significant role (Hamilton, 2009; Allat & Tett, 2018).

Critically, the implementation of SMART-driven forms of assessment within ESOL adult education has faced scrutiny and criticism despite its widespread

practice across various proficiency levels (NQF, 2019). Scholars such as Hamilton (2009) also argue that this approach reflects the neoliberal agenda of governments, prioritising economic outcomes over social justice in education. I have often found myself contemplating the perceived emphasis on employability objectives within ILPs and its implications for broader social justice aims and intrigued as to why both these concepts need to be mutually exclusive. Thus, part of what this study aims to explore is whether it is possible to strike a balance between prioritising employability objectives and upholding social justice values within educational policies and practices, and whether the ILP can serve as a tool to do both.

Moreover, there is the assertion that the effectiveness of ILPs as performance indicators in learners' language acquisition is questionable. While they aim to measure learners' progress and skills acquisition, they often fail to account for the complex social and linguistic challenges faced by immigrant learners in integrating into society (Court, 2017; Bippus & Eslami, 2013). For instance, immigrant learners may struggle with language barriers, cultural differences, and limited access to social networks that foster language development.

Court (2017) argues that authentic language interactions, essential for language acquisition, are often hindered by power inequalities and limited opportunities for meaningful dialogue. As Court (2017) states, "Language learning is deeply embedded in power relations and social inequalities" (p. 5). Examples of these inequalities include limited access to native speakers, lack of cultural capital, and systemic discrimination. These factors often create an environment where immigrants are isolated from authentic language

experiences, which are crucial for language development. Thus, without addressing these systemic issues, ILPs may fall short in their aim to support language acquisition and social justice for immigrant learners.

Additionally, the globalised trend of personalised learning, driven by economic incentives and privatisation agendas, raises concerns about the commodification of education (Ball, 2009) which further weaken the social justice aims of education. This global trend, exemplified by policies such as the No Child Left Behind Act in the USA, prioritises market-driven reforms over educational equity and social justice (Apple, 2013). Evidently, while SMART-driven target setting may align with government objectives of economic competitiveness, its implications for social justice within ESOL education warrant critical examination. Thus, the tension between economic outcomes and social justice objectives emphasises the need for a nuanced understanding of the complexities inherent in educational policy and practice.

2.5.1 Critiques of ILPs in the Context of Neoliberal Education Policies

In the previous section, I discussed perspectives of education policy being shaped by the larger globalisation and marketisation practices at play, drawing on the work of various scholars in the field. Fairclough (1992), Ozga (2000), Ball (2003), Hamilton (2009), and Cooke (2016) collectively argue that education policies are heavily influenced by global economic and political trends, leading to increased marketisation and performance-driven practices within the education system. Rampton et al. (2001) summarise education policy in England since the 1980s as a blend of neoliberal market economies and

cultural authoritarianism. This characterisation captures the introduction of market mechanisms, such as parental choice and school competition, alongside increased government control over curriculum and assessment, resulting in a unique landscape of educational reforms. It is based on this notion that Cooke (2006) suggests a tension apparent between consumer "choice," which she explains as being "the distortion of the principle of 'student-led' education to market principles" (p. 58), and a "strong centralizing tendency in terms of curricula" (p. 58).

Cooke (2006) expands further on this notion of "centralizing tendency" by drawing upon the Adult ESOL Core Curriculum (AECC), which was developed and implemented by the Skills for Life Agency as a statutory national curriculum for ESOL.

While the rationale behind the development of the AECC was to ensure ESOL learners acquired the necessary linguistic and literacy skills necessary for civic life and employment, criticisms of its implementation include the overly commercial designs for the tests of each level of attainment. This criticism is in addition to its overly prescriptive, overly general, too outcome-obsessed and mirroring of "vocabulary of skills" (Fairclough, 1992). As discussed earlier in relation to Ball (1998) and Ozga's (1987, 2000) work, the influence of neoliberal policy on education can arguably undermine core values of education in achieving social justice.

I would argue, while assessment has been shown to be an effective motivator for student learning (Black & Wiliam, 2009), it is essential to recognise that it

also plays a significant role in evaluating the quality of teaching and learning processes. With this in mind, it becomes increasingly crucial to consider the implications of assessment in the context of social justice, ensuring fairness and equity for all learners.

Expanding on the previously discussed critiques of ILPs as neoliberal-based target learning tools, it is essential to examine how the bureaucratic aspects and overarching neoliberal context of ILPs may hinder the development of learner autonomy and agency. As previously mentioned, ILPs often prioritise performance measurement and outcome-based funding, reflecting the broader influence of market-driven education policies (Ball, 2003; Hursh, 2005).

This emphasis on quantifiable outcomes can inadvertently undermine the importance of fostering learner autonomy and agency, as the focus shifts towards meeting specific targets rather than empowering learners to take control of their education. As a result, learners may become passive participants in the learning process – which I highlight further in this chapter, merely working towards predetermined goals rather than actively engaging in self-directed learning and personal growth (Court, 2017; Bippus & Eslami, 2013).

Ball (2021) continues to assert that education policy in England is shaped by a complex interplay of political rationalities, including neoliberalism, managerialism, and cultural authoritarianism. In the fourth edition of *The Education Debate*, he highlights how performativity, audit cultures, and outcome-driven approaches continue to dominate educational institutions. This

context reinforces the positioning of tools like ILPs as mechanisms of compliance and measurement, rather than authentic instruments for learner development. Ball warns that such policy technologies reduce teachers to deliverers of pre-set goals and learners to measurable outputs, leaving little space for relational or transformative pedagogy. In community ESOL, this becomes particularly problematic given the diverse learner needs and the socially embedded nature of language learning.

This culture of audit and accountability is further reinforced by the bureaucratic design of ILPs, which often demands extensive documentation and compliance from educators. As noted by Cooke and Simpson (2009) and Shepherd (2017), the administrative burden of implementing ILPs frequently consumes time that could otherwise be devoted to relational, dialogic teaching. In such contexts, learner-teacher collaboration is side-lined in favour of target tracking, limiting opportunities for co-construction of knowledge and diminishing the space for learner agency. The result is a narrowing of both pedagogical scope and learner experience, especially in community ESOL classrooms where flexibility and responsiveness are crucial.

Cooke and Peutrell (2019) also contribute to this critique by highlighting how assessment tools like ILPs are often shaped by a culture of accountability and audit. In their analysis of ESOL practices in the UK, they argue that the growing emphasis on documentation and compliance has redefined the role of educators, turning them into data gatherers rather than facilitators of learning. This reinforces the performative pressures identified by Ball (2003) and Ozga (2009), where the logic of funding and accountability often overrides the

relational and developmental aspects of pedagogy. The tension between meeting institutional demands and supporting learner growth is echoed across several contributions to the volume, which advocate for reclaiming pedagogical autonomy and centring student voice.

In conclusion, the limitations of ILPs in promoting learner autonomy and agency can be attributed to the broader neoliberal context and the administrative complexities that characterise these tools. As I shift my focus to the next section, I will delve deeper into the debates surrounding the potential drawbacks of ILPs in developing learner autonomy and agency.

2.5.2 Debate on ILP Limitations for Learner Development of Autonomy and Agency

The debate on ILP limitations for learner development of autonomy and agency raises questions about the effectiveness of ILPs in fostering active learning and self-reflection. Learner agency is concerned with students being active learners who are able to make choices and take actions to fully participate in their communities (Cowie, Harrison & Lewis 2016). To achieve this, education should involve everyday interactions, including Assessment for Learning (AfL) or formative assessment practices, which promote lifelong learning.

The RARPAP process, a staged approach within ILPs, theoretically aims to support mutual negotiation and collaboration between learners and tutors to achieve learning outcomes that benefit the learner in terms of autonomy, reflection, and self-evaluation. This process includes five stages: planning, setting targets, action, review, and end-of-course reflection. Stage 3, 'setting

targets,' is intended for mutual input of learning goals by both the learner and the tutor, which, as Petty (1993; 2016) suggests, can help tutors design tailored programmes and activities that meet individual learning needs (Isaku, 2014, p. 54). Similarly, Stage 5 of the RARPAP process encourages learner reflection in addition to summative assessment and achievement, illustrating the ILP's intended aim to be student-centred.

While the RARPAP process within the ILP framework aims to promote learner agency, it is essential to critically evaluate its effectiveness and potential limitations in practice to ensure it truly benefits learners in developing autonomy, reflection, and active learning. Having previously acknowledged the influence of neoliberal, globalisation, and marketisation practices that potentially influence performance measurement and goal setting in education, I believe it is now useful to situate the intended purposes of the RARPAP process and the ILP framework within the broader context of government and media debates surrounding immigration and integration. These debates play a significant role in shaping the provision and delivery of adult ESOL learning. By examining these interconnected factors, I aim to critically evaluate the effectiveness of ILPs in fostering learner agency and autonomy, considering whether ILP utilisation helps ESOL education practices in being learner-entered and responsive to students' unique needs.

2.6 Navigating the Discourse on Migration, Integration, and ESOL

Provision in the UK

Following my earlier discussion of Ozga's (2020) work on adult education policy and Ball's (2008, 2012) analyses of neoliberalism, globalisation, and marketisation in ESOL contexts, I next consider the wider academic debates on migration, integration, and ESOL provision in the UK. The discourse surrounding migration and integration policies in the United Kingdom represents a complex interplay of perspectives, ideologies, and empirical research (Hickman, Crowley, & Mai, 2008; Phillimore & Goodson, 2010; Saggar & Somerville 2012). By reviewing the existing literature on these topics of contention, I aim to critically examine the complex interplay between policy, theory and practice in order to build upon this to shed light on the experiences of both educators and students within this field of study. Furthermore, this review of the literature is imperative to gain a fundamental understanding of the factors shaping the experiences of migrants in the UK and the role of ESOL education in supporting their integration success so they are able to live and lead more socially just lives within their communities.

The discourse on migration and integration in the UK involves wide contributions, spanning multiple disciplines, such as sociology, political science, anthropology, and public policy (Finney & Simpson, 2009; Geddes & Scholten, 2016). Therefore, I have structured this review around several key themes: public attitudes and perceptions (Blinder & Richards, 2016; Anderson & Blinder, 2011), economic impacts (Dustmann et al., 2013), social cohesion and cultural

integration (Hickman et al., 2008), and the role of policy in shaping migrant experiences (Somerville & Ager, 2020).

At its core, the debate revolves around the tensions between notions of national identity, cultural diversity, economic interests, and social cohesion (Goodhart, 2013; Parekh, 2008). Scholars have scrutinised the impacts of migration on various aspects of society, including labour markets, social welfare systems, and community relations (Dustmann & Frattini, 2014). For instance, studies have examined how migration has influenced wage levels, employment rates, and the demand for public services (Migration Advisory Committee, 2018), as well as its effects on social trust and community relations (Laurence & Bentley, 2016). However, it is crucial to acknowledge that blaming migrants for apparent socioeconomic issues is not only unfair but also often misplaced. While migration undoubtedly influences economic and social dynamics, attributing all challenges solely to migrant communities oversimplifies complex structural issues within society (Goodhart, 2013). Media representations also play a significant role in shaping public perceptions and exacerbating these ideas, often perpetuating stereotypes and fostering divisive narratives that scapegoat migrants for broader societal problems (Khosravinik, 2009; Lawlor, 2015).

Nevertheless, academic discourse on migration and integration has informed policymaking, educational practice, and migrant experiences in several ways (Castles et al., 2014; Spencer, 2018). For instance, research highlighting the benefits of bilingualism and the importance of language support has led to the implementation of English language classes for migrants (Ager & Strang, 2008). This integration of language learning into migrant support services reflects a

growing recognition of the importance of linguistic inclusion (Baker & Wright, 2017; Cooke, 2015) whereby these initiatives could be viewed as an aim to better facilitate linguistic integration, enhance communication skills, and promote social inclusion among migrant populations.

Baker and Wright (2017) are also of the view that the integration of language learning into migrant support services reflects a growing recognition of the importance of linguistic inclusion, as proficiency in the host country's language can significantly improve migrants' access to employment, education, and social services. However, Cooke's research highlights the importance of ESOL education in fostering social integration among migrants, while also acknowledging the challenges faced by both learners and educators in the field, consequently emphasising the need for participatory approaches to language education that involve students in the design and implementation of their learning experiences.

Furthermore, studies on the economic contributions of migrants have also challenged negative stereotypes and influenced public debate (Migration Observatory, 2020). These findings have been crucial in shaping the development of policies that aim to leverage the skills and knowledge of migrants for the benefit of both the host country and the migrant communities themselves (Ruhs & Anderson, 2010). Moreover, studies on language support have also led to the development of specialised programmes for specific groups of migrants, such as refugees and asylum seekers (McIntyre & Neuhaus, 2021). These targeted interventions aim to address the unique challenges faced by these groups and promote their integration into the host society. By

prioritising language learning and fostering linguistic inclusion, policymakers and practitioners can empower migrants to actively participate in their new communities and improve their overall well-being, thus, developing a more inclusive and social just educational environment (Ager & Strang, 2008; Baker & Wright, 2017).

Additionally, the discourse on migration and integration has had a significant impact on social services and community-based initiatives. Grassroots organisations and local authorities have developed programmes that foster cultural exchange, promote mutual understanding, and facilitate the integration of migrants into local communities (Hickman et al., 2008). These initiatives are often informed by the experiences and insights shared by migrants themselves, highlighting the importance of collaborative and participatory approaches in policymaking and practice (Phillimore, 2012). In the context of adult community learning, I would argue that ILPs can play a crucial role in addressing the unique needs and goals of migrant learners as the goal-setting strategy could tailor learning outcomes that are more bespoke to the needs' of learners with diverse backgrounds and learning styles, while also fostering the development of essential social skills I have previously discussed the importance of (Coffield et al., 2004; Parthenis & Fragoulis, 2020).

Although studies showcasing the significance of language proficiency in the integration process of migrants is far-reaching with evidence suggesting that language proficiency correlates with indicators of social integration, such as interethnic friendships and civic engagement, there is still debate among scholars on the extent to which language proficiency alone determines

successful integration. The discourse highlights the importance of broader structural factors, such as socioeconomic status, discrimination, and cultural attitudes towards immigrants – particularly the way migrants are portrayed in mainstream media (Lewandowski, 2021; Ager & Strang, 2008; Ndhlovu, 2014). For instance, newspaper headlines such as “Immigrants create overcrowding and fuel tensions, report finds” (The Telegraph 03 Jul 2013) or Hazel Blears: Immigration fuels social tension (The Telegraph, 11 June 2008) help elucidate these tensions (Lewandowski, 2021). This nuanced understanding of integration recognises the interplay between language proficiency and other contextual factors, emphasising the need for comprehensive policies that address a range of integration-related issues.

Migrants who arrive in a new country often settle in economically disadvantaged areas and take up low-wage jobs as they strive to establish themselves (BBC, 2013). Understandably, they frequently gravitate towards neighbourhoods where their language and cultural background are represented, forming or joining support networks composed of friends and family members who share their linguistic and cultural heritage.

Further research suggests that poverty and ethnic segregation are inversely related to social cohesion (BBC, 2013). The presence of diverse social groups can sometimes generate feelings of threat and tension, leading to potential conflicts between minority and majority populations (Lewandowski, 2021). Here, ESOL programmes can play a pivotal role in addressing the needs of migrant learners, who often settle in economically disadvantaged areas and enter low

wage employment (Castles, de Haas and Miller, 2014; Phillimore and Goodson, 2010).

Therefore, through ensuring that such programmes are accessible and affordable, these initiatives can provide targeted support to help learners develop their language skills, which is crucial for integration and success in a new country (Simpson and Whiteside, 2015; Baynham, 2006).

Additionally, engaging with local organisations and cultural groups enables ESOL programmes to create culturally sensitive learning environments, fostering a sense of belonging and motivation among participants (Piller, 2016). Furthermore, these programmes can promote social cohesion by facilitating language acquisition, addressing cultural barriers, and fostering positive interactions between diverse social groups, which could help reduce tensions in ethnically diverse areas (Bigelow, 2010). Subsequently, ESOL programmes can empower learners to improve their socioeconomic status and quality of life by opening doors to better job opportunities and higher wages (Anderson & Blinder, 2011).

As Lewandowski (2021) highlights, the presence of diverse social groups can sometimes generate feelings of threat and tension, leading to potential conflicts between minority and majority populations. These tensions may stem from various factors, including perceived competition for resources, such as employment opportunities, housing, school placements, and access to healthcare within the National Health Service. Drawing on conflict theory proposed by Blalock (1967 in Sturgis et al., 2014), Patrick Sturgis, a Professor

of Quantitative Social Science, and his colleagues explore this dynamic in their 2014 paper. According to this theory, the perceived threats to the prevailing social order arising from ethnic diversity within communities can fuel stereotyping and discriminatory treatment of ethnic minority groups (Sturgis et al., 2014:1288).

The Integrated Communities Action Plan, published by the UK Government in February 2019, was introduced as a response to challenges and tensions highlighted in the works of Lewandowski (2021) and others. Acknowledging the potential for conflict between minority and majority populations which are often fuelled by perceptions of resource competition and increased ethnic diversity, the plan aimed to promote integration and foster social cohesion across the UK.

Drawing on Blalock's (1967) conflict theory (as cited in Sturgis et al., 2014) and supported by the work of scholars like Sturgis, the Action Plan recognises the structural and social factors that contribute to intergroup tensions. Its outlined measures include a comprehensive English language strategy, the Integration Innovation Fund, the introduction of Local Authority Asylum Support Liaison Officer roles, and tailored programmes for women from segregated communities. Collectively, these initiatives aim to reduce isolation, address communication barriers, and build more inclusive communities.

However, as Cooke and Peutrell (2019) argue in *Brokering Britain, Educating Citizens*, such policy frameworks often reduce ESOL learners to subjects of surveillance and compliance. The framing of English language learning as a civic obligation can perpetuate deficit narratives that view migrants as culturally

lacking, rather than as holders of rich knowledge and social capital. This government-led vision contrasts sharply with grassroots ESOL practices that centre learner dignity, critical pedagogy, and agency. Their work surfaces the tension between top-down, policy mechanisms and community-based approaches that resist the instrumentalisation of language learning in the service of nationalism or securitisation.

In conclusion, while the UK Government's efforts, as seen in the Action Plan do demonstrate a commitment to social cohesion, they also reflect a broader policy landscape where ESOL education is framed as a tool of assimilation. As a key stakeholder, the government not only funds and regulates adult ESOL education through bodies like Ofsted and the Education and Skills Funding Agency, but also shapes the metrics by which quality and impact are assessed. In this context, ILPs are positioned as performance measurement tools, used to evidence learning gains among lower-level learners. Yet, when framed critically, these tools also become a site of contention, illustrating the tension between standardised outcomes and learner-centred empowerment.

2.7 Assessment in ESOL Community Learning and Social Justice

In this section, I will explore assessment in ESOL community learning, focusing on the unique profile of learners and the social justice implications of assessment practices. It is essential to consider what are appropriate assessment tools for pre-entry and entry-level ESOL learners with diverse literacy skills and address their specific needs while considering shared social justice outcomes, given the diverse cultural, educational, and linguistic

backgrounds of the learners. Tailoring assessments to meet the needs of learners with different literacy levels helps to ensure accurate evaluation and support for their learning journey. Considering the social justice implications of assessment practices can also help create an inclusive learning environment that promotes equal opportunities for success.

As I have previously highlighted, exams may not be the most appropriate assessment tool for ESOL learners in adult community learning due to their diverse educational backgrounds and literacy levels. Many entry-level ESOL learners lack the study skills and literacy required for exams, making it difficult for them to demonstrate their true abilities and progress (Allemano, 2018). Additionally, ESOL in community learning settings often serves learners who have limited or no experience with formal education, making exams an unfamiliar and potentially intimidating form of assessment (Sidway, 2018). Sidway's (2018) study further revealed that student motivations for exams are mainly driven by extrinsic factors, such as their desire to integrate, rather than the pursuit of passing the exams and gaining qualifications. This finding provides evidence of learners' willingness and focus on becoming active members of their communities. Consequently, alternative assessment methods that are more learner-centred in community ESOL settings, accounting for their unique needs and experiences, would be more suitable for promoting social justice and inclusivity.

This argument finds further support in the work of Cooke and Peutrell (2019), who present examples of community ESOL projects that use participatory and narrative-based assessment methods. These approaches shift the focus from

quantifiable progress to meaningful engagement, allowing learners to articulate their goals in their own terms. Such practices align with the Capabilities Approach, which values what learners are able to be and do, rather than what they can produce within externally imposed criteria (Nussbaum, 2006; Walker, 2006). In this way, Cooke and Peutrell's work reinforces the idea that assessment for social justice must go beyond performance tracking and instead cultivate spaces where learners are recognised as whole people with rich, complex trajectories. This broader argument resonates with McArthur's (2013) earlier call to rethink how knowledge is framed and valued within higher education, which she links directly to questions of social justice. Though her analysis is situated in HE, it underscores the importance of considering how assessment practices shape learners' opportunities to flourish.

More recently, Cooke, Rampton and Simpson (2023) highlight how ESOL educators in England enact forms of linguistic citizenship amid ongoing policy neglect. Despite the absence of coherent national strategy, their study highlights how grassroots practitioners have developed inclusive, participatory pedagogies that position learners not as linguistic deficits, but as active contributors to public life. This reframing aligns with the Capabilities Approach in its emphasis on dignity, participation, and agency, and reinforces calls to move beyond instrumental, target-driven models of assessment. Their work also offers practical insight into how educators resist reductive metrics and instead foster environments where language learning supports civic engagement and social belonging.

In light of this, it becomes crucial to explore and assess approaches like ILPs that have the potential to foster more socially just and inclusive assessment practices in community ESOL.

Nevertheless, community adult learning, encompassing both formal and non-formal learning, is under-represented in terms of assessment practices, particularly for adult ESOL learners with basic literacy needs at the lowest level recognised by the NQF in the UK (Gov.uk, 2020) in addition to a lack of scholarly literature on Assessment for Social Justice in community ESOL. It is useful to note, however, that there is a body of literature on assessment in adult education in the U.S. which acknowledges assessment is a primary concern in government-funded programmes for accountability and demonstrating the impact on learners' integration and civic life (Van Duzen & Berdan, 1990).

A unique concept relevant to the specific profile of learners in this context, briefly touched on earlier in this chapter, is the "spiky" student profile. This is a term often used in ESOL teaching and learning to describe the uneven range of skills learners may possess across the four language domains (Schellekens, 2008; Cooke, 2006). That is, a learner may demonstrate strong fluency in spoken English while struggling with reading or writing, particularly if they are unfamiliar with the Roman script (Baynham et al., 2007). This disproportionate skill distribution is often seen among pre-entry and entry 1–3 learners due to their diverse educational backgrounds and experiences (Mallows, 2006).

Understanding the "spiky" profile is crucial for evaluating whether assessment tools adequately capture learners' strengths and needs, while also addressing broader social justice aims.

2.7.1 Assessment for Learning in ESOL: Equity and Learner Perspectives

In the domain of Assessment for Learning, McArthur (2016) emphasises the significant influence of assessment on student learning, suggesting that it is one of the most powerful factors shaping the learning process (p. 2). More recently, McArthur (2018) has extended this discussion, providing a comprehensive examination of how assessment can be reimagined to promote social justice across higher education. While her focus is on HE, the principles of capability expansion and inclusive assessment have clear relevance for adult ESOL contexts, where learners' diverse needs call for approaches that move beyond narrow performance measures. Consequently, the relationship between learning and social justice is crucial in understanding the role of assessment practices within adult ESOL education. This forms the foundation for a critical discussion on whether the ILP, as a tool for assessment, supports or hinders social justice within this context. Moreover, a tri-fold aspect of this study seeks to explore students' own experiences and awareness of their learning progression through ILP assessment, highlighting the importance of understanding the impact of this assessment tool on their educational journey. Thus, in the context of one of the fastest-growing sectors of adult education in the UK (Feinstein & Hammond, 2004), it is vital to investigate whether formative assessment approaches, like ILPs with their SMART target-driven strategies, support or hinder social justice for migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers.

While the LSDA has encouraged wider use of target setting for individual students in the learning and skills sector, it is important to note that the primary intention behind this shift was to focus on the learning process rather than

merely measuring achievement (Martinez, 2001, as cited in Shepherd, 2017). Thus, understanding the role of assessment for learning within adult ESOL education requires examining how formative assessment practices and tools, like ILPs, impact student learning and contribute to social justice for diverse learners.

2.7.2 ILPs as Learner-Centred Assessment in Practice: Opportunities and Limitations

Building on the previous section's exploration of the specific needs and barriers faced by ESOL learners, this section shifts focus to the concept of learner agency and the importance of positioning learners as active participants in the assessment process. Recognising the voices, contexts, and lived experiences of learners is not only central to equitable practice but also to fostering meaningful engagement with education itself.

Breen (2018b) argues for a shift towards more individualised and context-sensitive approaches to education, aligning with the broader aims of social justice. In the ESOL context, this entails recognising that learners come with distinct goals, prior knowledge, and life responsibilities that should shape both the content and mode of their learning. Therefore, tools such as ILPs can, in theory, help realise this by tailoring goals to each learner's aspirations. Additionally, involving learners in the ILP goal-setting process can enhance autonomy, promote motivation, and create a stronger sense of ownership over their learning journeys (Morton & Linares, 2012).

However, while ILPs offer a promising route to learner-centred assessment, their practical implementation can also be restrictive. As I explore later in this chapter, constraints such as institutional targets, limited time, and lack of staff training may reduce ILPs to tokenistic exercises. This tension highlights the need for educators to critically reflect on how assessment tools are enacted, ensuring they genuinely serve learners' interests rather than institutional convenience.

Breen (2018a, 2024) consistently emphasises the importance of acknowledging learners' lived realities, whether it be caring responsibilities, precarious employment, or digital exclusion. In this sense, agency is not only about choice or voice but about being enabled to participate fully within the structures of education. Assessment, therefore, must be flexible and responsive. For example, learners may benefit from assessments embedded in real-life contexts, but these should be adaptable enough to reflect individual priorities which could involve gaining English for the workplace, navigating healthcare, or engaging in civic life.

To support agency effectively, educators must also view themselves not just as transmitters of knowledge but as co-constructors of learning environments. This includes creating space for reflection, dialogue, and learner-led evaluation. Such an approach positions assessment as a formative and transformative practice and one that can challenge deficit narratives and affirm learners' capacity to shape their futures.

2.8 Challenges and Controversies Surrounding ILPs in Educational Practice

There is a difference between procedural and outcome-based approaches and as Petty (2009) notes, practice in regard to ILPs vary widely. Sejits and Latham (2005) distinguish further learning goals and performance goals, whereby a performance goal is focused on being set to achieve a specific end which can affect 'a person's desire to draw an extant knowledge and skills to become a high performer' (p.127). However, this type of goal setting does not emphasise the development of new skills or abilities. On the one hand, Sejits and Latham (2005) state that a goal to acquire the requisite task knowledge leads to higher performance, as individuals are able to take the time to gain the knowledge to perform the task effectively. Lock and Latham (2006) further support this notion by emphasising the importance of goal-setting in promoting learning. In line with these ideas, engaging in more authentic assessment, as suggested by Willis, Cowie, and Harris (2016), can encourage students to develop agency and further enhance their learning outcomes. This is perhaps because the developmental nature of the goal setting over a period of time accommodates for learners to view themselves becoming more expert and belonging in the community of practice.

However, the literature which considers learning in contrast to performance mainly criticises the use of ILP in setting goals for learning and instead recognises it as goals for performance and/or performance measurement for reasons I previously highlighted in this chapter pertaining to government policy and securing funding. Shepherd (2017) highlights the need for students to have

an awareness of their progress and what the relative steps to manage this process are which other authors, notably Tertullien (2018) and Isaku (2014), claim that the ILP in ESOL teaching and learning does not do.

Furthermore, Ofsted recognises progress in learning as a major focus which it states the inspectors will be evaluating the extent to which progress is made at the start of programmes in comparison to what has been achieved and that learners attain their goals (Ofsted, 2016: 49). Nevertheless, Shepherd (2017) challenges whether achievements of targets is an accurate evaluation of what has been achieved, also citing Fielding (1999), who makes claims of ‘confusion of clarity’ that hinder the achievements of targets as accurate performance measures. This notion of ‘confusion of clarity’ is evidenced further by the premise that students actually have understanding of several things. These include but are not limited to a full understanding of the goal, their own abilities (both linguistic and wider academic skills), and the ability to “see” what they need to do to achieve it.

Additionally, Shepherd (2017) highlights what Coffield (2009) described as students being able to think about their own learning with Schellenkens (2007) arguing that, “learners are so busy processing language, taking in information and trying to create meaning that there is hardly any space for the monitoring of performance...Learners may lack linguistic knowledge to describe their needs ... it is hard, if not impossible for language learners to reflect on their language performance. It is even more difficult for them to predict language needs in that they cannot be aware of aspects they have not yet uncovered” (Schellenkens, 2007: 135).

In regard to target setting for ESOL learners, Isaku (2014) makes a much bolder claim as to ILPs being seen as “a nonsense document which have been imposed from above, pedagogically flawed and bureaucratically unworkable” (p.56). However, it is interesting and also important to note that Isaku’s study does not suggest that all tutors are anti-ILP or consider it to be completely irrelevant to learner needs, rather the findings highlight flaws within its implementation and practice and offers some recommendations which I will draw my focus onto in the following section. Tutors’ frustrations, however, are also highlighted by Isaku (2014). These include, again, but are not limited to lack of “a language in common with learners, which makes it difficult to negotiate targets with them” (p.55). This is in addition to learners’ cultural awareness which means that low level learners do not understand the purpose of target setting. The frustrations then move on unsurprisingly to the tutors being expected to “express SMART learning goals in language that satisfies funding bodies” (ibid). The implication of this therefore becomes a very tutor-led, non-negotiable process of target setting for ILPs with no allowance for development of learner autonomy and/or agency as previously discussed. The findings from Tertullien’s (2017) study also echo these issues. Tertullien states when learners were asked who decides the targets, students promptly proceeded with “the teacher” as their answer. Nevertheless, Tertullien reported the learners expressed a lot of confidence in their ability to understand and engage in what was being said to them in a tutorial. It is worth mentioning the level of these learners is entry 2, which is slightly higher than those in the study by Isaku (2014). Tertullien also highlights the emphasis by Petty (2009) of mature learners to “negotiate their own learning needs, set their own targets

and monitor and assess their own learning” which she reports students did feel was happening.

2.9 Using Nussbaum's Capabilities Approach: A Soft Lens for Exploring the Transformative Potential of ILPs in Community ESOL

It is widely acknowledged that the literature on effective ESOL teaching, learning, and assessment often draws upon critical pedagogy, particularly the influential work of Paulo Freire (see Auerbach, 1996; Wallace, 2003; Norton & Toohey, 2004). While this lens provides valuable insights, my study takes a different turn. Even though ILPs face various challenges and criticisms, I argue that a more learner-centred approach can make them effective tools for assessment that promotes social justice and are valuable in demonstrating a transformative learning process in ESOL learners' development of wider social skills. Furthermore, by examining ILPs through Martha Nussbaum's Capabilities Approach, serving as a soft lens, I aim to explore how ILPs can be restructured to focus on holistic skill development and learner empowerment which in turn show richer evidence of both progression and achievement for satisfying education management purposes. Using the Capabilities Approach as a flexible framework also allows for an open exploration of ways to enhance ILPs, ultimately promoting the well-being and social integration of English language learners which in turn highlights the potential of ILPs to contribute to social justice when tailored to support learners' diverse needs and foster their overall development.

Martha Nussbaum, a renowned American philosopher and professor at the University of Chicago, has made significant contributions to the development of the Capabilities Approach building upon the work of economist Amartya Sen. She has played a pivotal role in advancing and shaping the Capabilities Approach as a framework for understanding human well-being and social justice (Nussbaum, 2011).

The central tenet of the Capabilities Approach emphasises the importance of individual capabilities and opportunities in leading a life that individuals have reason to value (Sen, 1999). Nussbaum's formulation of the Sen's work highlights ten central capabilities, including life, bodily health, practical reason, affiliation, and control over one's environment, among others (Nussbaum, 2006). Walker (2006) asserts that the Capabilities Approach provides an alternative discourse to the dominant human capital ideas prevalent in education policy. Instead of viewing education solely as a means to enhance economic productivity, the Capabilities Approach considers education as a way to expand people's freedoms and opportunities.

Consequently, Nussbaum's approach has been widely influential across various disciplines, including education, where it offers valuable insights into the development of policies and practices that foster holistic learner development and social justice (Walker & Unterhalter, 2007). By considering Nussbaum's contributions to the Capabilities Approach, I aim to highlight the relevance of this approach as a soft lens for analysing and enhancing the ILP as an effective and transformative tool for both learning and assessment in Community ESOL.

2.9.1 Reframing ILPs within the Capabilities Approach with a Soft Application of Nussbaum's Capabilities Approach

Nussbaum's Capabilities Approach has been instrumental in shaping discussions around educational equity and social justice, emphasising the importance of enabling individuals to live dignified and fulfilling lives (Unterhalter, 2017). This approach highlights the need to address systemic barriers to education and ensure equal opportunities for all learners, regardless of socio-economic background, race, ethnicity, or other social identities. The approach informs debates on inclusive education, access to quality education for marginalised groups, and education's role in promoting social cohesion and democratic citizenship (Walker, 2006).

Walker (2006), another key scholar exploring the Capabilities Approach in education, argues that this framework has significant potential for addressing a wide range of education-related questions. She emphasises the approach's ability to examine issues, such as education's role in promoting social justice and its connection to other capabilities. She states,

The capability approach has potential for examining a wide range of education questions, such as the role of education in promoting social justice, the relationship between education and other capabilities, the measurement of education inequality, the intergenerational transmission of inequalities through schooling, and the evaluation of education quality (Walker, 2006, p. 163).

This demonstrates that the Capabilities Approach can inform debates on inclusive education, access to quality education for marginalised groups, and education's role in promoting social cohesion and democratic citizenship. Additionally, Walker (2006) proposes a provisional list of education capabilities, taking into account gender equity in South African schools, which further showcases the approach's applicability in diverse contexts and its focus on well-being and development beyond academic achievement.

Further application of Nussbaum's Capabilities Approach in education is its influence on educational policies and practices, emphasising the development of students' capabilities. For instance, curriculum design can be informed by the Capabilities Approach to ensure educational goals and learning outcomes are aligned with promoting students' overall well-being and agency. Tikly and Barrett (2013), who explore education quality and social justice in the global South, argue that a curriculum rooted in the Capabilities Approach can empower students to participate fully in society. They emphasise:

A curriculum based on the capability approach would seek to develop the capabilities of students to participate fully in society, including their ability to critically reflect on their own lives and the lives of others and to imagine and work towards a more just society (Tikly & Barrett, 2013, p. 4).

This perspective highlights the importance of a curriculum based on the Capabilities Approach, enabling students to fully participate in society by fostering critical reflection on their own lives and the lives of others, as well as

working towards a more just society. In the context of ESOL education, this approach becomes particularly significant, as it can support learners in developing essential social skills for better civic engagement and community integration as previously denoted in my discussion on both performance-driven government policy and the immigration and integration debate surrounding migrant ESOL learners.

Imperiale (2017) extends the application of Nussbaum's Capabilities Approach to conflict-affected and marginalised education settings, highlighting how the development of capabilities through education contributes to peace, dignity, and social cohesion. While her focus is on international post-conflict contexts, the principles resonate strongly with adult ESOL education, particularly in community learning where learners often face systemic disadvantage and linguistic exclusion. In this sense, ILPs when guided by a Capabilities lens, have the potential not only to support functional literacy but to nurture learner agency, emotional well-being, and the ability to participate meaningfully in society. This aligns with my aim to reframe ILPs as tools for assessment for social justice within the ESOL landscape.

Thus, drawing upon Nussbaum's Capabilities Approach as an analytical framework, this study explores the potential benefits of incorporating its principles into ILPs. By doing so, I also explore learners' own awareness of their learning and progression in both language learning and the development of broader social capabilities. Additionally, employing Nussbaum's Capabilities Approach as a soft lens in this study allows for a critical reflection on how ILPs can be reimagined in a way that fosters learning goals, learner autonomy, and

social justice. Additionally, incorporating these aspects into ESOL education would help support learners' overall growth and confidence, especially within diverse community contexts.

2.10 Summary

This chapter explored the growing use of personalised learning schemes in education, driven by businesses aligning with what some consider to be the government's neoliberal agenda (Ball, 2009). However, their compatibility with the needs of ESOL learners remains questionable (Burch, 2006), requiring critical evaluation. To promote effective and inclusive practices for social justice, ESOL educators must balance performance measurement demands with diverse student learning objectives.

The literature discusses ILP use in ESOL as an assessment tool, considering its role in advancing social justice in learning. Building upon the study's introduction, this chapter showed the evolution of adult education into adult community learning, focusing on ESOL, along with its benefits and challenges. Discussion on assessment for social justice in ILPs also highlighted critique on SMART target setting, mainly its use for performance measurement rather than learning assessment (Isaku, 2014; Tertullien, 2017).

Although the ILP's relevance to students is recognised, adaptations are suggested to increase efficiency and cater to learners' needs. Isaku (2014) proposes adapted ILPs could enhance learner autonomy, promoting lifelong learning. Tertullien (2017) further recommends researching pre-entry and entry-level learners and investigating the trend towards AfL (Lewandowski, 2021).

Sen's (2005) notion that individual identity is shaped by choices serves as the foundation to the potential framework for this study. Sen's Capabilities Approach (2007, 2010) distinguishes procedural and outcome-based approaches while emphasising good procedure. However, Nussbaum's (2006, 2011) interpretation of the Capabilities Approach, focusing on ten Central Capabilities, provides a more suitable framework for examining well-being and social justice in education and a soft lens through which the study's findings will be analysed.

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Introduction

In conducting this exploratory study, I set out the methodological approach and discuss the techniques I adopt in consideration of my role not only as a researcher but also as a teacher with an existing insight which has evolved over the past decade from my teaching experience. It is imperative for me to state this upfront in order to contextualise why I adopt the positionality I do within this study, furthermore, in recognition of the way I view the world and my ontology and epistemology which is also shaped by my experience as an educator. It is through this lens that I carefully select a mainly qualitative method of research whilst opting for some quantitative methods of data collection, namely surveys, in order to gain an insight into specific statistics for a clearer sense of the whole study rather than to hypothesise anything. In this chapter, I aim not merely to outline commonly used research methods or describe how the data is collected and analysed, but to provide a clear rationale for my methodological choices and explain why they are best suited to the exploratory nature of this study.

I will first proceed by re-stating the research aim and subsequently the RQs before redefining my dual role as a researcher-educator along with my ontological and epistemological stance in the following section. Throughout this chapter I aim to weave the data collection methods and analysis closely to RQs I seek to answer, making a conscious effort to gravitate back to the anchor, that is the study's main aim.

The aim of this research is to investigate the application and influence of ILPs within Adult Community ESOL education on entry level learners' development of linguistic competencies and wider social skills. Through employing a multi-method qualitative approach, which includes interviews, surveys, and document analysis, the study seeks to provide a detailed examination of the execution and efficacy of ILPs in this context. Following on from this research aim, I also set out to address the following five guiding questions:

1. In what ways can ILPs evidence student learning outcomes and overall development, particularly in terms of academic competencies and broader social skills?
2. How do students and staff view their experiences with ILPs?
3. How can selected Nussbaum's Central Capabilities be used to analyse the transformative potential of ESOL education in achieving social justice?
4. To what extent can ILPs contribute to a more inclusive, empowering, and socially just learning environment, and how can they help address the constraints imposed by government policies?
5. How can the findings of this study inform future policy and practice within the ESOL educational sphere, particularly in terms of prioritising holistic student development and fostering more balanced and comprehensive approaches to assessment in community ESOL?

3.2 Establishing my Positionality

A study's starting point requires establishing the epistemology and ontology (Danermark et. al 2006), however, Grix (2004) highlights how these should be connected to practical research work. As I have previously stated, I am mindful of my dual role as researcher-teacher and how this inevitably impacts on the study. In this section, I draw upon my understandings of what it means to be a researcher, and distinguish 'what' knowledge is and 'how' we come to know about it.

Furthermore, in coordinating the research design, I would like to highlight both 'why' in addition to the 'how' of the research and consider where 'research' comes from, whose interests does it serve and where my place is within the study (Chilisa, 2012). Thus, this research takes into account my experience in teaching ESOL in an adult education community setting and to learners who are at entry level and who are the subjects of this study. In this regard, I adopt a constructivist ontological position which generally argues that there is no 'real' world which exists without meaning being attached to social phenomena (Marsh, Ercan and Furlong, 2018). A further issue and one which is pivotal to this study is my own values as the researcher which are central to the research being conducted. Undertaking this research from the actual role and position of teacher and researcher in addition to being carried out at my place of work and the central place of learning for the students – the subjects of this study. Many participants involved are known to me due to pre-existing and continuing teacher-learner relationships.

It is useful to rehighlight that my experience as a teacher working in the field of adult education in a community setting undoubtedly shapes the aim, design and conduct of the study. Haraway (2016) identifies this as 'situated knowledge' which is a form of understanding objectivity is not always entirely possible as all knowledge comes from 'positional perspectives'. Haraway claims further that the positionality of researchers inherently determines what is possible to know about an object of interest and based on this argues for an epistemology based on situated knowledge.

Furthermore, Willig (2003) advocates for reflecting on assumptions – about the world and about the knowledge we have made in the course of the research which help us to consider the implications of such assumptions made prior to the research and findings. Therefore, the choice of epistemological and ontological stance for this study is an interpretive paradigm in the social constructivism branch which considers social entities, phenomena and their meaning as socially constructed. Thus, their meaning has to be found in the way they are constructed (Creswell, 2007). In the following section, I will provide a rationale for the choice of a mainly qualitative research design and use of mixed-method data collection.

3.3 Rationale for a Qualitative Approach

Dudovski (2018) emphasises the importance of considering human interest in qualitative research. Richie and Lewis (2003) further explain that qualitative research is concerned with understanding the meanings people attach to actions, decisions, beliefs, values, and the like within their social world, and

understanding the mental mapping processes that respondents use to interpret the world around them. Given my role as a researcher, I believe a qualitative approach is most reflective of the exploratory nature of this study. My aim is to uncover and present the lived experiences, perceptions, and awareness of the learners' RARPAP through ILP use. This approach aligns with the study's focus on social justice in assessment, highlighting how learners develop language, academic, and wider social skills, such as employability (Bartel, 2018).

By adopting a qualitative approach, I hope to give learners a voice to share their authentic experiences and perspectives, addressing previous studies that have focused on teachers' frustrations with bureaucratic processes misrepresented as student voices. The objective is to utilise findings from the data analysis to inform better practices for ILP use, focusing on expanding and developing learners' capabilities rather than solely on performance measurement.

Silverman (2006) emphasises that methodological choices should be adapted to the research questions and not vice versa. This approach was supported in my formulation of research questions, which were developed before deciding on specific methodological practices.

Although some argue that mixed-method designs may suggest the superiority of quantitative methods (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005), I maintain that combining both qualitative and quantitative data is justifiable due to the limitations of each method. Hossler and Vesper (1993) and Creswell et al. (2008) highlight that mixed methods combine the reliability and validity of quantitative research with

the richness of qualitative data. Creswell et al. (2008) demonstrated this in their study on parental savings for higher education, where they collected both qualitative and quantitative data to gain deeper insights.

Thus, I have used multiple data collection methods, both qualitative and quantitative, to maximise their benefits while simultaneously minimising their drawbacks. The specific methods of data collection will be discussed in the following sections within this chapter, emphasising the validity and credibility benefits highlighted in the concept of triangulation (Wilson, 2014).

3.4 Rationale for Using Mixed-Method Data Collection

Dudovskiy (2018) emphasises the importance of considering human interest in qualitative research. Richie and Lewis (2003) further explain that qualitative research is concerned with understanding the meanings people attach to actions, decisions, beliefs, values, and the like within their social world, and understanding the mental mapping processes that respondents use to interpret the world around them. Given my role as a researcher, I believe a qualitative approach is most reflective of the exploratory nature of this study where I aim to uncover and present the lived experiences, perceptions, and awareness of the learners' RARPAP through ILP use. This approach aligns with the study's focus on social justice in assessment, highlighting how learners develop language, academic, and wider social skills such as employability (Bartel, 2018).

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misrepresented as student voices. The objective is to utilise findings from the data analysis to inform better practices for ILP use, focusing on expanding and developing learners' capabilities rather than solely on performance measurement.

As discussed earlier, Silverman (2006) stresses that methodological choices should be adapted to the research questions. This is a principle which underpins the choice of methods in this study. This approach was supported in my formulation of research questions, which were developed before deciding on specific methodological practices.

Although some argue that mixed-method designs may suggest the superiority of quantitative methods (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005), I maintain that combining both qualitative and quantitative data is justifiable due to the limitations of each method. Hossler and Vesper (1993) and Creswell et al. (2008) highlight that mixed methods combine the reliability and validity of quantitative research with the richness of qualitative data. Creswell et al. (2008) demonstrated this in their study on parental savings for higher education, where they collected both qualitative and quantitative data to gain deeper insights.

Thus, I have used multiple data collection methods, both qualitative and quantitative, to maximise their benefits while simultaneously minimising their drawbacks. The specific methods of data collection will be discussed in the following sections within this chapter, emphasising the validity and credibility benefits highlighted in the concept of triangulation (Wilson, 2014).

3.5 Conducting Document Analysis to Contextualise

This study commenced with a document analysis of entry-level community ESOL course files, which comprised course aims, dates, total teaching hours, schemes of work, and ILPs with examples of marked student work submitted as RARPAP evidence. As Bryman (2016) highlights, organisational and institutional documents serve as core sources of secondary data in qualitative research, emphasising the significance of this initial step in laying a robust foundation for the subsequent exploration of ILP effectiveness within adult community ESOL education.

The decision to analyse course files collectively, rather than focusing solely on ILPs, aimed to provide broader contextual insights. This approach was crucial for comprehensively understanding the RARPAP evidence supporting student progression within the framework of ILP-based summative assessments.

Document analysis plays a pivotal role in this process, as it involves a systematic examination of various materials to extract deeper meanings (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Bowen, 2009). According to Corbin and Strauss (2008), this qualitative research method can be applied to a range of documents, including organisational reports, press releases, letters, memoranda, newspapers, journals, application forms, and public records. Bowen (2009) further emphasises the importance of coding content into themes during document analysis, drawing parallels to the techniques used with focus group transcripts or interview data. By employing such a systematic approach, researchers can

effectively extract explicit information and uncover implicit meanings embedded within documents, providing valuable insights that inform their studies.

In this study, document analysis, alongside semi-structured interviews and student questionnaires, played a pivotal role for two main reasons. Firstly, it supported the principle of triangulation, whereby multiple methodologies are used to study the same phenomenon (Love, 2003). Bowen (2009) asserts that data triangulation enhances research credibility by synthesising findings across different data sources, thereby reducing the risk of bias.

For the document analysis of the ESOL course files, I initially conducted a comprehensive overview of the entire course contents. This involved systematically reviewing class profiles to gather student background information and studying schemes of work to understand the progression of learning objectives over the course duration (Biggs & Tang, 2011; Popham, 2008). During this phase, I ensured a thorough examination of the overall structure and alignment of the ESOL courses.

Subsequently, I adopted a focused approach to examine the ILPs in further detail, a methodology advocated by Guthrie, Klauda, and Ho (2013) for personalised learning assessment in educational settings. I meticulously examined all ILPs, selecting two from each course: one produced by a higher-level learner and another by a lower-level learner. This detailed examination was guided by principles outlined in educational literature on assessment and goal-setting (Locke & Latham, 2013).

During the detailed review, I applied the SMART criteria (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound) to evaluate the effectiveness of ILP targets, a strategy supported by educational theorists, such as Doran (1981) and Armstrong (2006). I assessed whether the targets contained within the selected ILPs provided challenging yet achievable goals tailored to the needs of both higher and lower-level learners (Bliuc, Goodyear & Ellis, 2007).

Furthermore, the review focused on identifying RARPAP evidence within the ILPs and evaluating whether the assigned coursework allowed both higher and lower-level learners ample opportunities to demonstrate progress through iterative feedback and revisions, aligning with literature on the importance of robust evidence collection (Black & William, 1998) and formative assessment practices (Hattie & Timperley, 2007).

This process involved completing a comparative table guided by further key questions:

1. Do the portfolios contain sufficient evidence for each learner, organised appropriately?
2. Are diagnostic assessment outcomes effectively linked to ILP targets for both higher and lower-level learners?
3. Are the targets in the ILPs SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound) and appropriately challenging for both higher and lower-level learners?

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4. Does the work set allow both higher and lower-level learners the opportunity to produce evidence of progress (e.g., corrections, drafts with corresponding improvements)?
 5. Is there evidence of summative assessment and feedback to measure the achievement of targets?

The findings from this detailed analysis will be expanded upon in the subsequent chapter and in final chapter on conclusions and recommendations, aiming to highlight strengths and areas for improvement in ILP implementation and educational practices.

3.6 Student Surveys

In line with the overall research methodology, which aimed to gather comprehensive insights from a diverse range of entry-level learners, semi-structured interviews were chosen as the primary data collection technique. This method was specifically selected due to its ability to provide rich, qualitative data focusing on students' lived experiences and capturing unique perspectives that might not be fully represented through other methods.

However, complementing the interviews, student surveys were employed to obtain standardised responses from a large sample of students (Cohen et al., 2017) and to contextualise the findings from the semi-structured interviews alongside the document analysis of the students' ILPs. By integrating these supplementary data sources, this study sought to maximize student input, ensure representation across the entire range of learners with varying fluency

levels and literacy skills within the Community and Cultural Learning department's ESOL courses, and contribute to a more thorough understanding of their awareness and experiences in relation to ILPs and their progression in employment or further education.

A significant advantage of using surveys is the ability to employ highly structured questions or dichotomous questions, which provide "a clear unequivocal response" (Cohen et al., 2017, p. 477). This structured approach addresses potential challenges, such as language barriers, as all respondents are second-language speakers of English with varying levels of fluency. While some students demonstrate high fluency in spoken English, all respondents possess extremely low or zero basic literacy skills in written English, even with the aid of electronic translators.

3.6.1 Sampling Method

In this thesis, the terms "*teacher*" and "*tutor*" are used interchangeably. This reflects both the varied terminology across ESOL contexts and the language used by participants themselves. Convenience sampling was employed to recruit participants from all entry-level ESOL classes within the Community and Cultural Learning Department. This approach involved coordinating with tutors teaching these classes to enlist willing participants. Convenience sampling is a non-probability sampling method where researchers select participants based on their availability and accessibility (Etikan et al., 2016). This method has been widely used in educational research due to its practicality and efficiency (Dörnyei & Taguchi, 2010). In this context, convenience sampling allowed for a

quick and straightforward recruitment process while focusing on the targeted student population within the department.

3.6.2 Longitudinal Perspectives

A unique aspect of this study is the partially longitudinal aspect. Longitudinal research involves the data being collected repeatedly over a period of time. The surveys were conducted within the longitudinal design considering the fact I wanted to gain an insight of the learners' awareness surrounding RARPAP/ILP practice and the terminology relating to it alongside their current skills, capabilities, personal goals and objectives for the course. I wanted to do this comparatively, that is to find out whether there had been any significant change at the start of the course compared to at the finish. Respectively, if there were any significant changes, what those changes were and what they represented. Saldana (2003) describes three key features of qualitative longitudinal research which include the length of the study, time and change. He suggests further that studies involving multiple data collection stages are not entirely longitudinal unless the implications of change over time are discussed and made clear by the researcher. The surveys were therefore conducted in two stages, phase I and II which will be expanded on in the following section.

3.6.3 Development and Dissemination of Surveys

The survey was developed using Qualtrics via a web browser at Lancaster.ac.uk/qualtrics. Qualtrics is the approved and licensed survey platform at Lancaster University, a web-based application which facilitates the design and creation of surveys and allows for the dissemination either entirely

online or as soft or hard copies in Word or PDF format (Qualtrics, 2022).

Qualtrics also allows for the results (of surveys completed online) to be viewed in reports and downloaded.

Two versions of the survey were developed, the first for phase I of the study conducted at the beginning of the course/start of the term and the second for phase II at the finish of the course/end of term. The surveys were not exclusively quantitative as some questions were purposefully designed to allow respondents to express their opinions, impressions, give examples and describe some experiences where possible. It was necessary, however, to investigate on personal information such as nationality, first language and frequency of use of English for the purposes of insight and further analysis which would follow subsequently. The survey questions were divided into blocks for ease of navigation and later analysis. These included learner demographics, use of English, education and work, future plans, skills, RARPAP/ILP awareness. A further block of questions for evaluation of the end of course was added to the surveys for phase II.

There was the option to translate the questionnaires into the learners' languages for which I must acknowledge the usefulness in relation to ease of learner comprehension. However, I decided not to do this because of the way the surveys were to be conducted, either as a whole group activity with the teacher as the main facilitator and possibility for peer support and the option for learners to take the survey home and complete, with the aid of a family member or friend. There was also the option for learners with stronger literacy and IT skills to complete the questionnaire online independently. The questions were

graded for low level literacy comprehension and the closed responses provided support for learners to express themselves without the need for them to generate complex written answers from their own lexical range which could otherwise prove to be problematic.

I must emphasise further that, respondents of this method of data collection were not considered as passive data providers. I gave due consideration to the respondents as subjects as opposed to objects of the research which aligns with the epistemological stance of this research. Thus, this was further exemplified by the qualitative element incorporated into the survey which drew in experiences, impressions and opinions of the respondents which they were willing to share.

3.7 Using Semi-structured Interviews

In social science research, interviews are considered to be one of the most widely used methods of collecting data. They are categorised commonly into three main types; structured, unstructured and semi-structured interviews.

While structured interviews often involve a fixed number of detailed closed questions which the interviewer must strictly adhere to, unstructured interviews as the name suggests, encourage respondents to speak freely without strict boundaries and minimal questions or prompts from the interviewer (Bryman, 2016). Semi-structured interviews fall between the scope of unstructured and structured interviews, allowing for free dialogue but providing some guidance so that the main aim and the focus of the interview is still achieved.

Creswell (2014) highlights the significance of participants' views and experiences in qualitative research in favour of the direction identified in the literature by the research. Thus, I chose to conduct semi-structured interviews because of the flexibility in providing guided questions using prompts to elicit information from participants considering their language skills as non-native speakers of English. I also found it beneficial in adapting the interview questions accordingly or change the order in which they are asked in addition to being able to probe for further detail when necessary. I deliberately avoided the use of closed questions and instead opted to formulate open ended questions with the view in mind that it is intended for the research to be exploratory. Bryman (2016) highlights further that where participants 'rambling' and 'going off into tangents' is discouraged in quantitative structured interviewing, unstructured interviews accommodate and encourage this as the interviewer welcomes this in quest of richer, more detailed answers.

As I previously highlighted, Silverman's (2006) emphasis that methodological choices should adapt to the RQs, not vice versa is reflected in this study where the RQs were formulated before the methodological choices were made. However, the study's epistemological and ontological stance with regard to the issue which needed to be investigated also informed the decision to take a qualitative approach.

The decision to employ semi-structured interviews, in addition to questionnaires and document analysis, was made to gain a deeper understanding of students' experiences and awareness of the ILP in their language and literacy learning, as well as their RARPAP. According to Bryman (2016), semi-structured

interviews allow for a more comprehensive insight into detailed information from the interviewees' perspectives. While the initial questionnaire data aimed to gain statistical insights into student awareness, the semi-structured interviews offered opportunities to collect richer, in-depth information through open-ended questions and discussions.

The semi-structured interview format also accommodates respondents with varying fluency in spoken English, enabling them to share their experiences more fully. In contrast, the student surveys utilised mainly closed questions with graded language to accommodate responses from learners with very low literacy levels. The combination of these data collection methods ensured a thorough exploration of the research topic, capturing both quantitative and qualitative aspects of student awareness and experiences related to ILPs and their progression.

3.7.1 Sampling Approach

Sampling plays a crucial role in qualitative research, influencing the richness and depth of data gathered. For this study, a convenience sampling method was employed to select participants who could provide insightful perspectives on the use of ILPs in language and literacy learning within the context of RARPAP.

3.7.1.1 Student Sampling

Students were selected based on their active participation in class discussions and their inclination to engage in informal conversations about their language

and literacy progress after class. This approach aimed to involve individuals who were likely to be willing and comfortable in sharing valuable insights into their experiences with ILPs. Prior to approaching potential participants, an informal explanation was provided to clarify the study's objectives and emphasise the voluntary nature of participation.

Each nominated student was then offered a consent form, which was translatable into multiple languages and included clear instructions. Participants were encouraged to take the form home to discuss with family or friends before making a decision to participate. This ensured that potential participants fully understood the study's scope and their rights as participants. Ultimately, twelve students voluntarily consented to participate in semi-structured interviews although only nine were interviewed due to scheduling availability.

3.7.1.2 Staff Sampling

Staff members were approached through an initial informal explanation followed by a formal email invitation outlining the study's objectives, procedures, and a consent form. Out of seven staff members contacted, six agreed to participate in Zoom and/or Microsoft Teams interviews, providing valuable insights from an educator's perspective on the implementation and effectiveness of ILPs in language and literacy education.

The use of convenience sampling allowed for practical engagement with willing participants who could offer diverse perspectives on the research topic. While this method facilitated access to participants, efforts were made to ensure

transparency, voluntary participation, and accessibility through translated materials and interpreter services where necessary.

3.7.2 Semi-structured Interview Process

A total of nine students and six staff members were interviewed. To facilitate effective communication and inclusivity among participants with varying levels of English fluency, translator and interpreter assistance was provided during the semi-structured interviews. All respondents were given the opportunity to have a translator or interpreter present, typically a familiar person such as a friend or family member. In one instance, where a student could not arrange for a personal translator, a commercial, professional translation service was used. Three learners demonstrated sufficient fluency to participate in the interviews without assistance, while the remaining six student participants were aided by a familiar person during the interview process. While all nine student interviews informed the analysis, eight are presented as individual case profiles in the findings chapter; the ninth learner's contributions were more limited and are incorporated into the thematic analysis rather than as a standalone profile. All staff interviews were held online via Zoom and Microsoft Teams video calling and student interviews were held both in-person and via Zoom to accommodate scheduling and participant preferences.

3.8 Data Analysis

As this is a qualitative study, the data from all three sources underwent a process of conceptual analysis. The data analysis techniques adapted depended a great deal on my own perspective as the researcher which has

previously been highlighted earlier in this chapter. Creswell (2003) notes that the researcher makes an interpretation of the data and seeks to establish meaning of the phenomenon from the perspectives of the participants as much as possible.

The data from the document analysis was reviewed and dissected then coded into categories the same way the transcripts from the interviews underwent content analysis where I looked for emergent categories and patterns. This was a way to create an understanding of “what’s going on” (Bogdan & Biklen, 2006, p.55) and as Maxwell also explains, coding involves fracturing and recognising the data into categories that are descriptive of the subsumed data. Creswell (2003) also adds that coding is a means to construct conceptual models about meaning of the data collected which allows for personally and theoretically stating the lessons learnt. Again, this supports my argument that as a researcher, my experiences and perspectives are not entirely removed or disassociated from this research.

Interviews were transcribed both manually and using an online transcription application, Descript. Interviews conducted entirely in English were transcribed using Descript for ease and efficiency and the interviews which involved the aid of a translator/interpreter were transcribed manually. This method provided the opportunity to reflect on themes and salient issues which arose (Bryman, 2016) and allowed me to fully contextualise the three-way dialogue using my field notes. The interview transcripts along with the field notes were then re-read closely and colour-coded thematically, before exporting the emerging themes into clearer categories using a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet.

3.8.1 Approach to Data Analysis

As Creswell (2014) notes, qualitative research is particularly suited for capturing the rich, contextualised data necessary to understand the nuances of educational phenomena. Thus, the data analysis involved in this study needed to be “fit for purpose” to explore and interpret the complexities of ILP implementation and educational practices in ESOL courses (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2018).

Qualitative data analysis provides a pathway from data collection to understanding, explaining, and interpreting the study in question (Lewins, Taylor & Gibbs, 2005). This process involves the stages of organising, describing, and comprehending the data, as well as accounting for it. Additionally, making sense of the participants' definitions of the situation (of which the researcher is one) and noting patterns, themes, categories, and regularities are fundamental aspects of the qualitative process. Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2018) emphasise that there is no single way to conduct qualitative data analysis; rather, how one approaches it should be led by the “fitness for purpose” (p.643, *ibid*).

Gibbs (2007) further suggests that qualitative data analysis is heavily reliant on interpretation, often involving multiple interpretations. This process is distinguished by the merging of analysis and interpretation, often occurring simultaneously with data collection. Consequently, the process of analysing the data can become intertwined with data collection itself, as the researcher writes down notes, memos, thoughts, and reflections in the field and during the stages

of observation. In this study, I kept a diary of field notes, which included observations, memos, and reflections while collecting the data, as well as additional thoughts while combing through the raw data and preparing to organise it. This once again reflects the significance of my dual role as teacher and researcher. Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2018) state that “qualitative data focuses on in-depth, context-specific, subjective data and meanings by the participants in the situation, with the researcher herself/himself as a principal research instrument” (p.643).

Therefore, it is important that the data analysis stages—from description to understanding to explanation—are made transparent and demonstrate validity (Glaser & Laudel, 2013). Qualitative methods allow for flexibility in data collection and analysis, which is essential when exploring diverse student experiences and educational outcomes (Merriam, 2009). By employing thematic analysis and coding techniques, this study aimed to uncover underlying patterns and themes within the data, providing deeper insights into the effectiveness of ILPs in facilitating student progression and achievement (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The following sections will expand on and demonstrate the techniques and measures undertaken to ensure rigour and trustworthiness, as well as to enhance credibility and dependability within this study.

7.2 Data Cleaning and Data Reduction Techniques

In this mixed-methods study managing and simplifying vast amounts of both the qualitative and quantitative data was crucial for meaningful analysis and interpretation. To address this challenge, I employed various data reduction

techniques, including data cleaning, coding, categorisation, and summarisation, which were instrumental in maintaining the integrity and richness of the data.

Data cleaning involved identifying and correcting errors, inconsistencies, and missing values in the raw data (García-Moya et al., 2021), ensuring the reliability and quality of the data for further analysis. Initially, 60 participants were surveyed at the beginning of the course (Phase 1). Due to data cleaning, which involved removing inconclusive, empty, or missing questionnaires, the final sample size for Phase 1 was 54 completed surveys. At the end of the course (Phase 2), 43 participants completed the survey after undergoing a similar data cleaning process. This data cleaning process was crucial to ensure the reliability and validity of the findings by excluding incomplete or invalid responses.

Coding is a systematic process of labelling segments of data to identify and categorise themes and patterns (Saldaña, 2016). I conducted open coding to break down the data into manageable parts and identify preliminary themes. Next, axial coding was used to establish relationships between the initial codes, grouping them into broader categories (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Finally, selective coding integrated these categories to form coherent themes, constructing a narrative that accurately represented the data (Creswell, 2014). This multi-stage coding process enabled a detailed and organised analysis of the qualitative data, providing valuable insights into ILP implementation.

Categorisation further simplified the data by grouping related codes into broader themes and sub-themes. Codes related to "student experiences" and

"ILP awareness," for example, were categorised under broader themes, such as "Learner Outcomes" and "ILP Implementation" (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This hierarchical organisation ensured that the complexity of qualitative data was handled systematically, making the analysis more structured and coherent.

Summarisation techniques, including detailed summaries and visual tools, condensed the data into concise and manageable formats. Detailed summaries highlighted key findings and supporting evidence, while visual tools, such as charts and graphs facilitated the comparison of responses and highlighted significant trends (Miles, Huberman & Saldaña, 2014). These data reduction techniques were instrumental in managing and simplifying the qualitative data while preserving its integrity and richness, ultimately contributing to a comprehensive understanding of ILP implementation and its impact on student outcomes within ESOL courses.

As emphasised by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014), effective data reduction, including data cleaning, is critical for deriving meaningful insights from complex qualitative data, enabling robust analysis and valuable findings that can inform future practice and research in this area. In the context of my ILP research, these data reduction techniques ensured a rigorous and systematic approach, providing credible and reliable insights into the effectiveness of ILPs.

3.9 Qualitative Data Analysis Techniques

Qualitative data analysis techniques, such as thematic analysis and coding, were instrumental in organising and interpreting the data collected from

document analysis, student surveys/questionnaires, and semi-structured interviews. Thematic analysis involves identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns (themes) within the data, which provides a coherent framework for interpreting findings (Braun & Clarke, 2019).

Coding, on the other hand, involves systematically labelling and categorising segments of data to facilitate the identification of recurring concepts and emergent themes (Saldaña, 2016). This process of coding and categorisation allowed for a systematic exploration of student perceptions, ILP effectiveness, and educational outcomes across different data sources.

3.10 Coding and Categorising Process for Analysis of Course Documents

The process of coding and categorisation for document analysis began with a comprehensive review of the ESOL course files, including course aims, dates, total teaching hours, schemes of work, and ILPs. Initially, I conducted a thorough examination of the overall course contents to understand the structure and alignment of the ESOL courses (Popham, 2008). During this phase, I systematically reviewed class profiles to gather student background information and studied the schemes of work to outline the progression of learning objectives (Biggs & Tang, 2011).

For the ILPs, I adopted a focused approach advocated by Guthrie, Klauda, and Ho (2013) for personalised learning assessment. I meticulously examined ILPs from higher-level and lower-level learners, assessing the SMART criteria (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound) to evaluate the

effectiveness of ILP targets (Doran, 1981; Armstrong, 2006). The coding process involved:

1. **Initial reading and noting:** Reading all documents and making initial notes on potential codes and themes.
2. **Open coding:** Systematically labelling and categorising segments of data to identify recurring concepts and emergent themes. Labels included terms such as "learning objectives," "feedback," "progression of learning," and "SMART targets."
3. **Axial coding:** Relating codes (categories and subcategories) to each other to form broader themes and identify patterns. Categories included "Course Structure," "Student Profiles," "Target Setting," and "Evidence of Progress."
4. **Selective coding:** Integrating and refining themes to construct a coherent narrative about ILP effectiveness and educational outcomes. Major themes included "Effectiveness of ILPs," "Challenges in Target Setting," "Student Progression," and "Educational Outcomes" (Corbin & Strauss, 2008).

3.11 Quantitative Data Analysis: Longitudinal Student Surveys (Phases 1 and 2)

The quantitative data analysis for this study involved examining the responses from the longitudinal student surveys which were conducted in two phases. The objective was to gain a clearer sense of the ESOL students' learning contexts

rather than to prove anything and also identify and interpret changes or trends in student experiences and perceptions related to ILPs over time.

3.11.1 Data Collection and Entry

Data were collected through surveys administered at two different points in time (Phase 1 and Phase 2). After collecting the surveys, the data entry process involved:

1. **Data cleaning:** The first step was to manually sort through the questionnaires. Only completed and legible responses were included in the analysis. Inconclusive or illegible responses were excluded to ensure the reliability of the data (Fink, 2013; Creswell, 2014).
2. **Data entry:** Valid responses were manually recorded into Microsoft Excel. The responses were tallied in bundles of five to efficiently manage and process the information. Accurate data entry is crucial in quantitative research to maintain data integrity and reliability (Bryman, 2016).

The responses were then processed to Microsoft Excel spreadsheets, creating organised tables for both phases of the surveys. This organisation facilitated the subsequent data analysis and ensured that the data were systematically arranged for easy comparison (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2018).

Using Excel, frequencies and percentages for each survey item were calculated. This provided a clear overview of the distribution of responses for both phases. By examining these frequencies, patterns and changes in student perceptions and experiences related to ILPs could be identified. Descriptive

statistics, were presented to summarise the tendencies and variability within the data (Field, 2013). The results from Phase 1 and Phase 2 were compared to identify any significant changes or trends over the period of the course. This comparative analysis helped to reveal the impact of ILP implementation on student experiences, awareness and outcomes (Creswell, 2014).

3.11.2 Data Visualisation

Visual tools are critical in quantitative research as they help in interpreting and communicating complex data effectively (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014). To facilitate the comparison between Phases 1 and 2, the data were transformed into visual representations, including charts and graphs, using Excel. These visual tools included:

1. **Bar charts:** Used to display the frequency distribution of responses for each survey item, making it easier to compare the results between the two phases.
2. **Line graphs:** Employed to illustrate trends and changes over time in student responses, highlighting any shifts in perceptions and experiences (Tufte, 2001).

Pie charts: Used for presenting the simplified proportional distribution of different responses, providing a visual summary of the data (Evergreen, 2017).

3.12 Coding, Categorisation and Thematic Analysis for Semi-Structured Interviews

The semi-structured interviews provided rich, qualitative data on students' experiences with ILPs and their perceptions of the RARPAP process. The coding and categorisation process for these interviews involved the following several steps:

1. **Transcription:** Interviews were transcribed both manually and using Descript, allowing for a detailed and accurate record of each interview (Bryman, 2016).
2. **Initial reading and memos:** Each transcript was read multiple times, and initial notes and memos were written to capture first impressions and potential codes.
3. **Open coding:** Segments of text were systematically labelled with codes to identify significant concepts and themes. Labels included terms, such as "student experiences," "ILP awareness," "RARPAP process," and "evidence of learning."
4. **Axial coding:** Relationships between codes were identified, grouping them into broader categories and themes. Categories included "Student Expectations," "ILP Benefits," "Implementation Challenges," and "Feedback and Improvement."
5. **Thematic analysis:** Themes were identified, analysed, and reported, providing a structured framework to interpret the findings. This involved

looking for patterns in how students described their experiences and the perceived impact of ILPs on their learning and progression (Braun & Clarke, 2019).

After transcribing the interviews, I started carefully reviewing the data and jotting down patterns, which I then labelled as initial codes (Saldaña, 2013). This process of open coding allowed me to identify specific concepts, ideas, and experiences related to ILPs mentioned by the participants, following the guidelines for qualitative data analysis in education research (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2011).

Following this, I looked for connections and similarities among the codes, grouping them into broader themes, a process known as thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This allowed me to move beyond individual instances and identify overarching patterns and ideas that emerged from the data, consistent with established methods in social science research (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The four main themes I identified were:

1. ILP Implementation, Delivery, and Recording
2. Learner Outcomes
3. Learner Awareness and Understanding
4. Evaluation and Improvement

Within each theme, I further refined my analysis by identifying sub-themes, which captured more specific aspects or dimensions of the main themes (Bazeley, 2013). This iterative process of theme development aligns with the

constructivist grounded theory approach, in which categories and themes emerge from the data (Charmaz, 2006).

Finally, I organised the themes and sub-themes into categories, which helped structure my findings and present them in a clear and coherent manner (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014). These categories not only captured the key aspects of the research topic but also enabled me to explore the interconnections and relationships among different themes and sub-themes, as recommended in education research (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

By employing these systematic coding and categorisation techniques, this study was able to comprehensively analyse data from both document analysis and semi-structured interviews. The integration of findings from these different sources provided a holistic view of ILP implementation and its effectiveness in supporting student progression within ESOL courses. Labels and categories from both data sources were cross-referenced to identify overlapping themes and unique insights, ensuring a robust and comprehensive analysis.

This rigorous approach ensured that the data analysis was thorough and robust, enabling the identification of key themes and insights that addressed the research questions and achieved the study aims.

3.13 Ensuring Rigor and Trustworthiness: Reliability and Validity

Measures in Mixed-Methods Data Analysis

Ensuring the reliability and validity of data analysis is crucial in qualitative research to establish the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings. As a

qualitative study, this research employed conceptual analysis techniques to interpret data from multiple sources, including document analysis, student surveys, and semi-structured interviews. To enhance the robustness of the findings, I incorporated several strategies to ensure reliability and validity.

3.13.1 Reliability

To achieve reliability in this qualitative study, I employed several strategies supported by established research methodologies. First, I utilised triangulation, a technique involving the corroboration of findings across different data sources (Bryman, 2016; Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2018). This approach helped mitigate potential biases and enhanced the consistency of the findings.

Second, I conducted systematic coding and categorisation, following established guidelines for qualitative research (Saldaña, 2016). This multi-stage process included initial reading and noting, open coding, axial coding, and selective coding (Creswell, 2014). These steps allowed for a thorough and organised examination of the data, ensuring the consistency and dependability of the findings.

Lastly, I maintained reliability through the use of software tools for transcription and data analysis. Descript was employed for transcribing the semi-structured interviews, while Microsoft Excel spreadsheets were utilised for analysing the survey data (Miles, Huberman & Saldaña, 2014). Additionally, an audit trail of decisions made during data collection, coding, and analysis was kept (Gibbs, 2007). These practices contributed to the overall consistency and

trustworthiness of the study by promoting transparency, reducing potential human error, and supporting the reliability of the research findings.

3.13.2 Validity

Ensuring validity involved key practices, such as providing thick descriptions, maintaining reflexivity, and engaging in peer debriefing. These strategies contributed to the authenticity and accuracy of the findings, aligning with established qualitative research practices and enhancing the credibility and dependability of the study.

By implementing these reliability and validity measures, I ensured robust data analysis, providing a solid foundation for interpreting the effectiveness of ILPs in facilitating student progression and achievement within ESOL courses.

3.14 Ethical Considerations

This study involves human subjects; therefore, the ethical procedures surrounding the research are shaped by the British Educational Research Association's Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research (BERA, 2024). I requested ethical approval for this project through Lancaster University's formal ethics process, with supervisory oversight and subsequently approved by the University's ethics committee. In my application, I outlined potential risks, including issues of confidentiality, anonymity, and power dynamics between myself as researcher and the participants. These risks were mitigated through informed consent forms, the anonymisation of participants, secure data storage, and careful attention to my dual role as both practitioner and investigator.

From the onset of the fieldwork, I provided participants with detailed information about the study, including its purpose, how their data would be used, and their rights as participants, ensuring the use of appropriately graded language to support ease of comprehension. Consent forms and information sheets were translated where needed, and I encouraged participants to take these home and discuss them with family or trusted others before deciding. I emphasised at every stage that participation was voluntary and that they could withdraw at any time without consequence.

Given my dual role as both researcher and teacher, which I was particularly mindful of throughout and the impact of the power dynamics at play, I arranged for interviews to take place outside of formal teaching hours and spaces in order to mitigate this. I also made it clear that students' decisions would not affect their learning or progress. Where language was a barrier, I offered participants the option of bringing someone they trusted to interpret. Most chose a familiar person, and in one case, a professional interpreter was used. These steps helped create a sense of safety, familiarity, and comfort.

In line with data protection requirements, all information was anonymised and stored securely. Pseudonyms were assigned to each participant, and no identifying details are included in the final write-up. I deliberately chose neutral, functional labels, such as “Learner 1” and “Tutor A” rather than more personalised names. This decision was made to help maintain a level of analytical distance from participants known to me in my role as their teacher, allowing me to approach the data with greater objectivity during interpretation. I kept reflexive notes in a fieldwork diary throughout to account for my

positionality and to ensure that my interpretations remained grounded in participants' voices rather than my assumptions. I approached each stage of the process with care, knowing that these were not just participants, but individuals trusting me with their stories and experiences. That trust ensured I carried out an ethical responsibility rooted in dignity, reciprocity, and social justice.

3.15 Summary

This chapter outlined the methodological approach employed in an exploratory study investigating the impact of ILPs on linguistic competencies and social skills development in adult community ESOL education. A qualitative approach was adopted, emphasising learners' lived experiences, with elements of quantitative data collection to maximise benefits (Sen, 2005).

Key methods included document analysis, student surveys for longitudinal perspectives, and semi-structured interviews with students and staff for deeper insights (Nussbaum, 2006). Additionally, diverse and representative samples were selected to ensure an accurate representation of the target population (Denscombe, 2017).

Furthermore, data analysis techniques encompassed qualitative coding, thematic analysis, and quantitative data visualisation (Bazeley & Jackson, 2013). Rigour and trustworthiness were ensured through reliability and validity measures (Golafshani, 2003). Additionally, ethical considerations were addressed in adherence to the British Educational Research Association's

guidelines (BERA, 2024), where informed consent, confidentiality, voluntary participation, and data protection were prioritised (Denscombe, 2017).

The next chapter presents the first part of the findings generated from the document analysis and student surveys, revealing valuable insights which are important for informing future policy and practice in ESOL education further along in this thesis.

Chapter 4: Findings Part 1 - Document Analysis and Surveys

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the first part of the study's findings, focusing on the document analysis of ILPs and the survey data collected from learners. These findings provide a crucial foundation for understanding the context and effectiveness of ILPs in adult community ESOL education. By examining both quantitative and qualitative data, this chapter offers a comprehensive view of the learners' backgrounds, motivations, and experiences with ILPs in their ESOL learning journeys.

I have chosen to divide the findings across two chapters to ensure a thorough and structured presentation. Chapter 4 delves into the contextual insights gained from the document analysis and surveys, highlighting key demographic characteristics and contextual factors that influence ILP effectiveness.

Following this, Chapter 5 will continue with the findings from semi-structured interviews, providing deeper qualitative insights into the holistic skill development fostered by ILPs.

The purpose of this chapter is to provide the reader with a clear understanding of the quantitative and qualitative data related to learner backgrounds, reasons for learning English, future plans, and their awareness of assessment terminology. The chapter is structured to first present the quantitative survey data, followed by the qualitative findings from the document analysis. This approach ensures that the quantitative insights provide a foundation for the richer, contextual qualitative data, offering a comprehensive understanding of

the learner and teacher experiences, challenges, and goals in ESOL teaching and learning through the use of ILPs.

I first begin this chapter by restating the purpose of the study and the research questions before presenting the data collected and the demographics of the participants. The findings are then organised into sections that first address the insights from the document analysis and then the survey data, concluding with a summary analysis. This structure sets the stage for the more in-depth qualitative exploration in the following chapter.

4.2 Restatement of the Purpose of the Study

The primary research question is: what is the role of ILPs in demonstrating the transformative potential of ESOL education in adult community learning, and how can they contribute to fostering a more inclusive, empowering, and socially just learning environment for students with diverse backgrounds and experiences?

This study aims to investigate how the implementation of ILPs in teaching ESOL can enhance the development of ESOL and literacy skills alongside wider social skills among entry-level learners. The study also seeks to provide a platform for these learners to share their personal experiences and viewpoints. Additionally, this research aims to answer five primary research questions relating to the benefits, challenges, perceptions, and strategies of using ILPs in ESOL teaching and how they can be optimised to support learners' progress and development of capabilities. These questions are:

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1. In what ways can ILPs evidence student learning outcomes and overall development, particularly in terms of academic competencies and broader social skills?
 2. How do students and staff view their experiences with ILPs?
 3. How can selected Nussbaum's Central Capabilities be used to analyse the transformative potential of ESOL education in achieving social justice?
 4. To what extent can ILPs contribute to a more inclusive, empowering, and socially just learning environment, and how can they help address the constraints imposed by government policies?
 5. How can the findings of this study inform future policy and practice within the ESOL educational sphere, particularly in terms of prioritising holistic student development and fostering more balanced and comprehensive approaches to learning?

Although the research primarily focuses on the external aims of student ILPs, the need to analyse some of the linguistic and literacy aims enabled a more comprehensive understanding of the RARPAP process and how students develop their academic and wider social skills. This is apparent in the findings of the document analysis of ILPs, which helps to form a better understanding of the qualitative data analysis of student and staff experiences of ILPs.

4.3 Data collection Approaches

4.3.1 Overview of the Documents Analysed

The document analysis focused on the ILP portfolios used in the adult community ESOL education setting of the adult education provider in London where this study takes place. The aim was to contextualise their role in order to better understand their effectiveness. ILPs serve as personalised roadmaps outlining learners' goals, strategies, and progress metrics (Roche & Marsh, 2000). A variety of ILPs from different learners were analysed to ensure a comprehensive understanding of their structure and content. Key aspects examined included the specificity of goals, alignment with SMART criteria, and the inclusion of both academic and social skill targets.

4.3.2 Survey Administration: Description of the Survey Design, Distribution, and Response Collection Process

Surveys were designed using the online survey platform Qualtrics to gather quantitative data on learners' demographics, motivations, and experiences with ILPs. Two phases of surveys were conducted: Phase 1 at the beginning of the course and Phase 2 at the end. The survey included questions on demographic information, reasons for learning English, future plans, preferences of learning styles and content, awareness of assessment terminology, and course evaluation.

The Qualtrics platform was chosen for its ability to design comprehensive surveys and provide flexibility in distribution methods. Participants had the

option to complete the survey either online via a shareable link or through exportable PDF copies, accommodating varying levels of digital literacy and accessibility.

The initial sample size was 60 participants at the beginning of the course (Phase 1), which was reduced to 54 completed surveys after data cleaning. At the end of the course (Phase 2), 43 participants completed the survey following a similar data cleaning process. This ensured that the data presented here is reliable and valid.

4.4 Key Findings from Document Analysis of ILPs

In this section, I present key findings from the analysis of ESOL course folders and student ILP portfolios. This examination highlights the common structural elements, variability in target setting, and alignment with SMART criteria within the ILPs. By analysing six ESOL course files, the discussion sheds light on the student journey and the fulfilment of RARPAP requirements. This context provides a foundation for understanding the quantitative data from student surveys, which will be explored next. These surveys offer insights into learner backgrounds, demographics, English usage, and other relevant factors, setting the stage for a deeper analysis of qualitative data from semi-structured interviews in the subsequent chapter.

I first begin with an outline of the analysis of six ESOL course files, which included detailed evaluations of both lower-level and higher-level learners across three different course levels. Each file contained comprehensive learner profiles and ILPs with diagnostic assessments, formative and summative work,

and tutor feedback. The ILPs were reviewed systematically, focusing on their structure and content, including the setting of SMART targets. For a more targeted analysis, I selected two ILPs from each course file—one for a lower-level learner and one for a higher-level learner—based on their respective formative and summative assessments. This approach aimed to assess the variability and effectiveness of the targets set, providing insights into goal-setting practices for learners at different proficiency levels (see Appendix One for detailed learner profiles and targets). The six ESOL course files analysed are detailed as follows:

Table 2: Summary of the Three ESOL Course Files and Six ILPs Analysed, Detailing Course Levels, Learner Profiles, and ILP Evaluations

Course file/name	Course Code	Level	Student ILPs examined
Community ESOL	ES0966CC	Pre-entry/entry 1	1. Lower-level Learner A 2. Higher-level Learner B
Community ESOL	ES0967CC	Entry 1 and Entry 2	1. Lower-level Learner C 2. Higher-level Learner D
Community ESOL	ES1128PS	Entry 2 and Entry 3	1. Lower-level Learner E 2. Higher-level Learner F

I began by systematically reviewing each course file from front to back. Each file included a class list with learner profiles detailing names, nationalities, languages spoken, and prior learning experiences. Following this, each learner's section contained an ILP cover sheet, diagnostic assessments, and examples of both formative and summative learner work, with tutor feedback.

The ILP cover sheets included responses to the following questions (completed by the tutor):

-
1. What are the reasons for studying this subject?
 2. Are there any factors that might affect your achievement/attendance on this course?
 3. Have you completed an induction at the college?
 4. What are your intended destinations (including internal progression)?

Each ILP review document listed SMART targets for the student, typically completed by the teacher, with minimal learner input beyond a signature and a brief progress evaluation. However, early in the course file, there was evidence of learner involvement through a 'learner declaration' form outlining course expectations.

Each course file included learner ILPs and reviews for each learner listed on the class list. After initial observation of the course files, I selected two learner ILPs from each course. The selection of two ILPs was made from skimming the entire students' work contained in the course file and what I concluded was the ILP of a higher-level learner and a lower-level learner based on the content of their work submitted for formative and summative assessment. This content included a diagnostic assessment, classwork and homework for formative assessment and one final piece of work for summative assessment. This was for the purpose of analysing the SMART targets set and to see how different the targets were, based on the differing literacy levels of the 2 learners in each course/level.

The work contained for the students' ILP is illustrated below:

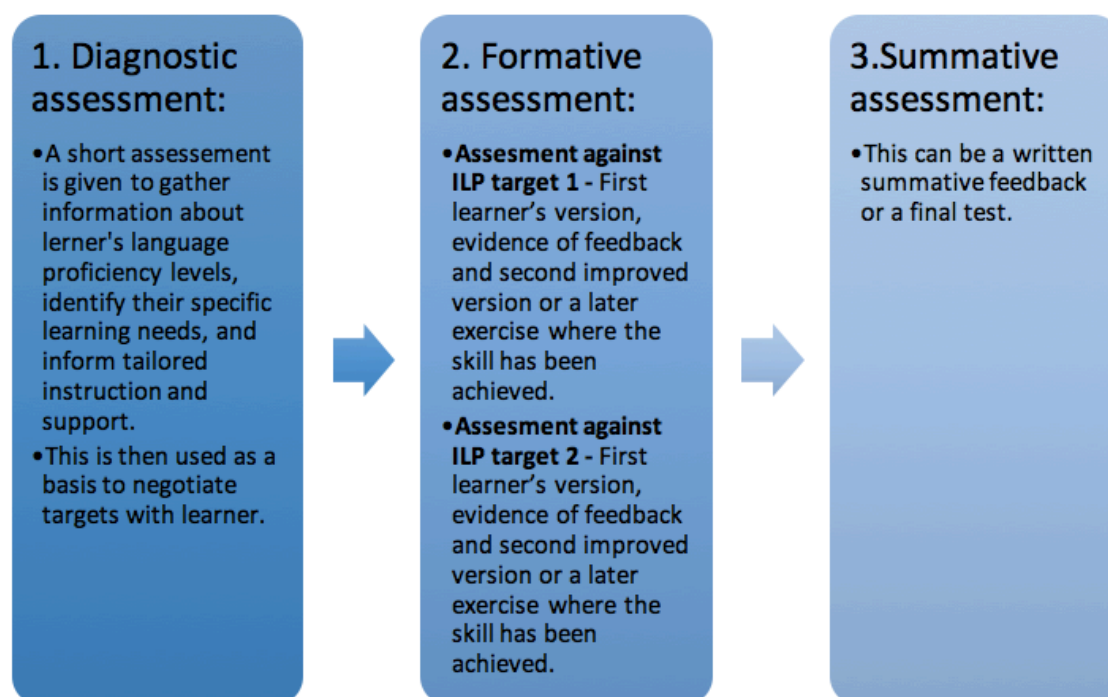


Figure 2: The content of the student ILP comprises of work completed and submitted as formative and summative assessment for RARPAP evidence.

I have labelled each ILP I examined as learner A, B, C, D, E and F including whether the learner is working at a lower or higher-level. The following table presents the SMART targets set for higher-level and lower-level learners across each course file examined. These targets are illustrated to demonstrate the differences and similarities in goal-setting for learners at varying levels.

Course name, level & code as labelled from folders during document analysis	Learner ILP examined and how learner profiles are labelled
Community ESOL Pre-entry & Entry 1 (ES0966CC)	• Lower-level learner A • Higher-level learner B
Community ESOL Entry 1 & 2 ESOL (ES0967CC)	• Lower-level learner C • Higher-level learner D
Community ESOL Entry 2 & 3 ESOL (ES1128PS)	• Lower-level learner E • Higher-level learner F

Table 3: SMART Targets for Lower-Level and Higher-Level Learners Across Three ESOL Course Levels

4.5 Summary of Main Insights from ILP Document Analysis

The analysis of the ILPs for ESOL courses reveals a consistent structure, with each plan beginning with detailed learner profiles and setting academic targets based on proficiency levels. While the ILPs I examined were generally well-organised, focusing on language development through formative and summative assessments, they exhibit variability in target setting and content. Notably, there is a lack of systematic inclusion of soft skills targets, and teacher feedback varies in specificity. Additionally, while academic targets align well with SMART criteria, soft skills targets often fall short. These findings highlight both strengths and areas for improvement in the ILP framework, setting the stage for a deeper examination of diagnostic assessments and target appropriateness in the following sections.

4.5.1 Common Elements and Structure of ILPs

The analysis of ILPs for the ESOL courses reveals several common elements and a consistent structural approach. Each ILP begins with detailed learner information, including the learner's name, nationality, and educational

background. This foundational data provides context for understanding the learner's starting point and educational needs.

Following the personal details, each ILP sets out academic targets tailored to the learner's proficiency level. For lower-level learners, these targets focus on fundamental language skills, such as basic reading, writing, and grammar. Higher-level learners are assigned more complex targets, including advanced language tasks that involve varied sentence structures and sophisticated grammar.

The ILPs systematically incorporate evidence from formative and summative assessments. This evidence includes diagnostic assessments, classwork, homework, and final assignments, which collectively document the learner's progress. Teacher feedback is a crucial component, providing evaluations of the learner's performance, highlighting achievements, and identifying areas for improvement. However, a noticeable limitation is the predominant focus on language development, with insufficient emphasis on soft skills development, such as critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving. This narrow focus restricts the ILPs' effectiveness in promoting a well-rounded educational experience.

4.5.2 Variability in Target Setting and Content

The document analysis uncovered significant variability in target setting and content across the ILPs. Academic targets are differentiated based on the learner's proficiency level, with lower-level learners focusing on basic skills and higher-level learners addressing more complex language tasks. This

differentiation is appropriate given the learners' respective levels, but the specificity and detail of the targets can vary.

As I previously highlighted, a critical observation is the inconsistent inclusion of soft skills targets. While some ILPs acknowledge the importance of soft skills, such as confidence-building and attendance, these aspects are not systematically integrated into the targets. For instance, feedback might highlight a learner's need to improve their attendance, but no explicit targets or strategies are provided to address this issue.

The quality of teacher feedback also varies. Some ILPs feature detailed and specific comments, offering clear insights into the learner's strengths and areas needing improvement. In contrast, other ILPs contain more generalised feedback, such as noting overall progress without specifying achievements or next steps. This variability in feedback affects its clarity and usefulness for learners.

4.5.3 Alignment with SMART Criteria

The alignment of ILP targets with the SMART criteria demonstrates both strengths and areas for improvement. Academic targets generally align well with the SMART criteria. They are specific to language skills, measurable through various assessments, achievable given the learners' proficiency levels, relevant to their educational goals, and set within clear timeframes.

However, the alignment with SMART criteria is less effective for soft skills targets. Once again, the absence of explicit targets for soft skills means these

aspects are not consistently measurable or time-bound. As a result, evaluating progress in areas, such as confidence and attendance becomes challenging.

Overall, while the ILPs provide a structured framework for tracking and supporting language development, there are areas that require enhancement. In the following sections, I present an overview of strengths and weaknesses of the SMART targets set in the ILPs. The discussion will highlight the role of diagnostic assessments in setting and evaluating targets, examine how formative and summative assessments document learner progress, and explore potential limitations within the ILP framework, such as reliability issues. The aim is to identify areas for improvement to enhance the effectiveness of ILPs in fostering holistic learner development which will follow in later sections.

4.6 Identification of Strengths and Weaknesses in Current ILPs

The examination of the six ILPs revealed several strengths and weaknesses. Strengths included the presence of clear academic targets focused on developing specific language skills and the use of both formative and summative assessments to track progress. However, there were significant weaknesses which also became apparent, such as the lack of explicit soft skill targets, which are crucial for holistic learner development. The ILPs often contained vague and non-specific feedback from teachers, which did not provide learners with actionable steps for improvement. Additionally, the targets set for learners were not sufficiently differentiated to cater to varying proficiency levels, leading to a one-size-fits-all approach that failed to address individual learning needs effectively. The findings highlight the need for more precise,

measurable, and differentiated targets to enhance the effectiveness of ILPs in supporting learner progression.

4.6.1 Examples of Well-Defined and Vague Targets

The findings from the detailed analysis of the six ILPs indicate a notable disparity in the clarity and precision of the targets set for learners. While the ILPs document learners' academic targets and progress, there are significant gaps in the articulation of both academic and personal development goals. This section highlights the examples of well-defined and vague targets found within the ILPs.

For instance, lower-level learner A has been assigned the target to "read a text about someone and identify at least 8/10 correct answers." This target lacks specificity and measurability, as it does not clearly define the text length or complexity, nor does it state how the answers will be evaluated. On the other hand, a target for higher-level learner B is to "read about two people and answer at least 18/20 questions correctly with correct spelling and punctuation and use 3rd person, e.g., 's' by 21/06." This target is more specific and measurable, clearly stating the number of questions, the criteria for correctness, and the use of specific grammatical features.

The absence of soft targets in the ILPs further exacerbates the issue. Without explicit goals related to soft skills, such as confidence-building or attendance, it becomes challenging to assess holistic learner development. The ILPs should incorporate these elements to provide a more comprehensive learning experience that includes critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving.

Learner Profile	Course Name, Level & Code	Academic Target(s)	Soft Target(s)	Comments from the Learner	Comments from the Teacher
Lower-level learner A	Community ESOL Pre-entry & Entry 1 ES0966CC	1. Read a text about someone and identify at least 8/10 correct answers 2. Gap fill the verbs and nouns in the text by 21/06	None indicated on ILP	'I don't feel I am getting better'	'You have made some progress, particularly in reading'
Higher-level learner B	Community ESOL Pre-entry & Entry 1 ES0966CC	1. Read about two people and answer at least 18/20 questions correctly 2. With correct spelling and punctuation. And 3rd pers. E.g.: 's' by 21/06	None indicated on ILP	'My English not better'	'You have made good progress in all skills'

Table 4: SMART targets for Lower-Level Learner A and Higher-Level Learner B in Community ESOL Courses from the Six Selected ILPs for Detailed Analysis

4.6.2 Assessment of Target SMART Criteria

The analysis of the academic targets within the ILPs also reveals a lack of adherence to the SMART criteria. Effective ILPs should include targets that are precisely defined, easily measurable, realistically attainable, relevant to the learner's needs, and bound by a clear timeline. This approach aligns with the SMART criteria, which emphasise that goals should be Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound (Doran, 1981).

For example, the target set for lower-level learner A to "read a short text about someone, i.e., your teacher" does not meet the SMART criteria. The target lacks specificity and measurability, as it does not clarify the length of the text or the aspects of literacy to be assessed. Furthermore, it is not evident if the target is realistic and relevant to the learner's current level and needs.

In contrast, higher-level learner B's target to "read about two people and answer at least 18/20 questions correctly with correct spelling and punctuation and use 3rd person, e.g., 's' by 21/06" is more aligned with the SMART criteria. It specifies the task, sets a measurable goal, includes a clear deadline, and is relevant to the learner's language development needs.

The targets for both higher-level and lower-level learners need to be differentiated more effectively. For instance, a lower-level learner could be tasked with "writing one sentence using the past simple tense about an event last week," while a higher-level learner might be asked to "write three compound sentences about a past event using conjunctions but/and/because." Such differentiation ensures that the targets are appropriately challenging for learners at different proficiency levels. Differentiated instruction is crucial in mixed-ability classrooms to cater to the varied needs and ensure each learner is appropriately challenged and supported (Tomlinson, 2001).

Additionally, and as previously noted, the absence of soft targets is a significant weakness in the current ILPs. Incorporating soft targets, such as improving confidence or attendance, would support the development of academic skills and provide a more holistic approach to learner development. For example,

encouraging a learner to switch from writing in pencil to pen could be set as a soft target to enhance their academic and social skills, such as filling out forms and understanding professional requirements.

The diagnostic assessments within the ILPs offer rich data that could be used to set more specific and measurable targets. By tailoring targets to address identified areas of weakness, such as spelling or punctuation, the ILPs could be more effective in supporting learners' language and literacy development. However, the current targets lack such specificity and do not leverage the diagnostic assessment outcomes effectively.

Furthermore, the feedback provided on learners' work is often too generic, lacking specific action points for improvement. To make feedback more meaningful, teachers should use SMART feedback techniques, such as "medal and mission" feedback, which highlight strengths and provide clear, actionable steps for improvement. The term "medal and mission" refers to a formative feedback approach that recognises learners' achievements (medals) and provides specific guidance on areas for improvement (missions), thereby supporting their progression toward learning objectives (Fawzi & Mohamad, 2020;

Fawzi & Mohamad, 2020; Petty, 2009). This approach would help learners understand their progress and focus on areas needing development.

In conclusion, the findings from the document analysis reveal that while the ILPs provide a framework for setting academic targets, they fall short in meeting the SMART criteria and addressing soft skills. Thus, enhancing the specificity,

measurability, and differentiation of targets, along with incorporating more detailed feedback and soft targets, would significantly improve the effectiveness of the ILPs and support a more comprehensive learning experience for ESOL learners.

4.7 Discussion of Contextual Factors

Contextual factors play a critical role in understanding the implementation and effectiveness of ILPs in adult community ESOL education. Examining these factors can provide valuable insights into the various elements that influence ILP practices and, ultimately, learner outcomes. This section highlights two key aspects of contextual factors: how document analysis helps ensure better understanding of ILP implementation and the impact of institutional practices and policies on ILP effectiveness.

4.7.1 How the Documentary Analysis Provides Context for Understanding ILP Implementation

The document analysis revealed critical insights into the effectiveness of ILPs by highlighting variations in evidence sufficiency and organisation within learner portfolios. For instance, inconsistencies in the documentation, such as missing diagnostic assessments or vague target descriptions, demonstrate challenges in ILP implementation. Portfolios like those of Learners A and B illustrate gaps between diagnostic outcomes and set targets, suggesting a misalignment that can hinder tailored instruction and accurate progress tracking. On the other hand, portfolios that demonstrate clear alignment, such as Learner C's, show how well-organised evidence supports effective target setting and progress

monitoring. Analysing these documents provides a deeper understanding of how well ILPs are executed, emphasising the need for SMART targets to enhance learner outcomes.

4.7.2 Insights into Institutional Practices and Policy Influences

Institutional practices and policies play a significant role in shaping ILP implementation. The analysis reveals that the use of both paper-based and digital methods reflects a preference for traditional approaches, particularly in Community and Cultural Learning, where paper-based ILPs are deemed more reliable. This preference impacts how evidence is collected and organised, with challenges noted in demonstrating learner achievement through both diagnostic and formative assessments. RARPAP introduces specific criteria that influence how targets are set and assessed. Furthermore, the variation in feedback quality and the effectiveness of summative assessments highlight the need for policy adjustments for this type of assessment. Recommendations include standardising documentation practices and enhancing feedback mechanisms to ensure that all learners receive consistent and constructive support. These insights further highlight the importance of aligning institutional practices with effective ILP strategies to improve overall educational outcomes.

4.8 Learner Backgrounds from Survey Data

In this section, I will present the results of the student surveys conducted for this study in two phases. One of the survey aims was to collect data on learner awareness of RARPAP through ILP. Its purpose also included gaining insight into the learner demographic and background, frequency in use of English,

previous learning and work experience, future aspirations, and learner understanding of terminology surrounding assessment. The survey questions were formulated from the interview data and initial review of ESOL course files.

As I have previously highlighted, the surveys were conducted at two different times: the beginning of the term (Phase 1) and the end of the course (Phase 2). The initial sample size was 54 learners for Phase 1 and 43 learners for Phase 2. I will first present an analysis of the survey data, including both quantitative and qualitative findings, before moving on to the in-depth qualitative analysis of the interview data in the following chapter. The results from the surveys in both phase 1 and phase 2 are illustrated in the charts and graphs as stage 1 and stage 2. This section will also provide an overview of interpretation of the findings.

4.9 Adult ESOL Learners' Demographic Characteristics: Insights from the Student Surveys

Conducting the survey in two stages – the beginning and the end of the course – provided the opportunity to gain valuable insights into the demographic composition of this specific group of learners on factors, such as length of residence in the UK, country of origin, first language, age group, and use of English outside the ESOL classroom.

The distribution across different durations of residence between the two stages of the survey conducted did not differ greatly, reflecting the diverse range of learners and their varying levels of English proficiency in the study.

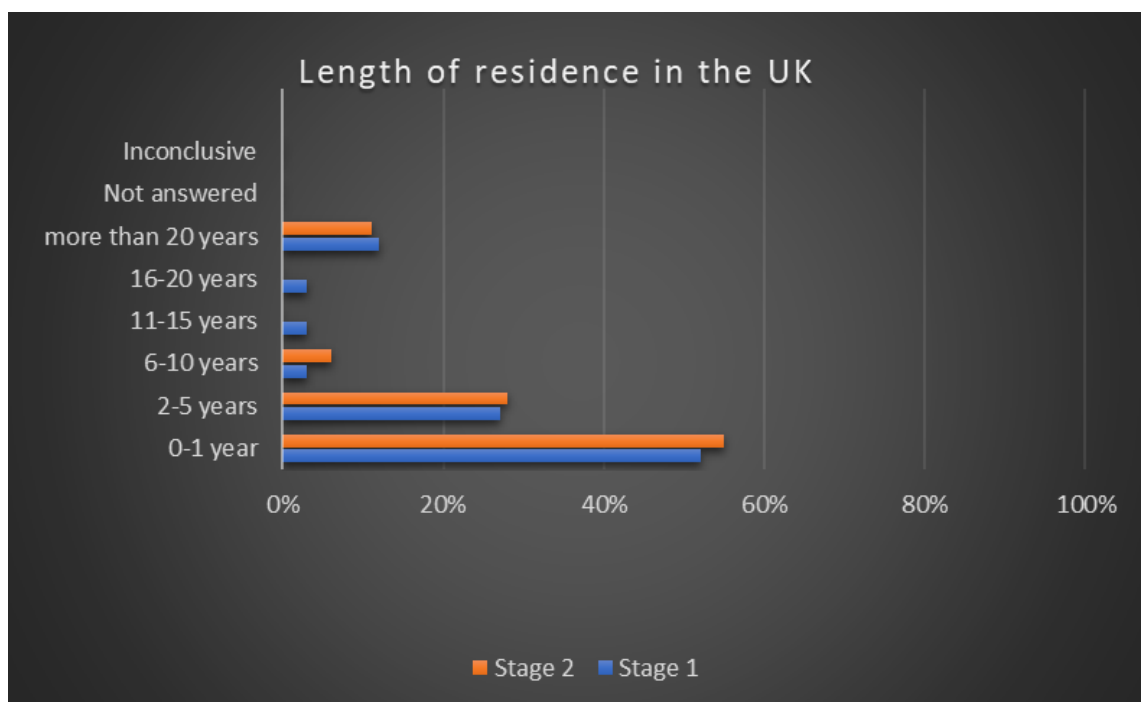


Figure 3: Length of Residence in the UK by Stage of Study (n = 54 for Stage 1; n = 43 for Stage 2)

The bar chart in Figure 3 depicts the length of residence in the UK for adult ESOL learners at two distinct stages of the survey: Stage 1, (n = 54), and Stage 2, (n = 43). The data reveals that a substantial proportion of learners had been in the UK for less than one year (0-1 year) during both stages, indicating a high percentage of recent arrivals within the ESOL cohort. There is a noticeable increase in the number of learners with 2-5 years of residence by Stage 2, suggesting either retention or the arrival of slightly longer-term residents by the end of the course.

The observed trends may reflect the fluid nature of the migrant population served by the ESOL programme, with the course potentially attracting both newcomers and those who have resided in the UK for a moderate period but are still in the process of linguistic and cultural integration.

Additionally, the survey's linguistic background data, which identified Arabic and Chinese as the most common first languages in Stage 1 and a shift to Chinese as the predominant language in Stage 2, supports the understanding of the ESOL classroom as a dynamic environment, influenced by evolving demographic patterns. The presence of diverse linguistic backgrounds, including an increase in learners identifying French as their first language by Stage 2, highlights the multicultural and multilingual nature of the learner population, with significant implications for language instruction and policy within the ESOL framework.

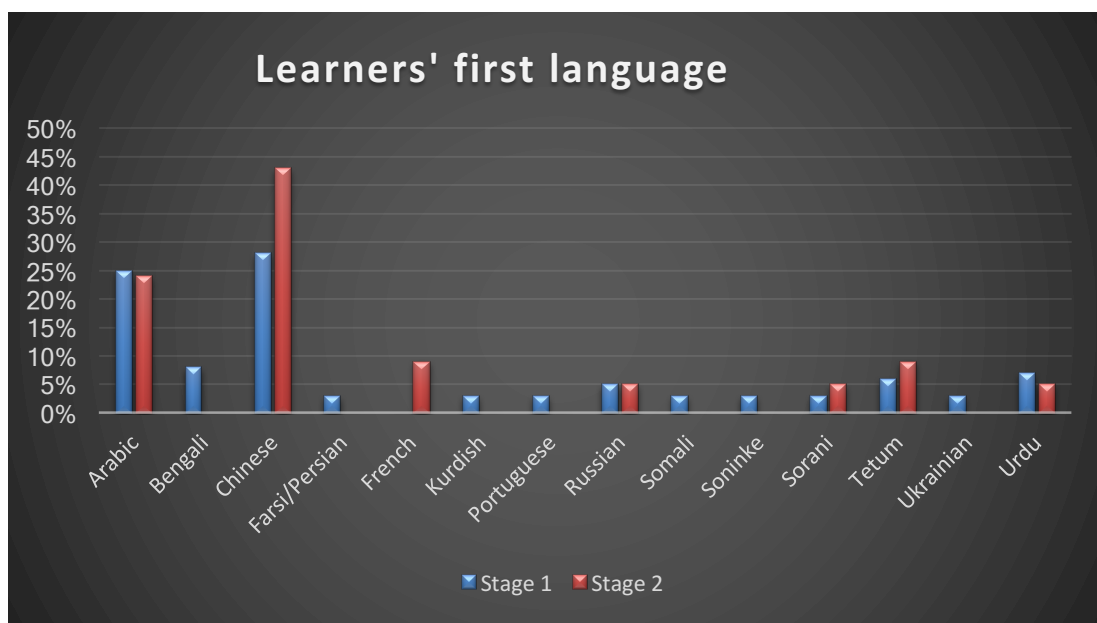


Figure 4: Learners' first language (n = 54 for Stage 1; n = 43 for Stage 2)

As expected, the adult ESOL learners surveyed originated from a wide range of countries, reflecting the international diversity typical of ESOL cohorts. China, Somalia, and Iraq were prominently represented in both survey stages, highlighting their consistent presence in the learner population. Notably, there were significant shifts in the representation of other countries between Stage 1

and Stage 2. For instance, the Stage 2 responses indicated an increased presence from countries, such as Algeria, Morocco, and Ukraine. Conversely, representation from countries like Bangladesh, Iraq, Pakistan, and Paraguay decreased by the end of the course.

These shifts highlight the dynamic and fluid nature of the adult ESOL learner population, driven by varying factors, such as migration trends, geopolitical events, and changes in local community demographics. Such variability pinpoints the importance of individualised learning and assessment strategies, as a one-size-fits-all approach would likely fail to meet the diverse and evolving needs of learners from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Tailoring educational approaches to account for this diversity is not only pedagogically sound but also essential for fostering effective language acquisition and integration for all learners.

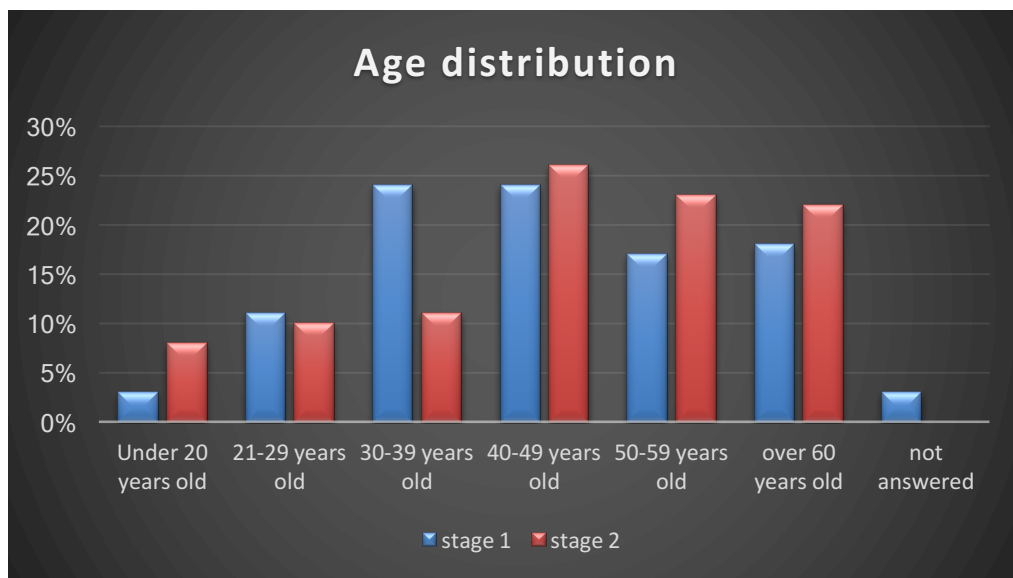


Figure 5: Age groups of the learners across both stages of the survey, stage 1 and stage 2 (n = 54 for Stage 1; n = 43 for Stage 2)

The age distribution among adult ESOL learners, as observed in Stage 1, revealed that the largest age group was 40-49 years old, followed closely by learners aged over 60. By Stage 2, the demographic landscape shifted, with the over-60 age group becoming the most prominent, followed by the 50-59 age group. This evolution in age distribution illustrates the broad age range within the adult ESOL learner population, emphasising the need for instructional strategies that accommodate diverse learning preferences and cognitive styles across different life stages.

The varied age distribution exemplifies the heterogeneity of adult ESOL learners, reinforcing the necessity of personalised and adaptive educational approaches. This diversity, coupled with the learners' English language usage outside the classroom, suggests a complex interplay between age, learning needs, and language acquisition. The survey data indicated that, in Stage 1, the majority of learners reported using English 2-3 times a week, with everyday usage as the second most common frequency. These patterns persisted into Stage 2, with a slight increase in learners using English 4-5 times a week and a decrease in those using it only once a week.

The consistent use of English outside the classroom, particularly the uptick in more frequent usage, reflects the learners' proactive engagement with the language, likely influenced by their daily routines, community interactions, and the demands of their personal and professional lives. This ongoing effort to improve language skills further highlights the importance of providing ESOL instruction that not only addresses the immediate linguistic needs of learners

but also supports their long-term integration and empowerment within the broader English-speaking society.

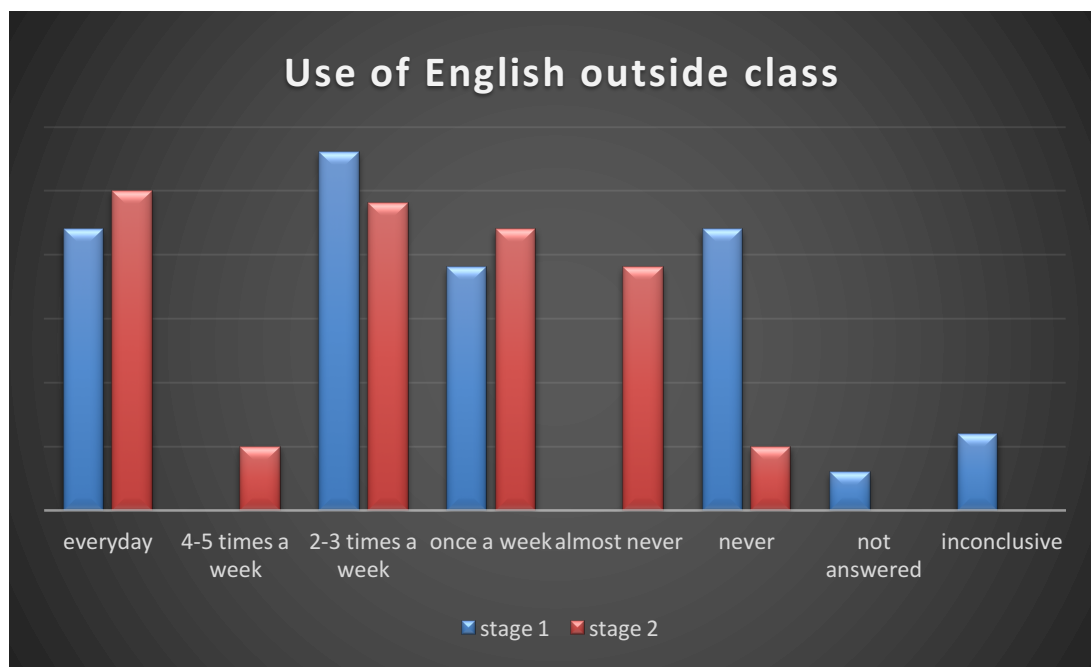


Figure 6: Learners' use of English outside class (n = 54 for Stage 1; n = 43 for Stage 2)

Interestingly, the data reveals significant variability in the levels of English usage at home among adult ESOL learners. In Stage 1, a notable portion of learners reported never using English at home, contrasting with others who indicated daily usage. By Stage 2, a shift occurred, with "almost never" and "2-3 times a week" emerging as the most common responses. This change suggests a decrease in the number of learners who entirely avoid using English at home, possibly reflecting an increase in their confidence and proficiency in using English in more personal and informal settings.

The reduction in learners reporting no English usage at home may indicate that as their language skills develop, they feel more comfortable incorporating English into their daily lives, even in environments where they might traditionally

rely on their first language. This shift could also point to the effectiveness of the ESOL programmes in fostering not only language acquisition but also the practical application of English in everyday contexts. The increased frequency of English usage at home, as evidenced by the data, highlights the importance of supporting learners in building linguistic bridges between the classroom and their home environments, which is crucial for their overall language development and integration into the broader community.

4.10 Re-ascertaining the Importance of the Unique Context of Adult ESOL Learners

The findings from the two phases of the survey support the need to consider the unique context of adult ESOL learners. Unlike younger learners, who are often immersed in English-speaking environments from an early age, adult ESOL learners frequently face the challenge of adapting to a new language and culture later in life (Matulionienė & Pundziuvienė, 2014). The diversity in their first languages and countries of origin reflects the multicultural nature of ESOL classrooms, where individuals from various backgrounds come together to acquire essential English language skills for civic life and social integration.

Understanding the length of residence in the UK is also crucial for assessing learners' experiences more effectively. A significant portion of respondents who have lived in the UK for a short time may still be in the early stages of language acquisition and cultural adjustment. On the other hand, those with longer durations of residence might have had more opportunities for language

exposure and integration, yet may still face challenges, potentially leading to them being labelled as 'non-integrators' (Matulionienė & Pundziuvienė, 2014).

Another key factor is the age distribution among adult ESOL learners. The presence of learners across various age groups, including those over 60, highlights the lifelong nature of language learning (O'Grady, 2013) and further emphasises the need for inclusive and age-appropriate learning environments. By tailoring language learning provision through bespoke, individualised learning and assessment, it becomes possible to address the specific needs of different age groups (CEDEFOP, 2023).

Insights into English usage outside of class further illuminate learners' engagement with the language. Many respondents reported regular use of English both inside and outside the classroom, indicating active efforts to improve their language skills. This reinforces the idea that language learning extends beyond formal educational settings into everyday contexts, a concept supported by Walqui (2006), who notes that education involves participation in sociocultural contexts as well as cognitive growth.

Data on English usage at home also provides valuable insights. Although some respondents reported never using English at home, the decrease in this category in Stage 2 suggests a gradual incorporation of English into daily life through family communication, self-study, or other means. The shift toward responses like "almost never" and "2-3 times a week" indicates a growing integration of English into learners' home environments.

In conclusion, the analysis of survey data offers valuable insights into the demographic characteristics and experiences of adult ESOL learners. Through cultivating an understanding of the diverse linguistic backgrounds, lengths of residence, age groups, and language usage patterns, educators, institutions, and policymakers can effectively tailor language learning provision and services to better support adult ESOL learners in their language acquisition journey and facilitate their integration into English-speaking society.

4.11 Learners' Educational Backgrounds and Goals

This section presents an analysis of learners' previous educational and work experience, provides a critical foundation for discussing the importance of context in adult community ESOL and the more in-depth insights from the semi-structured interviews in the chapter which follows. Additionally, as I have previously noted, by understanding the varied backgrounds and current needs of learners, better and more socially just assessments can be designed to demonstrate targeted, relevant, and personalised learning experiences that support both academic, social and professional aspirations in a more holistic way.

4.11.1 Insight into the Learners' Previous Education and Current Work Experiences

The following analysis of the data from both stages of the survey offers valuable insights into learners' backgrounds on previous English study experience and education in addition to previous and current work experience.

4.11.2 Prior English Study Experience and Its Implications for Individualised Learning

The survey reveals that a substantial proportion of learners in both stages have had prior exposure to English language studies. As illustrated in the graph below, approximately 30% of stage 1 learners and 25% of stage 2 learners have studied English before, while about 25% in stage 1 and 35% in stage 2 have not studied English before.

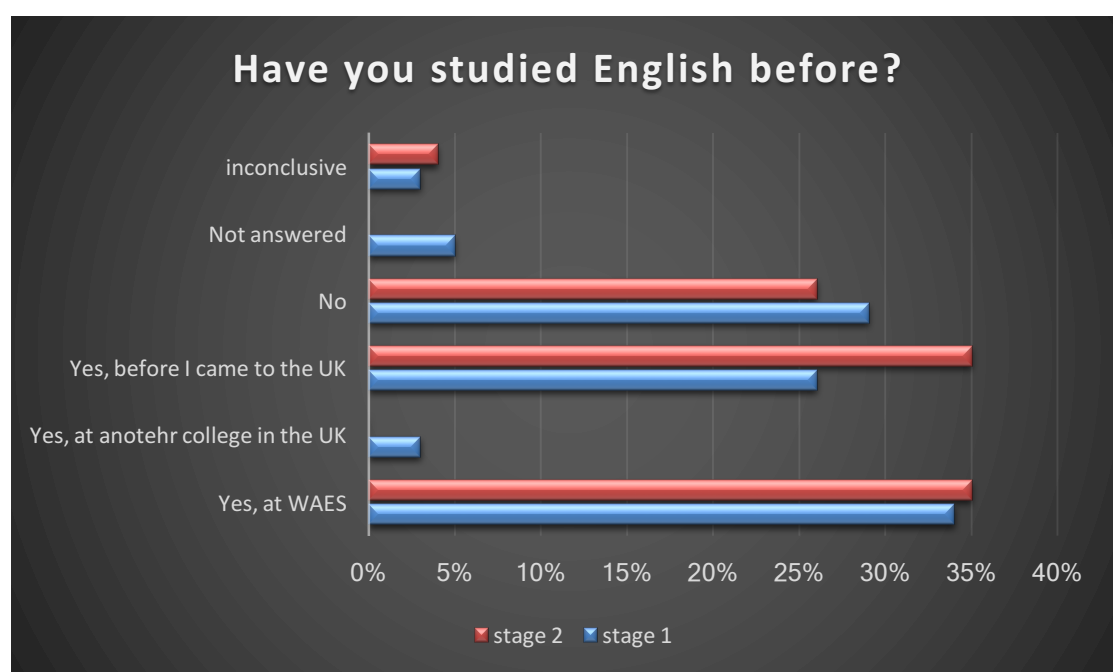


Figure 7: Prior English Study Experience of ESOL Learners (n = 54 for Stage 1; n = 43 for Stage 2)

These findings convey the importance of assessing learners' existing English competencies and designing ILPs that build on their current knowledge, as highlighted by various scholars in the field of English language education. For instance, Richards and Rodgers (2015) argue that effective language instruction should be based on a comprehensive understanding of learners' language proficiency levels, highlighting the need

for tailored approaches in designing ILPs. Similarly, Nunan (1998) emphasises the importance of learner-centred instruction that accounts for individual differences in language learning, including previous language exposure and educational backgrounds.

Again, by considering learners' diverse experiences and competencies, educators can create engaging and effective learning experiences alongside assessment that support language acquisition and demonstrate personal development (Vygotsky, 1978). As such, the findings from this study reinforce the significance of individualised instruction and the need to design ILPs that address learners' unique needs and aspirations.

4.11.3 Educational Backgrounds of ESOL Learners: Informing Learner-Centred Instruction and Negotiatory ILP Development

The graph below representing the highest level of education attainment clearly illustrates how learners' educational backgrounds vary widely, with many possessing secondary/high school education (about 30% in stage 1 and 25% in stage 2), primary school education (approximately 25% in both stages), and fewer holding university-level education (about 10%) or a college diploma

(around 5%).

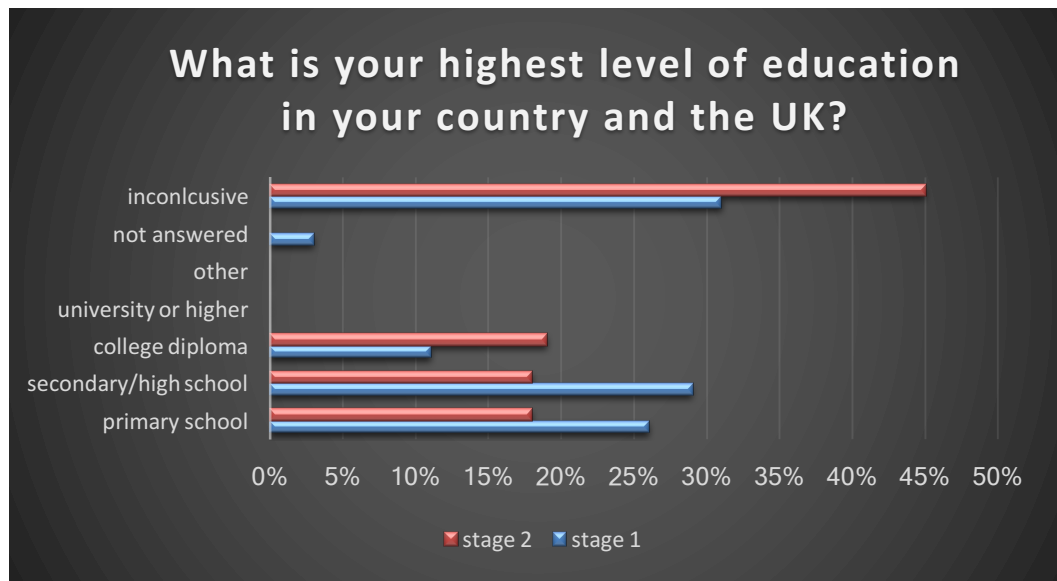


Figure 8: Learners' educational levels attained in the UK and in their countries ($n = 54$ for Stage 1; $n = 43$ for Stage 2)

This diversity in educational attainment again highlights the importance of learner-centred instruction approaches which have been shown to promote inclusivity in the classroom and enhance language acquisition (Nunan, 1998). It also brings to light the concept that ESOL learners are not passive recipients of knowledge, an idea captured in Plato's "Allegory of the Jar" (1952) and critiqued by Freire (1970) in his "banking model" of education, but rather bring a wealth of knowledge, skills, and experiences to the classroom, evidently in varying degrees. Recognising learners' educational backgrounds and work experiences as foundational elements enables educators to support both academic and wider skills development, ultimately improving learners' employability prospects and enhancing their civic engagement (Freire, 1970; Vygotsky, 1978). This approach aligns with Bruner's (1960) emphasis on considering learners' prior knowledge and experiences when structuring and delivering instruction.

By acknowledging the rich context that ESOL learners bring, educators can adopt a more negotiatory role when setting ILP targets, fostering a collaborative process that promotes personalised learning and better aligns with individual goals and aspirations (Richards, 2015). This not only enhances the effectiveness of instruction but also empowers learners in their educational journey, acknowledging the importance of social interaction and cultural contexts in cognitive development (Vygotsky, 1978).

4.11.4 Work Experience and Current Employment Status of ESOL

Learners

The survey data demonstrates many ESOL learners are actively engaged in work or seeking employment, as illustrated in the graph below. In stage 1, it can be seen about 35% of learners are currently working in London, while around 25% are not working, not looking for work, or do not want a job. In stage 2, approximately 30% are employed in London, and a similar percentage (around 25%) are looking for work.



Figure 9: Learners' work experience and employment status (n = 54 for Stage 1; n = 43 for Stage 2)

Overall, recognising the diverse educational and work experiences of ESOL learners is another essential component for creating effective ILPs (Kumaravadivelu, 2006). Incorporating insights into learners' work experience enables a better negotiatory partnership between students and their tutors to tailor individual learning aims, focusing on the development of employability skills crucial for career advancement. This approach not only enhances the learners' abilities in the UK workforce but also supports educational institutions in addressing governmental priorities and quality assurance. Moreover, it facilitates a more authentic and holistic method of teaching while empowering learners to achieve their personal and professional goals which can be effectively evidenced in their RARPAP for satisfying the performance metrics of government policy on education.

4.12 Learner Aspiration and Needs

Data from both phases of the student surveys reveal evolving trends in learners' future plans for employment and studies. In Stage 2, a noticeable shift towards pursuing higher education emerged, with more learners expressing a desire to attend university or continue their studies. This contrasts with Stage 1, where the primary focus was on finding employment. However, the significant proportion of learners who did not respond in Stage 2 suggests some uncertainty or lack of clarity about their future plans. This could be attributed to several factors, such as uncertainty about future aspirations, language barriers that may have hindered understanding of the question, or a perceived lack of relevance to the learners' current situations. Thus, understanding these potential reasons can help inform strategies for better supporting learners in

clarifying their goals, addressing language barriers, and ensuring the relevance of survey questions to improve engagement and data collection in the future and more importantly so learners have the necessary tools to understand engagement about their future plans and aspirations.

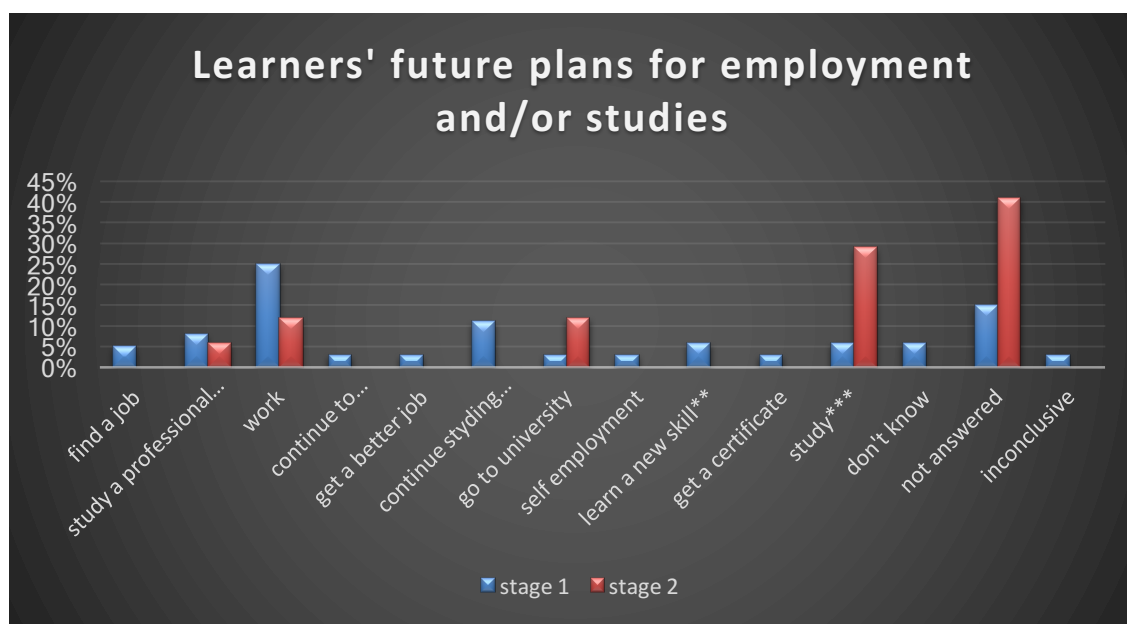


Figure 10: Learners' future plans for employment and/or study (n = 54 for Stage 1; n = 43 for Stage 2)

The graph above depicts the transition in learners' future plans between Stage 1, representing their initial intentions upon entering the programme, and Stage 2, symbolising their revised plans after completing the course. In Stage 1, the majority of learners (25%) intended to pursue employment opportunities. A smaller proportion planned to either pursue professional courses (8%), improve their English language skills (11%), or acquire new skills (6%). Approximately 6% of learners were uncertain about their future plans.

In Stage 2, a noticeable shift occurred, with 29% of learners expressing the intention to continue studying, representing a significant increase from Stage 1. The number of learners intending to work decreased to 12%, while 41% did not

provide an answer, potentially due to increased uncertainty or language barriers. Furthermore, the proportion of learners aiming to enrol in a university increased from 3% in Stage 1 to 12% in Stage 2. Interestingly, the percentage of learners planning to study a professional course decreased slightly, from 8% in Stage 1 to 6% in Stage 2.

These findings hint at a possible impact of the ESOL programme on learners' future plans, as many shifted their priorities from immediate employment to further education and personal growth. The underlying reasons for these changes and their implications will be explored through an in-depth analysis of the semi-structured interviews in the subsequent chapter.

4.13 Learners' Motivations for Learning English

Additionally, learners were asked about their reasons for learning English in both stages of the survey. This question into the motivations behind learners' engagement with English language education reveals a complex interplay of personal, familial, and socio-political factors. Common motivations were shown to include improving reading and writing skills, enhancing study skills, helping family or children, and striving for independence. In Stage 2, there was an increase in learners citing the need to learn English to remain in the UK. These responses provide valuable insights into the learners' motivations and specific goals regarding their language proficiency which again is fundamental to designing and developing CCL ESOL programmes which are fit for purpose and assessment practices which is inclusive to the different modes of learning demonstrated by these entry-level learners.

The graphical representation shown below illustrates these motivations across the two distinct stages of learning: Stage 1 and Stage 2. Analysing both these stages helps provide a nuanced understanding of how learners' priorities evolve as they progress in their language acquisition journey.

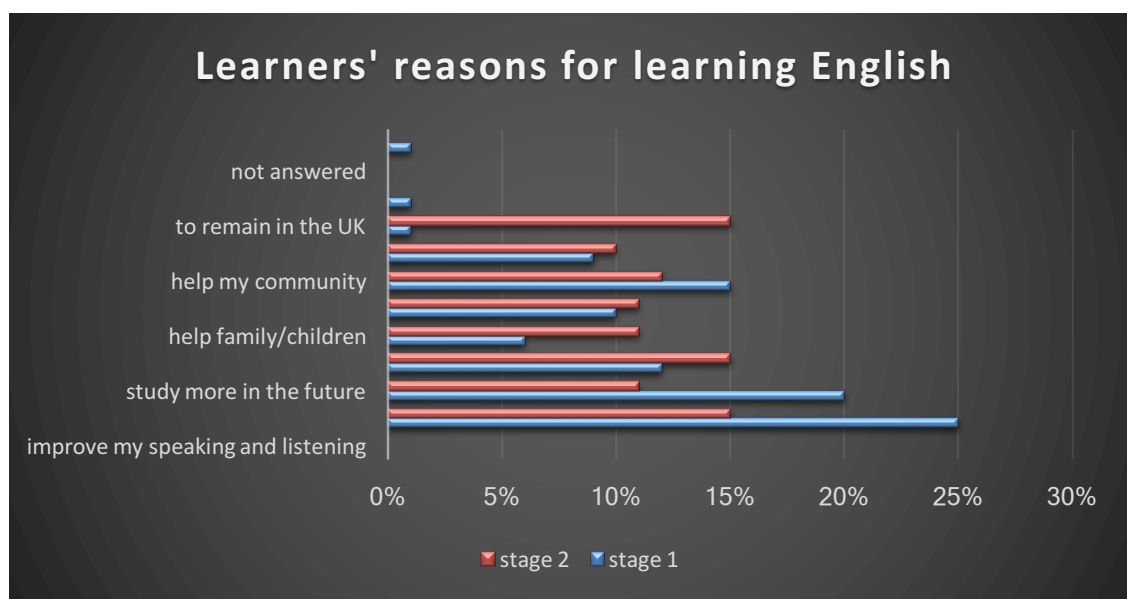


Figure 11: Learners' reasons for learning English (n = 54 for Stage 1; n = 43 for Stage 2)

4.14 Motivation for Language Skills Enhancement

In Stage 1, a substantial proportion of learners (25%) prioritise enhancing their speaking and listening skills, emphasising the importance of oral proficiency for effective communication. However, this focus shifts in Stage 2, with only 5% of learners highlighting these skills, suggesting a satisfactory level of competency has been achieved.

Similarly, 20% of Stage 1 learners seek to improve their reading and writing abilities, recognising their significance for academic and professional development. This percentage decreases to 10% in Stage 2, implying that

learners have acquired basic literacy skills, thus reducing the urgency for further enhancement.

These findings demonstrate that initial language acquisition stages emphasise foundational communication and literacy, which become less pressing as learners' progress and develop necessary competencies. However, it is essential to note a consistent 10% of learners in both stages aspire to further their education, suggesting that a stable subset views English proficiency as crucial for academic endeavours. This indicates further that the goal of continued education remains a steady motivator across various proficiency levels.

Furthermore, familial and community considerations, family-related motivations initially cited by 15% of learners decrease to 7% in Stage 2. This shift implies a transition from immediate familial concerns to personal goals. Similarly, community-oriented drivers also exhibit a slight decrease, indicating possible fulfilment or a refocusing of priorities.

In terms of health, well-being, and independence, health and well-being motivations experience a minor reduction from 8% to 7%. This indicates that basic language proficiency may be adequate for healthcare needs. Likewise, the desire for independence shows a slight decline, emphasising the importance of initial language skills acquisition.

Additionally, socio-political motivations display a notable increase in learners motivated by residency requirements, from 5% to 17%. This highlights one of the fundamental roles of language proficiency in immigration processes and

suggests an amplified awareness of linguistic residency requirements as learners advance in their studies.

Lastly, the 'Other', 'Not answered', and 'Inconclusive' categories maintain minimal representation. This reinforces the validity of the primary drivers and demonstrates that learners generally have clear motivations for pursuing English language education.

4.15 Summary

The aim of this chapter was to present the document analysis of ILPs and student survey data to shed light on the context of ILPs in adult community ESOL education. I have highlighted the importance of contextualising ILPs to gain a comprehensive understanding of their operation and effectiveness. Through examining the survey findings and document analysis, I uncovered valuable insights into learners' evolving motivations and experiences across different proficiency stages.

The document analysis provided valuable insights into the effectiveness of ILPs, revealing variations in evidence sufficiency and organisation within learner portfolios. The identification of inconsistencies, such as missing diagnostic assessments or vague target descriptions, highlights challenges in ILP implementation that can hinder tailored instruction and accurate progress tracking. These findings emphasise the need for SMART targets and well-organised evidence to enhance learner outcomes.

In the next chapter, I turn my focus to analysing the rich interview insights and to explore holistic skill development, further emphasising the significance of context in understanding and improving ILPs to foster English language acquisition and wider skills development that is imperative to social integration.

Chapter 5: Findings Part 2 – A Deeper Dive into the Semi-Structured Staff and Student interviews

5.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to present the rich qualitative data derived from semi-structured interviews conducted with both staff and students involved in the delivery of ESOL programmes where this research takes place. In this chapter, I build upon my previous analysis of ILPs and survey data, taking a deeper look into the personal experiences, perceptions, and insights of those directly engaged in the ESOL educational process in community learning.

The semi-structured interviews were conducted with a total of 15 individuals, including nine ESOL students and six staff members. The staff members consisted of the Head of Community and Cultural Learning (CCL) and the CCL Coordinator who are also ESOL tutors teaching community classes, an ESOL Course Manager responsible for internal verification and overseeing the moderation of RARPAP for ILPs, and three additional ESOL tutors teaching in the CCL.

The interviews explored various aspects of the ILP and RARPAP processes, including their implementation, effectiveness, and the challenges faced by both tutors and learners. Staff participants provided detailed accounts of their experiences with ILPs in community settings, highlighting the difficulties in engaging learners and the need for a more flexible and learner-centred approach.

Additionally, student interviews offered valuable insights into their personal experiences with ILPs, their awareness and understanding of the programme's objectives, and their expectations and outcomes. This qualitative data sheds light on the learners' motivations, aspirations, and the impact of the ESOL programme on their academic and personal development.

The key areas examined in the interviews include the implementation and recording of ILPs, logistical challenges in administering RARPAP, enrolment procedures, methods for tracking learner progress, and the balance between academic, personal development targets and wider social skills integration. Furthermore, the interviews addressed learner well-being, pride and ownership of learning, career plans, and the overall effectiveness of the programme.

In this chapter, I first provide a brief overview of the staff backgrounds and context, setting the stage for the detailed findings. Then, I present the thematic analysis of the interview data, organised by key themes, such as ILP implementation, learner awareness, expectations, outcomes, and suggestions for programme improvement. This comprehensive analysis aims to provide a deeper understanding of the complex dynamics within the ESOL programme and emphasise the role of an inclusive and empowering learning environment in unlocking the transformative potential of ILPs.

5.2 Participant Backgrounds and Context

To ensure the anonymity of participants and maintain focus on their experiences, staff and students involved in the study have been labelled (e.g., Tutor A, Student 1) rather than using pseudonyms or personal identifiers. This

approach aligns with ethical research practices, as outlined by scholars, such as Saunders et al. (2018), who emphasise the importance of protecting participant identities in qualitative research. Additionally, as emphasised by Creswell (2014), this method serves to prioritise the experiences and accounts shared by the participants, allowing for a richer understanding of the topic under investigation without unnecessary emphasis on individual personalities.

The staff backgrounds and contexts demonstrate the diverse experiences and challenges associated with implementing ILPs in various educational settings. For instance, Tutor A, who teaches ESOL at a Chinese Community Centre, describes ILP implementation as overwhelming, highlighting significant challenges in engaging learners in the RARPAP process. Many students remain at the pre-entry level for extended periods due to limited speaking and reading skills, reflecting the spiky profiles (Schellekens, 2008; Cooke, 2006). highlighted in the literature.

On the other hand, Tutor B, an ESOL tutor and course team leader, advocates for the adoption of electronic ILPs and emphasises the importance of balancing auditing requirements with learner needs. Tutor C, who manages a class with a high number of newly arrived immigrants, suggests a less systematic ILP process focused on developing soft skills. Similarly, Tutor D, who uses video recordings to track learner progress, emphasises the importance of student ownership and pride in learning.

In addition, Manager A, an ESOL Community and Cultural Learning Coordinator, also supports the evolution of ILPs from paper-based to digital formats, aligning with the changing needs of the educational environment.

5.3 Diverse Learner Profiles: Varied Backgrounds, Learning Styles, and Work Experience

I will first present an overview of learner profiles, followed by emerging themes from the interviews. These profiles offer valuable insights into the diverse backgrounds and experiences of individuals enrolled in ESOL courses at the college. Each learner brings a unique set of circumstances and motivations, contributing to their learning journey and goals. This is supported by Mallows (2006) whose study draws on the findings of 18 different research projects to ESOL provision and the diverse nature of its learners. During consultations with ESOL practitioners in the study, several teaching and learning difficulties were identified. These challenges include the remarkable variation in learners' backgrounds, prior educational experiences, and present circumstances within the same class. Additionally, learners exhibit a high level of motivation to acquire English skills, viewing it as a pathway to employment opportunities or further academic pursuits.

A total of nine students were interviewed. However, while eight are presented here as individual case profiles (Learners 1–8), the ninth learner's contributions were limited and are instead incorporated into the thematic analysis rather than presented separately. This ensures that all data is represented, while allowing the profiles to highlight those cases with richer and more detailed insights.

Learner 1, of Eritrean heritage, has been residing in the UK for 15 years. Having previously lived in Saudi Arabia as a diplomat's wife, she relocated to the UK after her husband's passing to seek better opportunities for her children. With a determination to equip herself and her family with the necessary skills, she enrolled in a community ESOL course in 2016. Fluent in Arabic and Tigray, she embarked on learning in order to improve all four basic language and literacy skills, including fluency in English.

Similarly, Learner 2 arrived in London in 2017, bringing with her Spanish as a mother tongue and fluency in Italian due to a period of settlement in Italy before marriage. While possessing a good entry level 1 in literacy skills due to her Latin language background and prior education, this learner's spoken English lacks both fluency and accuracy. Currently employed as a part-time cleaner and nanny, she has been studying ESOL at the college since September 2018.

Learner 3, who is from Egypt, has been living in London for just over a year. Upon arriving, she reports to have had no knowledge of the English language and was recommended by a friend to pursue ESOL at the college. After an initial assessment, she was placed in a beginner level ESOL class.

Unsurprisingly, this learner exhibits a spiky profile, demonstrating stronger speaking skills, particularly in fluency, but weaker grammatical accuracy and receptive abilities. Nevertheless, having studied basic English in elementary school and completed high school education in Egypt, she possesses a foundation in English writing and attended a computer college in Cairo. She currently works as a hotel housekeeping supervisor and has engaged in

learning within both community settings, such as libraries, and two of colleges' campus.

Learner 4, originally from Morocco, arrived in the UK in 2016 after residing in New York with her spouse and child. While her education in Morocco was primarily in Arabic and French, reading and writing in Roman script poses a challenge for her at the pre-entry level. However, this learner demonstrates high fluency in spoken English which is reflective of the spiky profile common with ESOL learners. She first enrolled on a pre-entry ESOL programme in 2021, seeking to improve her reading and writing skills.

In contrast, Learner 5's situation arises from fleeing Afghanistan following the return to power of the Taliban in late 2021. At 20 years old, he had completed studies up to the 12th grade in Afghanistan, encompassing subjects like maths and science in their native language, Dari, as well as some basic English. After arriving in London with his family, he initially resided in a hotel in Westminster, feeling optimistic about their new life but was shortly relocated with his family to a seaside town away from London where he had started to settle in well and build his life in the local community. However, due to high travel costs, he now faces isolation and longs to re-join the college's ESOL classes through online provision.

Learner 6, originally from Brazil, possesses prior experience studying English during childhood. Since 2021, he has been working as a cleaner in London, where minimal English is required in his workplace. Recommended by a friend, he also decided to study ESOL at the college. While he has literacy skills in the

Roman script due to Portuguese being his first language, his proficiency in all four language areas remains low.

Learner 7, a refugee from Syria, had pursued studying law for two years before being compelled to leave the country due to the ongoing civil war. She subsequently worked as a hairdresser for two years before marrying and coming to the UK in 2020. After joining the mainsite college for five-month, she was referred to community learning due to the cost associated with her residency status which meant she was ineligible for the fee waiver for learners who are resident in the UK and either in receipt of benefits or on low income.

Lastly, Learner 8, originally from Algeria, engaged in education and employment in Algeria before relocating to Saudi Arabia and then the UAE, where she assumed the role of a homemaker for a total of fourteen years. Upon hearing about the ESOL courses at THE COLLEGE from Arabic-speaking community members, she conducted her own research and decided to be assessed for her level in English at the college open day. Despite having a spiky profile, this learner excels in reading and writing at entry level 3 but possesses lower proficiency in speaking which is gradable at an entry level 1. However, due to her duration of stay in the UK, like learner 8, she does not qualify for a concession towards the cost of enrolling in a main site ESOL exam class.

These diverse learner profiles showcase the array of backgrounds, experiences, and aspirations present within the ESOL student body at the college. The college serves as a crucial platform for these individuals to

improve their English language skills, enhance their opportunities, and integrate into the broader society. With each learner facing unique challenges and goals, ESOL provision through this Adult Education provider continues to play a vital role in supporting their educational journeys.

5.4 Themes from Interviews:

5.4.1 Personalisation and Relevance of ILPs to External Aims

Overall, the learner outcomes discussed in the interviews include academic and well-being goals, pathways for progression, learner autonomy, social integration, and the challenges of measuring soft outcomes. The focus is on empowering learners to become active participants in their communities while addressing their specific language and well-being needs was a key aspect highlighted by the majority of staff. The Head of Community and Cultural Learning discusses learner outcomes, emphasising the importance of prescriptive teaching, co-creating learning experiences, and empowering learner autonomy. The goal is to encourage learners to become active participants in life, leading to economic progress for the community. However, she also pointed out the potential challenges associated with measuring soft outcomes, such as raised confidence and social connections. The Community ESOL course aims to improve well-being, social mobility, and access to local services, but measuring the intangible nature of well-being remains problematic.

Manager A places importance on the different pathways available to ESOL learners, such as career plans and cultural integration also recognising the

significance of student aspirations and the need to measure progress from the beginning of their learning journey to the end. However, Manager B differentiates between academic objectives and goals related to well-being. Here, he emphasises that certain learners participate in community ESOL programmes with the intention of engaging socially, rather than solely pursuing academic exams or employment. The focus is therefore on empowering learners to develop the necessary skills to independently navigate society. This view is supported further by Tutor C who had recent experience in teaching recently arrived refugees from Afghanistan. She expresses, that for Afghan refugees it is imperative for them to be able to communicate and function in their new society following the 2021 overthrowing of the Afghan government by the Taliban forcing them to have to flee to the UK. Here, the development of soft skills aid tremendously in the smoother acquisition of academic and linguistic skills.

Furthermore, Tutor B highlights the learning environment in a community setting, where progress to exam classes is not common. Learners who do progress often have limited speaking and reading skills, making it challenging to teach reading skills from scratch. Learners at the pre-entry level may stay there for a longer time, particularly while developing confidence.

Perhaps one of the most unique concepts of community adult ESOL highlighted by the Head of CCL in addition to the spiky profile of students is the case of circular learners who have been at pre-entry level for a considerable amount of time, in many cases up to seven years. She explains that is not clearly reflected in the RARPAP and ILP and if teachers rely solely on hard targets it would

appear as if the RARPAP is ineffective. However, as she puts, the intended outcome needs to be better reflected in the ILP and RARPAP which clearly shows that these are well-being learners, those without a direct academic orientated goal who still attend community ESOL programmes with the goal of interacting socially. This includes and is not limited to coming in to “have a chat with people” and engage in the language. They have no particular aspiration of going directly into a higher level ESOL exam class or employment. The goal here is to encourage learner autonomy to engage in this type of learning but as she puts forward, the question is whether the ILP documentation supports this.

5.4.2 Setting SMART Targets for Career Plan Learners and Well-being Learners

The Head of CCL confirmed that Community ESOL course has several aims which rather than involving formal qualifications, instead include promoting well-being, enabling social mobility, improving lives, and facilitating access to social and local services, such as general practitioners and vaccine programmes. She also highlighted that another important goal of the course is to address “the issue of gang violence in the local area” by enhancing well-being, which aligns with the wider council agenda and is based on intelligence gathered from within the community. In recognition that the learners enrolled in the course have diverse profiles with varying language and well-being needs, and the curriculum is designed to cater to these needs. The course emphasises enrichment and confidence building, following a curriculum path defined by the college which is divided into two; well-being learners and career plan learners. She gave the example of “circular learners” referring to those learners who have been at pre-

entry level for a considerable amount of time, such as Learner 1 and Learner 8 who have been at pre-entry level since 2015, additionally Learner 3 who has also been a CCL student since 2018. She explains further how for these well-being learners, the emphasis of the outcome needs to be on issues, such as mental health and well-being, social mobility, improving lives, accessing social and local services. These would require more flexibility in order to add softer outcomes to the RARPAP and offer space for “gradual” improvement.

Interestingly, she draws a distinction between recording harder SMART targets for academic and linguistic aims which are important for obtaining and maintaining GLA funding for audit purposes which make it necessary to see the learners’ journey (progression) and not always needing SMART hard outcomes for the aims of well-being learners.

She emphasises that in the case of a well-being learner, sometimes softer outcomes are just as effective, which she provides an example of such target as “I will speak to my neighbour this month” which underlines the need to build confidence and a communication skill. However, she does clearly acknowledge the challenges associated with measuring these types of soft outcomes, intangible things, such as raised confidence and creating social connections and suggests that a move towards outcome-based model of learning where the end goal is economic progress for the community.

Furthermore, the Quality Assurance coordinator at the college explains the need to distinguish between targets and aspirations. She asserts that these two aspects need to correlate as there is an evident disconnect between negotiation between tutor and learner. The fact that both stages of the survey alarmingly

showed a significant proportion of respondents struggled to comprehend the fundamental terms, such as "assessment," and "ILP" highlight the pressing need for more focused instruction and clarification regarding key assessment terminologies within the ESOL curriculum, especially to ensure more effective negotiation of RARPAP targets between tutor and learner.

The two main types of learners as defined by the college and the CCL department who fall into the categories of career-oriented learners and well-being learners were further explained by Tutor A. This tutor described how career-oriented learners have specific career goals in mind and their focus is not solely on ESOL. They also prioritise broader social issues, such as isolation, mental health, well-being, and access to courses that provide support for these social needs. For instance, they may attend classes to meet and interact with others. The tutor gives an example of a student with schizophrenia,

"So [...] there's this there's one woman who comes [to class] and from my experience as a social worker, I would say that she's a schizophrenic who doesn't take her medication very much... but she comes to all the classes. She turns up a bit, a bit late, and sometimes she says some very weird things, but she likes coming to the class and she doesn't form relationships with other people in the class. She likes being in a group where people listen to what she's saying So that's... a question of her coming to an English class... see there's very few very limited provision for people who are mentally ill, but [who are] not sectionable [sic] so, I'm not sure if

she's been sectioned, but coming to the group, it seems to be having a positive effect on her mental health.”

From the very beginning, these learners express the need to comprehend and be understood in various social contexts. They are less concerned about literacy skills related to reading and writing, as their primary emphasis is on developing English language skills for effective communication, especially at their places of work. The tutor identifies and classifies this particular group of learners into six further categories, which may have some overlap:

- Group 1: These are unemployed individuals who need language skills for everyday tasks, such as shopping and effectively communicating with people in various settings, such as doctors, dentists, pharmacists, and technicians servicing their home appliances.
- Group 2: This group consists of individuals who had professional jobs in their home countries but now find themselves in unskilled positions due to language barriers.
- Group 3: Learners in this group feel isolated because they lack English language skills, which prevents them from participating in social interactions in their new environment, such as their new home. Some may experience isolation at work or in the community in general.
- Group 4: These learners have an employment requirement to learn or improve their English, as their employers have given them an ultimatum to either enhance their language skills or risk being replaced by another worker.

However, there is no measurement of competence or evidence provided regarding the fulfilment of the employer's conditions. Nevertheless, learners in this group reported receiving verbal feedback from colleagues at work, indicating that they could now be better understood.

- Group 5: Another category of learners who consider themselves to have insufficient English language proficiency to secure employment.
- Group 6: This group comprises underemployed individuals who are currently working but are described by the tutor as “capable, intelligent, and hardworking”. However, their lack of proficiency in English as a second language hinders them from finding or securing a suitable job that matches their professional skills and prior experience until they improve their English competency.

5.4.3 Recording Evidence of Learning and Progression

The interview responses demonstrated that the staff are proactively involved in the administration of RARPAP. However, there is a discrepancy between the practices of the tutors and the expectations set by the management regarding the implementation of RARPAP. Understandably, recording evidence of learning and progression in the context of RARPAP involves various approaches and perspectives. Tutor A utilises video recordings to track learner progress, which students appreciate as it allows them to visibly witness their growth and share it with others, including potential employers. However, the tutor notes a challenge with internal assessment moderation and has yet to find a solution for external progression. Tutor B, on the other hand, considers

conducting tutorials a waste of time due to student difficulties and the time-consuming nature of the process, resulting in the burden of RARPAP falling solely on the teacher and imposing targets and learning directions on learners.

Tutor D outlines his experience with RARPAP, which includes attaching electronic Individual Learning Plans (eILPs) to an electronic-based system since the RARPAP process involves diagnostic activities, target setting, a mid-term review, and a final summative assessment to gauge achievement and progress. However, the workload for teachers is considerable, and issues, such as study skills and emerging soft targets arise throughout the course. Tutor D, also a moderator, emphasises the importance of feedback and highlights the significance of gathering evidence in a rich manner that demonstrates purposeful learning, contrasting decontextualised exercises with relevant real-life experiences and authentic language usage. Examples of rich evidence include context, feedback during speaking activities, audio recordings with feedback, witness statements, and video evidence over use of decontextualised activities, such as random grammar exercises and worksheets extracted from textbooks or downloaded from the internet. Sets of exercises presented as evidence for RARPAP are deemed unacceptable from a moderator and quality assurance perspective. Additionally, learner voice is regarded as crucial.

The Quality Assurance Coordinator emphasises that community and ESOL tutors must follow all five stages of RARPAP in supporting learners at the college. These stages involve constant monitoring of learning progress, conversations between learners and tutors within the first four weeks of the course, and the differentiation between ILP, where targets are recorded and

kept as a reference document, and RARPAP, a non-accredited process that records learning, progression, and achievement through negotiated targets and comprehensive assessment. RARPAP provides learners with a clear focus and purpose by generating tangible evidence, fostering purposeful assessment within a varied practice. She further concludes that the SMART steps align with the RARPAP process, further supporting its implementation.

5.5 Challenges in ILP Implementation

5.5.1 ILP Implementation, Delivery and Recording

ILP implementation, delivery, and recording are crucial aspects of community ESOL programmes in comparison to the main site ESOL programmes at the college which are heavily exam based. The Head of CCL reports that community learners generally have less confidence in their academic and study skills and prefer more local and familiar learning environments. Community ESOL is funded separately by the GLA, with no requirement for exams. Additionally, extra funding is available for both individual and group learning in local, more deprived areas of Westminster. The community ESOL programme covers employability and ESOL up to entry level 3, offering shorter courses, mixed ability learners, and various locations, such as schools, libraries, and other places familiar to learners within the community.

In terms of ILP implementation, delivery, and recording, RARPAP has been created specifically for community ESOL provision. It emphasises hard outcomes through SMART targets, allowing for measurable progress. However, it also provides flexibility to include softer outcomes, recognising the need for

more gradual improvement and building learners' confidence and communication skills. While hard outcomes are important for obtaining and maintaining GLA funding and for audit purposes, softer outcomes can be just as effective in demonstrating learner improvement, integration, and social cohesion. RARPAP serves as a tool to support finance, funding, and quality, providing structure and pace to the programme. However, consistency and quality may vary in the absence of exams.

The Head of CCL further reports that both funders and Ofsted require evidence of learner progress, and RARPAP can fulfil these requirements, particularly through soft targets. Additionally, the Quality Coordinator, explains that ILPs follow the six stages of RARPAP as illustrated in [Figure 1: The 6 stage RARPAP process](#) (in chapter 1). Auditing RARPAP is also crucial to support learners at the college, ensuring constant monitoring of learning progress which is done internal by staff. Conversations between learners and tutors are held within the first four weeks of the course to establish and assess targets. She reiterates that while the ILP serves as a collective document for recording and reference, evidencing RARPAP, the non-accredited process that records learning, progression, and achievement, it also allows for negotiated and set targets and assesses all aspects of students' work. She claims further that RARPAP provides learners with a clear focus and purpose, generating tangible evidence of their progress, which adds purpose to the varied assessment practices in the programme. The SMART steps align with the RARPAP process, further enhancing its effectiveness in supporting ILP implementation and delivery.

5.5.2 RARPAP Administration and its Key Challenges

The interviews highlighted the challenges faced in RARPAP administration during the COVID-19 lockdown encompassed learners' limited digital skills, difficulties in target setting, the need for learner empowerment and effective feedback, issues with evidence management and electronic evidence, comprehensibility of SMART targets, data protection, the contextualisation of RARPAP evidence, and the standardisation of the ILP portfolio. These challenges further highlight the complexity of implementing and delivering RARPAP effectively in diverse learning contexts which individual tutors shared their accounts of.

Tutor A highlighted the learners' lack of digital skills as the main hurdle, impeding their ability to adapt to online learning, upload their work digitally, and receive timely feedback. In a face-to-face setting, different learners would achieve varying results through written exercises. Tutor C discussed implementation challenges, noting that while target setting appears easy in theory, it is actually difficult in practice. The process was described as "highly systematic" and required less rigidity in order to be practically effective. Furthermore, tutors shared the difficulty faced in demonstrating evidence of soft targets.

The CCL Coordinator identified challenges in the RARPAP ILP where control primarily rested with the teacher. However, it was crucial for students to feel empowered and take ownership of their progress and achievements. Effective

feedback between teachers and students was considered essential, but there was uncertainty regarding students' understanding of the feedback. The use of error correcting codes, which promote learner autonomy, proved useful. The coordinator emphasised the importance of tutors attempting to elicit responses from learners rather than providing corrections outright, aiming to maximize learning and progress. Additionally, there was a gap in teachers collecting work from students.

Tutor D gave detailed account of several challenges in the implementation of RARPAP. One major issue revolved around evidence management, highlighting the need for a transition towards electronic evidence. This posed challenges in terms of the students' role, providing evidence, and accessibility due to varying levels of digital literacy. SMART targets were criticised for being “too wordy” and overly “teacher-led”, making them less comprehensible for learners with lower literacy and language skills. Data protection concerns arose when storing student audio/video of speaking exercises. It was particularly emphasised that RARPAP evidence lacks meaning without clear communicative context and, that exercises, such as completing grammar worksheets and gap filling activities do not suffice as RARPAP evidence on their own. Standardising the ILP portfolio was deemed highly challenging, while the distinction between literacy and language learning was underscored. Tutor D specifically critiqued the SMART element of the ILP for its reliance on accountant language and mentality, overlooking the circular nature of language learning which is a dynamic element of the entire RARPAP.

Relatedly, Tutor B also shares how target setting is a very cultural thing in the UK. In this context of target setting in the UK, she also highlighted that the process primarily serves auditing purposes and may not be suitable for low-level community learners. The clarity of targets for the entire class was found to be easier for students to understand, thus the tutor opting to set group targets as opposed to individual ones. Feedback was identified as highly beneficial for students, with the implementation of a medal system being particularly effective. However, for teachers, the target setting process was again recognised as being overwhelming and tedious, involving excessive paperwork and the expectation of individual targets for every student. Furthermore, the collection of paper-based, speaking and listening activities for RARPAP proved to be time-consuming and challenging. The logistics of managing 12 sets of 10-minute tutorials made it difficult, if not impossible, for teachers to effectively handle the rest of the class. The clash between SMART targets and traditional teaching in a cultural class further complicated the process.

Tutor A highlighted further problems arising from the enrolment stage process. The process of working with groups of learners with varying language proficiency levels presents challenges in determining individual goals and aspirations, particularly for learners with very low language levels. He shares that while it is relatively easier to identify general language skills aims, understanding specific individual goals becomes more difficult due to the learners' spiky profiles. The tutor also notes that the enrolment process is predominantly focused on satisfying the requirements of the funder rather than

prioritising the needs of the students, echoing the sentiment of Tutor D who draw similarities with the audit process with that of “accountant mentality”.

Tutor A explains further that the funder's emphasis is on assessing the level of new learners, while a learner-oriented approach would assess the level and consider the learner's desired direction if this could be done at the initial/enrolment stage. This highlights the need to address the tension between funder-oriented assessments and assessments that truly prioritise the learners' perspectives and desires. This suggests that adopting a learner-oriented assessment approach would ensure that learners embark on a journey they genuinely wish to pursue, rather than one that is imposed upon them.

5.5.3 Systemic Issues in Evidencing Progression

While Section 5.4.3 detailed initial concerns about evidencing progression, further insights from staff and learners reinforced just how deeply embedded the challenges are. One tutor described the system as “a paper chase” that detracted from real language acquisition, while another commented that learners often felt confused by what was being recorded:

“I will ask them, what did you learn today? And they just look at the ILP like, ‘I don’t know what that even says.’” (Tutor C)

These comments not only reiterate earlier themes but demonstrate a growing disconnect between the intended function of documentation and its actual classroom use. This supports the need for a critical re-evaluation of what

counts as “evidence” in ESOL assessment and how it can be made more learner-centred and transparent.

5.6 Impact on Social Skills Development and Community Integration

5.6.1 Challenges Faced by Learners with English as a Barrier

The interviews explored the problems faced by learners in their English language journey and the impact these barriers have on their daily lives. Learners expressed that they were seeking to integrate into a new society, pursue employment opportunities, or engage in further education. However, various barriers and challenges can impede learners' progress and hinder their ability to communicate effectively in English.

Learner 1, for instance, faces difficulties in communicating with individuals outside of her community. Having lived in the UK for a considerable period, her children have now grown up and moved out, leaving her struggling to communicate without their assistance. When attempting to inquire about employment opportunities or further courses at the college, she encounters a significant hurdle. Her low speaking and listening skills make it challenging to understand others, hindering her ability to pursue her employment aspirations effectively.

Similarly, Learner 2 encounters difficulties in translating between English, Spanish, and Italian. She reports having to frequently rely on tools like Google Translate and experiences confusion when attempting day-to-day tasks, such

as booking appointments with her local GP. Consequently, it becomes a significant challenge to be able to convey her concerns accurately during consultations, highlighting the limitations caused by language barriers in accessing necessary services and effectively expressing herself.

Learner 3's language difficulties lead to feelings of fear, anxiety, and discomfort. She reported her struggle to comprehend and communicate effectively, resulting in isolation and emotional distress, "I stay at home and cry, cry, I cry everyday".

Another very interesting and realistic example she illustrated was living near the bustling Victoria coach station in London, she found it challenging to provide directions when approached by others. Despite knowing the way, her limited speaking skills prevented her from articulating the necessary information, leading to feelings of shame and withdrawn from giving instructions to passers-by who stopped and asked for her help. She explained further her dependency on her spouse for translation in various situations, such as making GP appointments which causes her to face significant limitations in her ability to independently navigate her daily life. Additionally, the fast pace of initial English classes in mainstream ESOL further complicated her learning journey, making it difficult to follow and understand the lessons effectively.

For Learner 5, a young adult with aspirations of building a life and pursuing higher education in the UK, basic English speaking skills pose a significant barrier. Communication becomes a challenge in various contexts, limiting his ability to interact effectively and hindering his progress towards his goals.

The outbreak of the Coronavirus pandemic has only worsened the barriers faced by some learners. For instance, Learner 7 expressed how the rules of lockdown and restrictions on in-person learning made it challenging for her to join an ESOL course promptly. Living in London for six months without easy access to English-speaking individuals, during this unprecedented period, she experienced isolation and limited opportunities to practice and develop her language skills. The pandemic has further heightened the barriers to study, underscoring the additional challenges faced by learners during extraordinary circumstances.

What can be highlighted and supported further from the learners' interview responses is that the journey of English language acquisition is not without obstacles. Learners face a range of problems, including difficulty in communication with people outside their community, reliance on translation tools, feelings of fear and anxiety, limited access to information and services, and the impact of unforeseen events, such as the pandemic. Recognising and addressing these barriers is crucial for supporting learners in their quest to develop their language skills and successfully integrate into society. By providing tailored support, targeted language instruction, and accessible resources, educational institutions can play a vital role in empowering learners to overcome these challenges and achieve their goals in English language proficiency.

5.6.2 Learner Pride and Ownership of Learning Through Cultivating Soft Skills

Learners' pride and ownership of their learning journey play a significant role in their educational experience. This is highlighted from the student and staff interview responses. For example, Tutor B verifies that the Chinese Community Centre students value tangible proof of their achievements, while learners appreciate the RARPAP as a tool to showcase progress. She explains that “students are proud of having a piece of paper to prove their learning”.

Learner 1 also exemplifies the importance of study skills and taking ownership of materials, showing awareness and pride in having good study skills, such as the ownership of study materials i.e.: a folder, pencil case and their importance for study skills in development of her language and literacy. She shares how she understands that these tools contribute to her language and literacy development, showcasing a proactive and responsible attitude towards her own learning. Overall, these instances illustrate how learners find motivation and satisfaction in their educational journey through a sense of pride and ownership.

This pride and ownership arguably not only boost learners' self-esteem but also foster deeper engagement and commitment to their studies. By actively participating in their learning process and assuming responsibility for their success, learners cultivate a proactive mind-set that contributes to a more fulfilling and effective learning experience. Encouraging and supporting learners in developing this pride and ownership can greatly enhance their overall educational outcomes which is further supported by the Head of CCL's keenness of embedding these integral soft skills in order to nurture and empower student autonomy, thus developing confidence in learning – which

she previously highlighted as fundamentally difficult to evidence within RARPAP. Cultivating confidence is essentially important as she describes community learners as “less confident” and needing flexibility to add softer outcomes to RARPAP. The purpose of having this flexibility in RARPAP is to substitute courses which are more rigid than Community ESOL and require harder assessment whereas RARPAP offers space for what she describes as “gradual” improvement of learner soft skills, such as confidence.

5.7 Integration of Survey Data and Interview Data – a Synthesis of

Findings from both Methods

5.7.1 Learner Awareness and Expectations of the Programme

The findings of both the staff and student interviews and stage 1 and 2 of the student surveys highlight the challenges in understanding key assessment terminologies for ILP administration and RARPAP faced by adult ESOL learners. The low comprehension levels observed for terms, such as assessment, ILP, Individual Learning Plan, and RARPAP indicate the need for attention and deploying better strategies for student awareness. By employing diverse instructional strategies and providing ongoing support, educators can enhance learners' comprehension and engagement in the ESOL programme. Addressing these challenges will ultimately contribute to the overall success and progress of adult ESOL learners in their language acquisition journey.

The stage 1 survey as illustrated in the graph below alarmingly showed a significant proportion of respondents struggled to comprehend the fundamental term "assessment," with 36% indicating that they did not understand it.

Furthermore, 25% remained unsure about its meaning. Similar challenges were observed for ILP, where 47% of learners expressed their lack of comprehension.

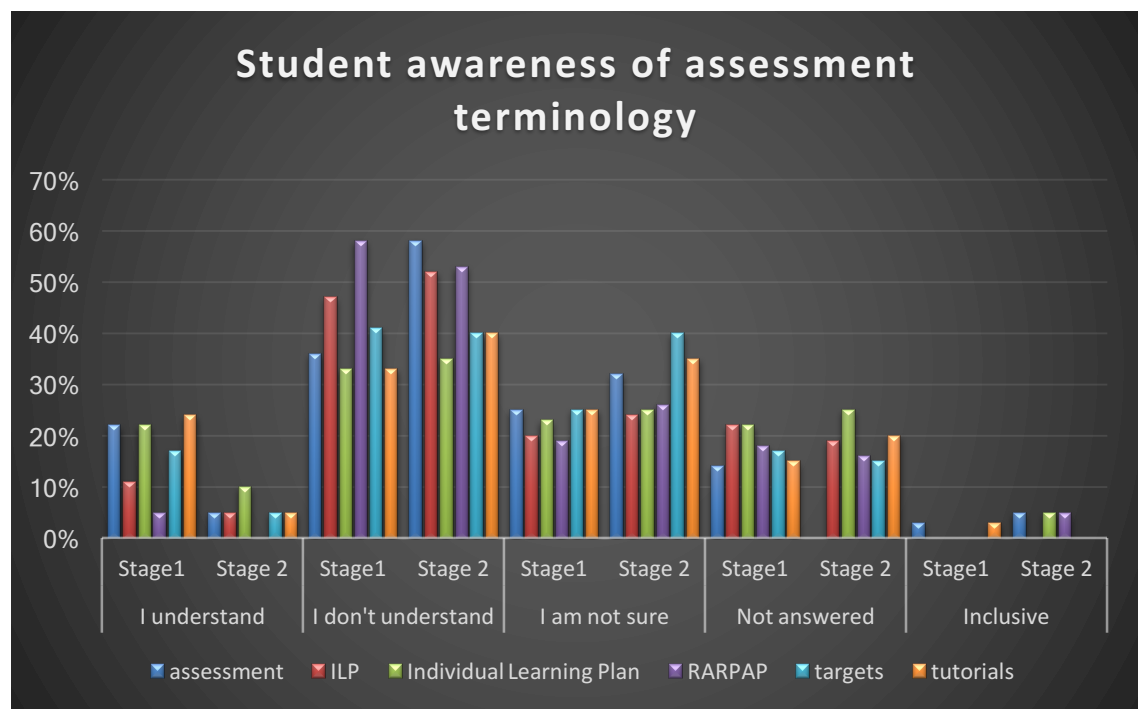


Figure 12: Students were asked 'do you know what these words mean?' in both stage 1 and stage 2 of the surveys (n = 54 for Stage 1; n = 43 for Stage 2)

Although the understanding levels for Individual Learning Plan were slightly better, 33% of respondents still faced difficulties with this. The term "RARPAP" posed the most significant challenge, with 58% of learners indicating their lack of understanding. Lastly, while "targets" and "tutorials" had comparatively higher comprehension levels, a substantial portion of learners remained unsure or found it difficult to grasp these terms.

The stage 2 findings reinforced the concerns observed in the first phase. Once again, the term "assessment" proved to be problematic, with 58% of learners expressing their inability to understand it. Similarly, the understanding levels for

ILP remained consistently low, with 52% of respondents facing challenges. Despite a slight improvement in the comprehension levels for Individual Learning Plan, 35% of learners still struggled to grasp the concept. The term "RARPAP" continued to pose significant difficulties, with 53% of learners lacking understanding. While the understanding levels for "targets" were relatively better, a substantial percentage (40%) of respondents faced hurdles in comprehending the term. The term "tutorials" had relatively higher comprehension levels, but a noteworthy number of learners remained unsure.

These findings highlight the pressing need for more focused instruction and clarification regarding key assessment terminologies within the ESOL curriculum, more specifically in the early stages of the course/programme as these survey findings undeniably indicate that adult ESOL learners encounter significant challenges in understanding terms, such as assessment, ILP, Individual Learning Plan, and RARPAP. The limited comprehension exhibited by learners emphasises the necessity of targeted interventions to enhance their understanding and engagement in the ESOL programme.

5.8 Evidence of learning and assessment taking place

The interview responses, however, demonstrated that although the learners were not necessarily aware of the assessment terminology as highlighted by the survey findings, they were still able to show an awareness of learning and assessment taking place. This is also highlighted by the evidence from the formative and summative assessments contained in the ILPs analysed. For

example, Learner 2 is aware of assessment being set when the teacher mentions in class “get ready for test, I will test you on this next week”.

Similarly, Learner 2, although indicated no clear understanding of RARPAP and ILP terminology when asked in the interview still demonstrated an awareness of teacher feedback and assessment taking place. She explains that she feels confident when receiving verbal or written feedback from her tutor and that the tutor does this by writing and including “sad” or “happy” smiley faces. However, she also shared that sometimes the feedback can be confusing when there is a lot of writing. Verbal feedback directly from teacher is preferred and much more helpful with use of medal style symbols, such as smiley faces and stars to convey achievement and what needs to be improved.

In terms of assessment, Learner 2 also shows a clear awareness of task/instruction setting by teacher and the checking of homework which takes place. She also demonstrates the use of IT in the classroom by both the teacher and students through the use of Microsoft Teams, where the teacher posts lesson materials and asks students to send their homework by taking pictures of their work on their mobile phones and uploading to the class channel. There is also an awareness of assessment in the form of an ‘exam’ and the frequency it is administered.

Learner 3 exhibits certain characteristics in terms of teacher feedback and assessment. In terms of teacher feedback, they describe a structured process wherein the teacher assigns weekly homework and collects it from the students.

Additionally, they appreciate having exams or tests every two weeks, as it allows them to practice and learn vocabulary effectively.

Furthermore, Learner 3 also shows an awareness of formative tests but appears confused regarding their relation to the ILP. She demonstrates difficulty grasping the meaning and understanding of the ILP concept, suggesting some confusion in this area. In terms of teacher feedback, she is able to describe a structured process wherein the teacher assigns weekly homework and collects it from the students. Additionally, she shares how much she appreciates having exams or tests every two weeks, as it allows her to practice and learn vocabulary effectively.

In conclusion, although the surveys show the majority of learners in both stage 1 and 2 showed difficulty in comprehending assessment terminology which would indicate they are not fully able to engage in RARPAP and the ILP administration, the interview responses provided more context to these findings. They were able to show that while learners have difficulty with the terminology, there is however, an awareness of learning and assessment taking place. This suggests that learners need more support in terms of language for assessment in order to ensure they are able to fully engage in negotiating their targets and learning outcomes with their tutor on the course.

5.9 Evaluation and Improvement – a Shift in Responsibility for RARPAP

In ESOL learning, there is a common perception among students that knowledge acquisition occurs through a passive transfer of information from the teacher to the students. This "mugs and jugs" approach, as described by Tutor

C, stems from the students' previous educational experiences in cultures that heavily rely on teacher-led instruction. This approach is a critique of traditional, transmission-style pedagogy where learners are viewed as empty vessels to be filled by the teacher. It is a metaphor, which echoes Paulo Freire's (1970) concept of the "banking model" of education, emphasises the limitations of one-way instruction and the need for more dialogic, learner-centred methods.

However, the interview responses also highlighted there is a growing recognition of the need to shift this perception and promote a more interactive and collaborative learning environment.

The Head of CCL emphasises the importance of structuring progression in language learning. She reports funders are now interested in softer targets as they are increasingly recognising that these transferrable skills are valuable for further education, employment, and fostering harmony and cohesion within society through language engagement and integration. The excessive focus on hard academic targets, such as grammar, is questioned, prompting a re-evaluation of the purpose of "bog standard grammar" as she puts it. Instead, she highlights that language function should enable interaction, negotiation, and collaboration.

A further crucial aspect highlighted for improvement is the measurement of outcomes related to softer, intangible targets. The challenge lies in finding effective methods to assess and evaluate these outcomes. The suggestion of using case studies and stories as means of capturing the impact and progress made by students in these areas is worth exploring as indicated by the ESOL

tutors. This would also help better contextualise the language learning and make assessment more relatable to students' everyday lives.

Another area of concern is the confusion surrounding the RARPAP procedure. This is clearly highlighted by the Quality Assurance coordinator who puts further that there is a lack of clear direction and consistency in practice across the institution, indicating a need for a stronger lead on RARPAP. The disconnect between tutor and organisational perspectives on the direction of learning further reinforces this issue. To address this, better clarity is required between Quality Assurance in CCL and the ESOL department regarding expectations and realistic practices.

The CCL coordinator also emphasises the need for student awareness regarding targets and their purpose. One proposed solution is to shift to an electronic ILP (or eILP) format or an app. This transition would streamline the logistics of the ILP, including evidence collection and recording. Furthermore, an app could serve as a scrapbook, functioning as a portfolio showcasing learners' academic and social work for targets. It would also resolve conflicts related to GDPR legislation, allowing teachers to record students without privacy concerns. The move toward electronic formats is supported by the Quality Assurance coordinator, who believes that digital feedback would encourage timelier reflective input from learners. Applications, such as Microsoft Teams and class notebook are suggested to facilitate recording, presenting, and auditing purposes while ensuring consistency.

The Quality Assurance coordinator raises concerns about "RARPAP anxiety" among teachers, often stemming from a lack of understanding about RARPAP in contrast with ILP procedures and the overwhelming responsibility of implementing and recording evidence. The document analysis carried out in this study reveals that the majority of RARPAP preparation is done by tutors, with minimal input from students. The coordinator suggests that a collaborative effort, with at least a 50/50 involvement of teachers and students, should be encouraged more. Additionally, the ILP should inform the evidence for RARPAP.

The CCL coordinator also discusses the issue of using paper-based ILPs or electronic ILPs, highlighting accessibility issues for learners. It is important to avoid imposing targets and expectations on learners, and the SMART approach can sometimes create unnecessary ambiguity for both students and teachers. It is proposed that the responsibility for the SMART element should be shifted to tutors in a broader sense or divided into hard SMART and soft SMART targets. Moreover, the use of SMART goals should consider the equitable and ethical aspect, ensuring that learners have a certain level of language and literacy to make informed decisions about their own learning direction. SMART targets can be more suitable for supporting the development of soft skills in literacy learning rather than being solely focused on hard academic assessment at lower levels of learning.

In conclusion, the evaluation and improvement of the RARPAP process call for a shift in responsibilities and perspectives. The passive "mugs and jugs" approach to learning needs to be transformed into a more interactive and

collaborative environment. The focus should be on softer, transferrable skills, and better methods for assessing these outcomes. Clear communication and alignment between tutors, organisations, and quality assurance departments are essential. The transition to eLP formats or apps can streamline processes and promote student engagement. Ultimately, by addressing these concerns, the RARPAP process can be improved to better support learners' language acquisition and integration into society.

5.9.1 Student Self-Evaluative Practice – What Needs to Change?

The interview responses illustrated learners' satisfaction with various aspects, such as engaging teaching methods, improvements in confidence, and practical language skills acquisition. The experiences shared highlight the importance of personalised learning approaches and the role of self-awareness in their language development.

One learner, after receiving positive feedback from their teacher, took the initiative to conduct a self-assessment. She recognised her own areas of weakness and acknowledged the need to revisit pre-entry level material. Despite experiencing self-blame, she remained determined to put in more effort and try again.

Another learner expressed a preference for the current teacher, appreciating their teaching style and pace. In contrast, she had negative experiences with frequent changes of tutors and class cancellations in a previous location. She explained how she now was able to feel a sense of comfort and enjoyment when learning in a library environment. In terms of personal progress, she also

expressed how she felt they she was improving at a relatively fast pace and found the opportunity to attend Saturday classes beneficial. She also reported how her confidence had also improved, allowing her to feel more at ease when speaking and interacting outside of the classroom, for instance when being asked for directions to the coach station, she had previously declined as she was not confident in her speaking ability. However, she explained that now this is not the case and how she is now proactive and even willing to giving directions when asked by strangers.

Several learners shared specific achievements they attributed to their English courses. One learner noted improved listening skills through attentive engagement with teacher instructions. Others mentioned making British friends and engaging in conversations about their daily lives, contributing to their language development and cultural integration. Learners were able to cite examples of what they had learned, such as local rules and regulations.

Learner 5, a recent refugee from Afghanistan, explains how he was able to use his recently acquired language skills to make some British friends from living in the temporary hotel in the community and speaking with others about his daily life, for instance his preference for honey over jam at breakfast.

In terms of areas for improvement, learners expressed a desire to focus on speaking and pronunciation. They mentioned the effectiveness of drilling exercises and repetition in enhancing their language skills. Building confidence in spoken English was identified as a crucial goal, as learners recognised the importance of effective communication and the potential for misunderstandings or inappropriate vocabulary use.

The student survey responses in Stage 1 demonstrated the most popular activity among the learners was "learning to use new words" and "talking to other students," with both activities receiving 20% of the responses. These results indicate that the learners value interactive and communicative activities that allow them to practice their language skills and engage with their peers.

"Learning about grammar" was also highly favoured, with 18% of the learners expressing their preference for this activity. This suggests that understanding the rules and structure of the English language is important to them. Other activities that received notable mentions include "writing letters, emails, and stories" (8%), "reading stories and answering questions" (8%), and "learning about British culture" (10%). These activities provide opportunities for both written and reading comprehension, as well as cultural knowledge and understanding.

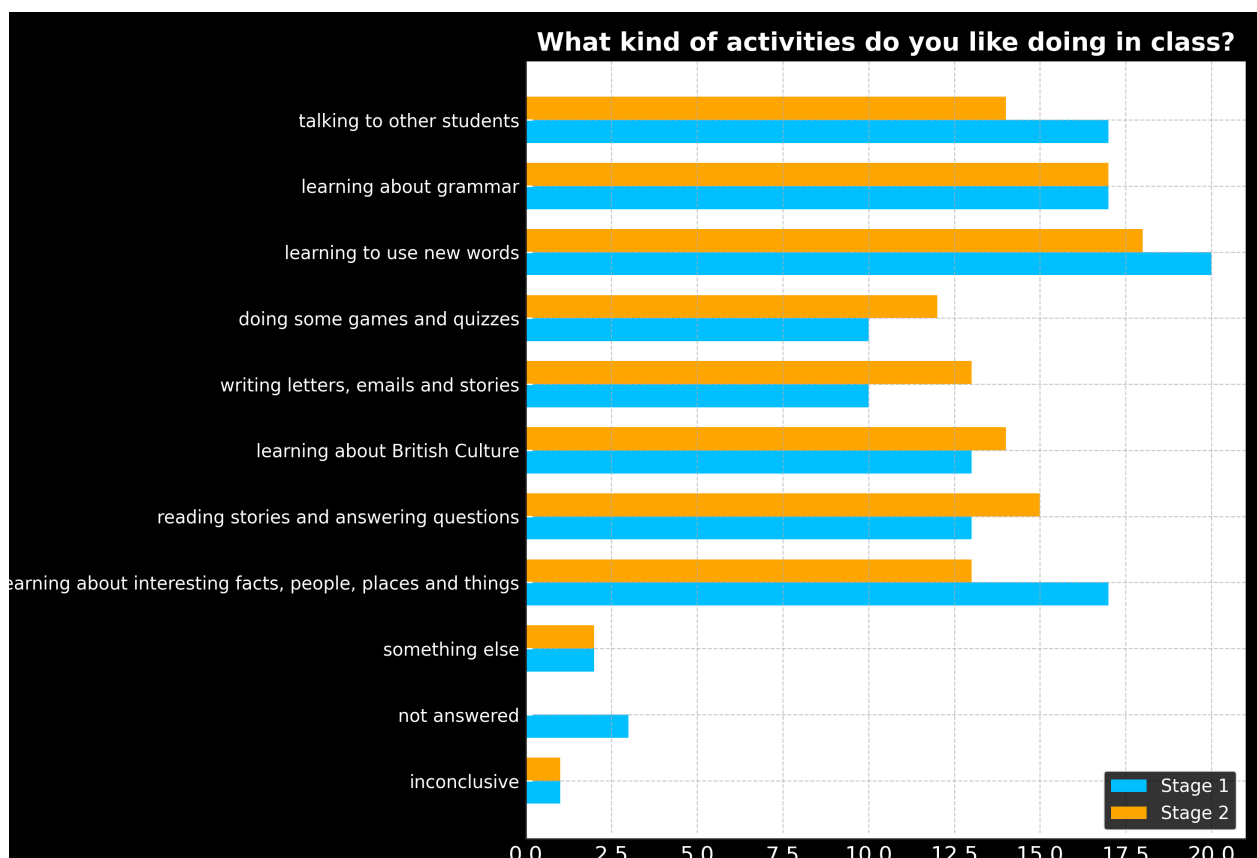


Figure 13: What activities students like doing in class (n = 54 for Stage 1; n = 43 for Stage 2)

Stage 2 highlighted the preferences of the learners which remained relatively consistent. "Learning about grammar" and "learning to use new words" remained popular, with both activities receiving 18% of the responses. This indicates the learners' ongoing interest in language skills development.

Some activities experienced an increase in popularity from Stage 1 to Stage 2. For example, "doing games and quizzes" saw an increase from 5% to 10% of the responses, suggesting that learners enjoyed interactive and engaging activities that make learning fun.

Similarly, "writing letters, emails, and stories" and "reading stories and answering questions" also saw an increase in preference from Stage 1 to Stage

2, indicating a continued interest in written and reading comprehension activities. It is worth noting that in both stages, no learners mentioned preferring "something else" or left the question unanswered, indicating a clear preference for the provided options.

Overall, the data suggests that ESOL learners enjoy activities that foster communication, vocabulary acquisition, and grammatical understanding. They also appreciate activities that allow them to practice their writing and reading skills, as well as learn about British culture. The increased interest in interactive games and quizzes in Stage 2 further emphasises the learners' desire for engaging and enjoyable learning experiences. Thus, tutors can leverage these preferences to design and plan classroom activities that cater to the learners' interests and promote their language learning effectively.

Beyond language proficiency, learners appreciated the social and personal benefits of their learning experiences. They found inspiration in making friends and engaging in social activities, which enhanced their motivation and overall learning outcomes. Some learners also highlighted the practical applications of their language skills, such as improved communication with their children's school or increased independence in daily life without relying on electronic translators.

Furthermore, in the student interviews, several learners stood out with their unique perspectives on their language learning experiences. For instance, Learner 6 stood out among the interviewees due to his strong inclination towards improving his speaking and pronunciation skills despite the challenges

he faced as a circular CCL learner, having been studying at pre-entry level since 2015. He explained that he found that drills and repetitive exercises were effective in helping to enhance his abilities. Most notably, he expressed satisfaction in overcoming previous challenges, such as now being able to ask the price of something in a store which makes him “very happy” and being able to do the basic things he previously was not able to.

Learner 7 expressed how she valued the opportunity to socialise and build friendships in her Community ESOL class, as she found it inspiring for her language learning journey. She shares how she “loves to be able to get a cup of coffee before class”, adding that this was her proudest and most valued accomplishment besides “loves making friends”. However, she did not mention any specific difficulties and expressed a desire to continue her learning and progression.

In addition, Learner 8 recognised numerous advantages gained from attending her Community ESOL course, which included expanding her vocabulary and improving her verb conjugation skills. She expressed feeling equipped with the necessary tools to “think and communicate in English” within real-life situations. Additionally, the course encouraged her to engage in other social activities, such as reading and writing with her children, which she previously expressed as one of her main motivations for learning English. As a result, this learner expressed a sense of excitement and optimism for her future prospects.

5.10 Summary

The evaluative findings from the student interviews shed light on two key aspects of language learning: developing learner independence and fostering effective teaching and learning interdependence. These aspects play crucial roles in creating successful language acquisition experiences and empowering learners.

In terms of developing learner independence, the interviews revealed that students expressed a strong inclination to take more ownership of their learning journey. They recognised the importance of self-evaluation, identifying areas of improvement, and actively seeking opportunities to practice and refine their language skills. Learners highlighted the effectiveness of activities, such as drilling exercises, repetition, and targeted practice in enhancing their speaking and pronunciation abilities. This demonstrates the value of providing learners with resources and strategies that enable them to take charge of their language development.

On the other hand, the interviews also emphasised the significance of effective teaching and learning interdependence. Learners expressed appreciation for supportive learning environments that fostered social interactions, such as making friends and engaging in meaningful conversations which would be resourceful for setting and negotiating individualised targets in their ILPs, in addition to better contextualised formative and summative assessments. Learners recognised the positive impact of engaging teaching methods, interactive activities, and opportunities to learn about British culture, evidencing their desire to integrate and be proactive members of their communities. Additionally, learners valued courses that encouraged participation in other

social activities, such as reading and writing with children. These findings highlight the importance of creating a sense of community within language learning contexts and the need for educators to establish an environment that promotes active engagement and collaboration.

The insights gained from the interviews provide a foundation for further exploration and development of learner independence and effective teaching and learning interdependence. In the final chapter of this thesis, I will expand on these findings and discuss strategies and recommendations for promoting learner independence while fostering an interdependent teaching and learning environment. Incorporating these approaches will help enable language educators to create more enriching and empowering learning experiences that support students in their language acquisition journey.

Chapter 6: Discussion

6.1 Introduction

In the previous two chapters, I presented the findings from the documentary analysis of ESOL course files and ILPs, student surveys, and semi-structured interviews with staff and students. The findings diverged from the prevalent discourse in the existing literature, which predominantly characterises ILPs as tools geared solely toward meeting governmental criteria for employability and

immigrant integration into UK society. Instead, the study uncovered substantial evidence of learner growth in language proficiency, literacy skills, and broader social competencies essential for civic participation.

In this chapter, I present a discussion based on these empirical findings, using Nussbaum's (2011) Capabilities Approach where necessary as a soft analytical lens. Nussbaum's approach emphasises the importance of capabilities rather than material resources or outcomes in assessing a person's quality of life. By focusing on capabilities, this framework captures the full range of opportunities and freedoms necessary for human flourishing and achieving better social justice.

Drawing upon Nussbaum's Central Human Capabilities, specifically the facets of life, practical reasoning, and social connections, I will analyse the findings of this study to demonstrate that ILPs possess a broader utility in fostering learners' societal integration and leading more meaningful lives. In examining the ESOL learners' journey of growth through the lens of Nussbaum's Central Capabilities, this chapter addresses a gap in the current literature by demonstrating the transformative power of ILPs in fostering more socially just lives and social integration within the context of adult community learning. Thus, this discussion reveals the transformative potential of ILPs in promoting a more equitable and socially just society while providing evidence of learners' development for civic life participation within ESOL education.

6.2 ESOL as a Cornerstone of Adult Community Learning

Within the multifaceted landscape of adult education, adult community learning plays a crucial role in providing educational opportunities to diverse learners, including many migrants to the UK who require language and literacy skills for well-being, employment, further education, and civic life (Heugler & Kersch, 2021). ESOL education, in particular, aims to empower individuals who do not have English as a first language, helping them fulfil their potential and participate fully in society (Baynham and Simpson, 2010). Understandably, these learners encompass a broad spectrum, from immigrants and refugees to individuals seeking skill enhancement for employment.

In this context, assessment practices have significant implications for social justice and equity. Effective assessment strategies can empower learners by recognising their existing skills and facilitating their integration into society (Johnson & Johnson, 2019). However, inadequate assessment methods are also considered to perpetuate inequality by overlooking learners' diverse needs and limiting their access to educational opportunities (Taylor, 2017).

Despite the importance of effective assessment practices, critiques of ILPs persist within the adult education sphere. These critiques include their alignment with neoliberal-driven targets (Fairclough, 1992; Rampton et al., 2001; Hamilton, 2009; Ball, 2009), implications for bureaucracy, and challenges in fostering learner autonomy and agency. However, the evidence gathered from this study demonstrates a rich repertoire of adult community learning in providing educational opportunities to diverse learners and its broader societal contributions.

As I have previously highlighted in the literature review, adult community learning focuses on working with local communities and engaging individuals in learning that benefits their personal and professional lives (GLA, 2022). This learning covers essential skills and provides opportunities for learners to improve their lives and gain skills that enable them to progress into employment and secure better jobs (UK Commission for Employment and Skills, 2008). Furthermore, adult education extends beyond the confines of the classroom, empowering learners who are local residents in their communities to cultivate broader outcomes in their personal lives, which in turn contribute to the enhancement of local communities, businesses, and the regional economy (Local Government Association, 2020).

The findings from this study confirm the multifaceted nature of learner development in ESOL beyond narrow performance measures, showcasing the importance of addressing learners' real-life communication needs and practical skills within the ILP framework.

The word cloud below, generated from responses to the question "What do you want to learn from this course?" illustrates the diverse and practical learning aspirations of ESOL students. Keywords, such as "communicate," "people," "speak," and "writing" highlight the learners' desire to engage in meaningful and relevant language use in their daily lives.

ILP tutorial for target setting or review but was a real-life communication need that the tutor addressed by providing relevant vocabulary. This assistance enabled the learner to resolve his accommodation issues, demonstrating the practical impact of contextualised learning. ILPs should include provision to reflect this type of contextualised learning to evidence that the language learning taking place is relevant to learners' lives and the real-world situations which exist.

Research supports the notion that when learners engage with language in contextually rich environments, they are more likely to retain and use the language effectively (Lightbown & Spada, 2013; Brown, 2007). This approach is further supported by Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory, which posits that social interaction and authentic contexts are crucial for cognitive development. By addressing and incorporating learners' immediate and practical needs, ILPs can facilitate more meaningful learning experiences and better prepare learners to use English in their everyday lives by integrating this as part of the goals set or individual learning outcomes achieved.

It is also evident from this study that the potential of ILPs to develop learners' language and literacy skills equips them with valuable life skills, enabling them to act as agents in their own lives and communities. This further aligns with the literature that recognises the role of adult community learning in empowering individuals and fostering community and economic development (Baynam & Simpson, 2008).

In light of the demonstrated potential of ILPs and the alignment with the empowering role of adult community learning, it is crucial to consider how government policies can better support this transformative process as these policies play a significant role in guiding performance measurement and goal-setting strategies, especially concerning ESOL funding and assessment practices. These policies further influence the allocation of resources and shape the frameworks used to evaluate learner progress and programme effectiveness (Hamilton & Hillier, 2006; Cooke & Simpson, 2009). Therefore, it is essential for the holistic nature of ESOL development to be taken into account when designing assessment practices that support and provide evidence of effective teaching and learning or broader societal development is taking place. ILPs can produce evidence of far richer learning than is often assumed, even though this is not always represented in the plans, therefore, greater effort must be made to reflect this authentic learner development.

Furthermore, the goal-setting aspect of ILPs, while not completely ineffective, should be viewed in terms of its potential. Goal setting needs to be used more effectively to evidence learning outcomes that are reflective to learners' real-life situations as this study has revealed. Such outcomes as this study's findings emphasise, necessitate for more nuanced performance measures that capture the comprehensive and transformative learning experiences facilitated by ESOL in adult community learning, thereby ensuring that assessment practices align more closely with the real and diverse needs of learners.

6.3 Applying Nussbaum's Central Capabilities to ESOL Learning: A Social Justice Perspective

Nussbaum's Capabilities Approach provides a valuable lens for examining the social justice aspects of ESOL learning, emphasising the importance of developing linguistic, literacy, and broader social skills necessary for leading socially just lives (Nussbaum, 2011). The approach aligns with the aims of ESOL education in equipping learners with the necessary skills for self-sufficiency, while also addressing their diverse needs and aspirations (Anderson, 2007; Crocker, 2008). In light of this, it is crucial to consider how government policies can better support this transformative process, particularly in performance measurement and goal-setting strategies.

Below, Table 5 summarises key issues identified with ILPs in this study alongside practical responses, showing how ILPs can contribute to developing learners' capabilities in practice (see also Appendix 11 for extended examples).

Example of Capability	Academic Skill Development	Soft Skill Development
Making a doctor's appointment	Target language: vocabulary for health/making a phone call	Communication skills: telephony, conversation practice
Shopping online or in grocery shops and/or famous brand shops	Reading subskills: skimming/scanning product descriptions, reviews, and prices	Practical literacy, confidence in navigating public spaces, asking questions, and making purchases
Helping children with homework	Reading for detailed understanding of complex information; developing practical literacy	Teaching and mentoring skills: storytelling, patience, empathy

Getting a promotion at work	Vocabulary for jobs and business; literacy skills	Problem-solving, confidence, communication in workplace contexts
Ordering a latte in a coffee shop	Vocabulary for food/shopping; functional grammar for placing an order; reading subskills	Social and communication skills: making purchases confidently, exercising independence, and navigating public spaces
Giving directions to strangers	Vocabulary for transport/directions; functional grammar for asking/answering questions	Social skills: confidence in public interactions, empathy, human connection

Table 5: These capabilities provide evidence of learners' development of academic and soft skills. They reflect language proficiency, communication abilities, problem-solving skills, literacy and practical knowledge

While neoliberal objectives of government agendas may seem at odds with acknowledging learners as individuals, the findings of this study confirm that ILPs can foster personal and social development through RARPAP, aligning with Nussbaum's focus on human capabilities (Biggeri & Santi, 2012; Hamilton, 2009). Utilising the Nussbaumian Capabilities Approach in ESOL education gives insights as to how educators can promote a more inclusive and equitable learning experience, recognising the multifaceted dimensions of learners' development (Walker & Unterhalter, 2007).

Incorporating Freire's (1970) critical pedagogy, Nussbaum's approach highlights the importance of holistic assessment practices in empowering students, promoting critical thinking, and encouraging social transformation (Boud & Falchikov, 2006). Integrating culturally relevant methods, providing a variety of assessment tools, such as formative assessments, portfolios, and self-assessments, and incorporating authentic assessments as described by Wiggins (1993) can enable learners to apply their knowledge and skills in meaningful contexts, fostering deeper understanding and engagement of the target language being taught.

6.4 Transcending Neoliberal Frameworks: The Role of Sen's Capabilities Approach

In the pursuit of a more equitable and empowering educational landscape, it is crucial to move beyond the limitations of neoliberal frameworks that focus solely on the instrumental aspects of education. Instead, as I have previously made clear, embracing a holistic perspective recognises the diverse needs and aspirations of learners, paving the way for a more inclusive and transformative learning experience. Thus, by re-highlighting the multi-faceted nature of ESOL education and its potential to foster individual empowerment, this section connects with Sen's Capabilities Approach, shedding light on its significance in promoting social justice within the field.

While Nussbaum's Capabilities Approach has been central to this discussion, it is essential to acknowledge the foundational role of Sen's Capabilities Approach in shaping the broader theoretical framework. Sen's approach, which

supports the idea that learners should develop linguistic and academic skills to enhance self-sufficiency, diverges from theories like human capital theory, focusing primarily on the instrumental aspects of education (Becker, 1975; Unterhalter & Brighouse, 2007). Nussbaum's perspective complements Sen's fundamental values as recognising learners as individuals with diverse needs and aspirations, reinforcing the multi-purpose nature of ESOL education and its role in fostering substantial freedom and empowering individuals to pursue their goals within society (DeJaeghere & Lee, 2012; Terzi, 2007).

More importantly, the application of the Capabilities Approach to education has been explored in various works, most notably in the contributions of scholars, such as Walker, Unterhalter, Alkire, and Robeyns. These authors have demonstrated the potential of the approach in understanding the value of education in promoting human flourishing and creating opportunities for individuals to pursue their desired life paths (Walker, 2006; Alkire, 2002; Robeyns, 2006). By acknowledging the importance of the Capabilities Approach in the context of ESOL education, I use it as a soft lens to explore its potential in promoting social justice and empower community ESOL learners in their pursuit of linguistic, academic, and personal development. In this context, drawing on some of Nussbaum's Central Capabilities will allow for an analysis of learners' growth in their academic and personal development, as revealed in this study on ESOL learners, consequently illuminating the ways in which they can lead more socially just lives.

6.5 Enhancing ESOL Education and Addressing Immigrant Stereotypes

Using Nussbaum's Central Capabilities

Unlike Sen's original version, Nussbaum's Capabilities Approach emphasises universal capabilities and specifies minimum thresholds for these capabilities, making it particularly suitable for our discussion on the diverse needs of ESOL learners. The Central Human Capabilities provides a useful framework for identifying and measuring capabilities, allowing for a more comprehensive assessment of the needs of different populations, such as ESOL learners. Walker (2003) adds that education plays a crucial role in social transformation, providing learners with critical and reflective forms of consciousness that enable them to participate in creating a more desirable form of social life than what currently exists.

Nussbaum's Central Human Capabilities offer a structured framework for fostering holistic learner development in ESOL education. Nussbaum (2000) proposes ten capabilities crucial for a thriving life, encompassing economic activities, personal and interpersonal growth, and broader environmental, political, and social contexts. While not the sole conceptual framework for assessing educational performance, Walker (2003) acknowledges that it serves as an intriguing starting point.

Additionally, this approach offers a valuable lens through which to examine the experiences of migrants and the debates surrounding migration, both of which significantly shape British national identity (Cooke, 2006).

In the context of media discourse often fuelling the demonisation of immigrants (Ameli et al., 2007), portraying them as a burden on the economy despite their potential to contribute (Gillborn, 2010), this discussion highlights the relevance

of the Capabilities Approach in addressing these negative stereotypes. Brine (2006) adds that these immigrants are often characterised as lacking knowledge and skills and are seen as "in 'need of training' [sic] " (p. 651), framing them as a problem that needs solving.

The linguistic needs of Britain's more recent migrants are often shaped by prevailing attitudes towards national identity and the English language (Cooke, 2006; Hamilton & Hillier, 2009; Conteh, 2012). The perceived relationship between poor language skills and lack of assimilation can be traced back to the Bradford Riots of 2001 (Blackledge, 2000; Cooke, 2008). Following the riots, Ann Cryer, then MP for a Leeds constituency, controversially linked social unrest in northern towns to certain people's lack of English proficiency (BBC News, 2001). This connection was further reinforced in the Community and Cohesion Report (Cantle, 2001), although it was widely disputed (Han, Starkey & Green, 2010). By applying Nussbaum's Capabilities framework to this context, I demonstrate its broader implications beyond employability and immigrant integration, as often portrayed in the existing literature.

In the following section, I present an overview of three facets of Nussbaum's Central Human Capabilities - life, practical reasoning, and social connections. This overview aims to highlight the connection between the theoretical framework and the practical application of ILPs, as well as the relevance of each capability to ESOL learners' experiences.

Life

Nussbaum's facet of life encompasses the full span of human experience and the ability to live a complete life. In the context of ESOL education, this translates to the ability of learners to achieve their full potential beyond mere survival in English-speaking environments. While ILPs have been considered ineffective in some literature (Ellis, 2005), empirical evidence from this research demonstrates their holistic development of learners' skills which can be supported through RARPAP in the ESOL context. For example, learners reported improved self-confidence and participation in community activities, which are essential for a meaningful life, aligning with Nussbaum's emphasis on flourishing and well-being (Nussbaum, 2011). Walker and Unterhalter (2007) highlight that "education should expand individuals' capacities to choose and pursue life plans they have reason to value" (p. 4). This perspective aligns with the observed outcomes where ESOL learners not only improved their language skills but also enhanced their self-efficacy and community engagement.

Practical Reasoning

Practical reasoning involves the ability to form a conception of the good and engage in critical reflection about the planning of one's life. This facet is evident in the way ILPs enable learners to set personal and educational goals, fostering autonomy and self-directed learning (Little, 1991). Several participants noted that their ESOL learning helped them in reaching their goals not just for learning English, but also for their career and personal life. These learners gave examples, such as securing employment as a housekeeper in a hotel and being promoted to supervisor within two years of arriving in the UK with almost no knowledge of English. This learner shared further that she is still focused on

pursuing a more desirable career to her which is to become a receptionist and she believes developing both her literacy and language skills through her ESOL learning will help her achieve this.

Another learner shared being able to make practical shopping lists when doing her weekly grocery shops and explained how this not only helped her stay organised but also independent. These findings align with Nussbaum's argument that education should cultivate the capacity for critical thinking and decision-making (Nussbaum, 1997). Walker and Unterhalter (2007) further assert that "the development of practical reasoning and critical reflection is central to the capabilities approach in education" (p. 6), highlighting the importance of fostering these skills in learners.

Social Connections

Social connections refer to the ability to live with and toward others, recognising and showing concern for other human beings (Nussbaum, 2011). ESOL classes in the community settings allowed for a social learning space, which enhanced social bonds among learners. This was particularly beneficial for immigrants who often face social isolation, particularly during and after lockdown (Doyle & Walker, 2011). One learner shared, "Through the group activities in [sic] our teacher made us do, I made friends and felt more connected to the community." This outcome also aligns with Nussbaum's assertion that education should promote empathy and understanding among diverse groups (Nussbaum, 1997). Walker and Unterhalter (2007) emphasise that "education should foster social relationships and networks that can

contribute to a supportive and cohesive community" (p. 10), which is precisely the effect observed in the ESOL classroom settings.

6.5.1 Expanding Learners' Holistic Development through Life Capability in ESOL Education

Nussbaum's capability of life highlights the necessity of opportunities that allow individuals to lead a life of normal length while maintaining bodily health and integrity (Nussbaum, 2000). In the context of ESOL learners, this capability emphasises the development of academic and soft skills that contribute to their overall well-being and success. The central human capability of life, as conceptualised by Nussbaum (2000), plays a pivotal role in fostering the holistic development of ESOL learners. For instance, this capability emphasises opportunities that allow individuals to live a life of normal length while maintaining bodily health and integrity. The empirical research findings from this study provide valuable insights into how developing academic and soft skills, particularly those related to the capability of life, can significantly impact the lives of ESOL learners.

For example, in the context of shopping and accessing famous shops, the capability of life is enhanced by improving literacy skills, such as skimming and scanning product descriptions (Kirsch, 2001). Learner 3 shared her goals and aspirations for improving her language literacy skills, and how she was now able to go shopping in "normal shop [sic] not only online". This is in addition to being able to make friends outside her Arabic speaking community and being able to make appointments with the GP over the phone by herself. Similarly,

Learner 4 shared her motivation for learning was being able to have interactions outside her home, such as shopping in the supermarket. She shared further how she was unable to make a shopping list of essential grocery items before enrolling for her course but now is able to make a list of basic items which she is proud of. She gives examples of these items, such as “potatoes, milk, yoghurt, eggs, water, oil, rice, tomato” including beauty and self-care products “coconut oil”.

These abilities empower learners to make informed decisions about their purchases and navigate consumer spaces more effectively. This alignment with Nussbaum's argument that the capability of life should enable individuals to engage in essential daily tasks without shame or fear is further supported by scholars in the field. As argued by Walker and Unterhalter (2007), literacy skills play a crucial role in fostering autonomy and independence, allowing individuals to participate fully in society and access various services and resources. In this context, the capability of life can be seen as a key factor in promoting social inclusion and addressing inequalities faced by ESOL learners.

Similarly, Kirsch (2001) emphasises the importance of practical literacy skills in enabling individuals to function effectively in diverse contexts, including consumer spaces. By improving their ability to skim and scan product descriptions, ESOL learners can overcome barriers to participation in everyday life and exercise greater control over their choices and well-being. This perspective further underscores the significance of life capability in promoting equitable outcomes for ESOL learners, aligning with the core tenets of Nussbaum's Capability Approach (2000).

Moreover, helping children with homework highlights the importance of advanced reading skills in promoting intergenerational knowledge transfer and educational support within families (Bigelow & Vinogradov, 2011). Learner 4 shared another motivation for learning English was to be able to help her son with his “schoolwork and homework”. Similarly, Learner 8 shares that the ESOL course has “helped me reading and writing with my children”. This capability not only contributes to the intellectual growth of family members but also strengthens emotional bonds through storytelling and teaching skills (Cranton, 2006).

Regarding professional development, the capability of life is further emphasised through the enhancement of job-related vocabulary and practical literacy skills, leading to increased employability and financial stability (Barton & Hamilton, 2005). Additionally, the development of communication and problem-solving skills contributes to workplace performance and career growth, fostering a sense of accomplishment and personal fulfilment (Darvin & Norton, 2015).

The central human capability of life serves as a powerful framework for understanding the holistic development of ESOL learners. By emphasising life, educators can design curricula that promote academic and personal growth, empowering learners to lead more fulfilling lives and contribute to their communities. This approach challenges deficit-based perspectives that frame ESOL learners as lacking knowledge and skills (Brine, 2006), and migrants as “non-integrators.” As Schinkel (2018) points out, “Migrants are often seen as ‘non-integrators,’ supposedly unwilling or unable to adapt to the host society’s

values and norms. This perception can lead to social exclusion and hinder their ability to fully participate in their new communities" (p. 123).

However, this research highlights the potential of ESOL education to empower learners with the abilities needed to engage in essential daily tasks, foster social connections, and contribute to their local communities. The experiences of Learner 4 and Learner 7 exemplify this potential, as they have been able to apply their newfound language skills to engage in everyday activities, such as ordering their favourite beverages at local coffee shops and making new friends. As Learner 7 shared (translated from Arabic), one of her most treasured learning experiences involved enjoying a cup of coffee before class and fostering connections in the cafe, demonstrating how the development of life capability can enhance learners' social connections and overall well-being.

This demonstration of the tangible benefits in developing the central human capability of life exemplifies how this research advocates for a more nuanced understanding of the lived experiences and potential of migrants in their new societies. It emphasises the transformative impact of ESOL learning and calls for further this rich evidence of learning in authentic real-life context to be evidence of RARPAP in student ILPs, thereby contributing to more equitable outcomes for ESOL learners and supporting their integration into local communities.

6.5.2 Enhancing Practical Reasoning Capability in ESOL Education: Empowering Learners Through Real-Life Experiences

Nussbaum's practical reasoning capability also plays a crucial role in fostering the holistic development of ESOL learners. This capability emphasises the importance of developing learners' critical thinking skills to engage in reflective thinking and decision-making, enabling them to actively participate in society, critically evaluate situations, and make informed choices (Nussbaum, 2000; Walker, 2003). Cultivating practical reasoning enables learners to navigate complex social issues and contribute meaningfully to public discourse.

The semi-structured interviews with ESOL learners revealed several key areas where practical reasoning capabilities are developed through real-life experiences. One such area involves making doctor's appointments over the telephone. In this context, learners employ practical reasoning to communicate their needs effectively and exercise autonomy in managing their health in addition to functional language skills learnt in class which empowers learners to reason through health-related situations, make informed decisions, and convey those decisions clearly. Furthermore, practicing telephony skills helps learners articulate their needs confidently, demonstrating agency in caring for their well-being. Although the Head of CCL notes that the students' development of these wider, soft skills, such as confidence are difficult to document due to their 'intangible nature', she still recognises the importance for RARPAP and the importance for funders to "see and hear about these soft, transferrable skills". She explains further that such soft skills are pivotal in facilitating integration, negotiation and collaboration which are fundamental aims of Community ESOL Learning.

Another area where practical reasoning capabilities are fostered is through engaging in small talk at the gym and other social settings. Learners interview responses demonstrated that by applying functional grammar to ask and answer questions, they are able to engage in logical thinking and interact with others in novel social environments. Conversational practice in diverse environments encourages learners to reason through social scenarios and respond appropriately, enhancing their situational awareness and fostering a sense of belonging (Young & Walsh, 2010).

Shopping online and in grocery stores presents yet another opportunity for ESOL learners to develop their practical reasoning capabilities. As learners decipher detailed product information, they hone their ability to make informed purchasing decisions. This is particularly important for individuals with dietary restrictions due to personal or religious reasons. For instance, Learner 4 shared her experience of not previously being able to read important information in shops, such as ingredients on food packaging. As she cannot consume pork or alcohol for religious reasons, being able to recognise the names of food ingredients is crucial. By improving her ability to understand product descriptions through her ESOL journey, Learner 4 can now make more informed choices that align with her dietary needs and religious beliefs. Skills in asking questions and handling transactions reflect critical thinking and problem-solving abilities in real-life contexts. These proficiencies work together to equip learners with the tools to navigate consumer spaces confidently and effectively.

In each of these scenarios, the development of academic and soft skills works synergistically to foster practical reasoning capabilities in ESOL learners. It is

through honing their language proficiency and critical thinking abilities that learners become better prepared to engage with various aspects of daily life, from managing their health to navigating social interactions and making informed consumer choices.

Moreover, fostering practical reasoning capabilities can challenge pervasive stereotypes about ESOL learners that limit their agency and potential for success (Bigelow & Vinogradov, 2011).

3.2.3 Building a Sense of Belonging: The Power of Social Connections in ESOL Education

Nussbaum's social connections capability portrays the significance of nurturing a sense of belonging and community among ESOL learners (Nussbaum, 2000). The Capabilities Approach posits that individual well-being is dependent on the expansion of people's real freedoms and opportunities, emphasising the role of capabilities in leading lives they value (Sen, 1999), thus as ESOL learners develop language proficiency, they become more confident in engaging with local communities through volunteering, attending local events, and participating in social gatherings. These interactions contribute to personal fulfilment and help challenge social isolation, a common issue faced by many immigrants (Hamilton & Hillier, 2009), consequently making them targets for discrimination.

Alkire (2002) and Robeyns (2005) further emphasise the importance of social connections within the Capabilities Approach. Alkire's (2002) research on the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) highlights the need to consider multiple

factors when assessing poverty and human development. This could be applied to the social connections capability by examining the diverse aspects of social interactions and networks that contribute to ESOL learners' overall quality of life. Moreover, Robeyns' (2005) work on capability ethics and justice argues for the ethical importance of ensuring that individuals have the capabilities they need to lead lives they value. This perspective can also be extended to the social connections capability, emphasising its role in promoting well-being, agency, and social justice for ESOL learners.

Building social connections is inevitably essential for ESOL learners, as it encourages their active participation in the community and enables them to establish meaningful relationships. The Capabilities Approach highlights this importance of social interactions and networks in expanding learners' capabilities and enhancing their well-being (Ibrahim, 2006). Research has shown that a sense of belonging and social connectedness can positively impact mental health, emotional well-being, and overall life satisfaction (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). Moreover, fostering social connections can lead to improved language acquisition, as learners practice their communication skills in various real-life situations, which aligns with the focus of the Capabilities Approach on expanding individuals' capabilities (Sen, 1999).

Furthermore, integrating the social connections capability in ESOL education can help learners overcome challenges related to cultural adaptation and exclusion (Block, 2014). Providing opportunities for engagement with local communities enables educators to facilitate the development of cross-cultural understanding and appreciation. Consequently, this helps in promoting a more

inclusive society. This approach resonates with the Capabilities Approach's emphasis on addressing inequalities and enhancing social justice through expanding human capabilities (Sen, 1999).

Furthermore, promoting the social connections capability can help counteract negative stereotypes about immigrants and facilitate their integration into the broader community. As ESOL learners become more involved in local activities and events, they can contribute to dispelling misconceptions and fostering mutual understanding between different cultural groups (Portes & Rumbaut, 2006). This approach aligns with the Capabilities Approach's focus on promoting agency, empowerment, and social change through collective action and solidarity (Deneulin & Shahani, 2009).

Overall, integrating Nussbaum's Central Human Capabilities in ESOL education, particularly the social connections capability, fosters holistic development in learners by promoting a sense of belonging, community engagement, and personal growth. ESOL learners can develop both academic and soft skills that enhance their life opportunities, career prospects, and overall well-being through introducing these capabilities in real-life context. This approach echoes the Capabilities Approach's commitment to social justice, human development, and capability expansion, ultimately benefiting immigrants and their families, while fostering a more inclusive and interconnected society.

6.6 The potential of ILPs for Fostering Personalised Learning, Agency, and Holistic Growth in Community ESOL

The findings of this study emphasise the significant role of ILPs in ESOL education, particularly when effectively implemented and aligned with learners' unique goals and aspirations. The participants' narratives illustrate how ILPs can serve as catalysts for transformative learning experiences, aligning with the principles of the Capabilities Approach. For instance, empowerment is central to the Capabilities Approach, with Robeyns (2005) highlighting its focus on enabling individuals to make choices aligned with their aspirations.

This sense of empowerment is further strengthened by personalisation, which, as Terzi (2007) argues, is supported by the Capabilities Approach's emphasis on individual well-being and capabilities. By acknowledging learners' unique needs and aspirations, personalised ILPs can facilitate meaningful and relevant education for learning tasks and formative and summative assessment which are contextualised to embed and reflect real-life situations of ESOL learners, especially those relevant to their communities (Dosey & Day, 2011).

Furthermore, Dosey and Day (2011) contend that well-formed outcomes provide a more comprehensive and robust approach for target-setting in education, as they consider the learner's identity, emotions, social relationships, and values. They further claim this approach also encourages mental rehearsal, a process where learners mentally visualise and practice tasks or actions in their minds, which helps improve their performance and confidence.

This is particularly relevant for ESOL learners, who come from diverse backgrounds, qualifications, and skill sets (Isaku, 2014). Some learners may have strong qualifications and study skills in their mother tongue, while others may not have received formal education in their own countries (Isaku, 2014).

Thus, a personalised and contextualised approach to ESOL education helps cater to these varying needs and experiences, ensuring that learners receive the support and guidance they require to thrive in their language learning journey.

Agency is another critical aspect of the Capabilities Approach. Crocker (2008) highlights the importance of individuals actively participating in decision-making processes impacting their lives, including education. When applied to ILPs, this principle can help ensure learners are more actively involved in shaping their learning journey, fostering a sense of responsibility and engagement. This is exemplified by experiences of Learners 4 and 7, as well as the perspectives of staff members, providing valuable insights into the role of ILPs in fostering personal and professional growth in ESOL education.

In the case of Learner 4, the ILP was instrumental in enhancing her ability to navigate daily tasks and develop self-confidence, showcasing the potential of ESOL education to strengthen personal agency and capabilities. Similarly, Learner 7's journey demonstrates her determination to overcome challenges and pursue her goal of becoming an English teacher, reflecting a broader vision of professional and personal development facilitated by ESOL education. These examples support the importance of both personalisation and agency in fostering meaningful learning experiences, which can be facilitated through the effective implementation of ILPs.

Staff perspectives revealed in this study further emphasise the need for ILPs to capture both academic progress and wider personal development. While

recognising the value ILPs can add beyond traditional assessment methods, staff members, both tutors and managers, expressed concerns that these plans are not always fully utilised to document learners' holistic growth. Court (2017) argues that ILPs are unlikely to support learners' language acquisition or promote socially just outcomes unless broader systemic issues are addressed. These include limited access to native speakers, lack of cultural capital, and structural discrimination, all of which undermine the effectiveness of ILPs. However, what this study has revealed is that there is a holistic skills development for learners' academic and wider social skills and the ILP is a catalyst which can demonstrate that personalised learning, agency and holistic growth does happen in ESOL community learning. The main challenge, however, is the importance of aligning ILPs with learners' aspirations and capabilities, while also addressing the challenges faced by tutors in managing and administering these plans effectively which I will expand upon this in the subsequent sections.

As the experiences of Learners 4 and 7 demonstrate, personalised learning and agency are central to fostering transformative ESOL education. By aligning educational objectives with individual learners' goals and needs, ILPs can support learners in setting and pursuing their personal and professional aspirations, ultimately fostering a sense of ownership and empowerment. ILPs have the potential to support holistic learner growth by incorporating the development of both academic and soft skills and presenting these as SMART goals set.

6.7 The Interplay of Academic Competence, Wider Social Skills Acquisition, and Targeted Feedback in Enhancing Holistic Development in ESOL Learning

While some argue that an emphasis on quantifiable outcomes may inadvertently undermine the importance of fostering learner autonomy and agency in ESOL education (Court, 2017; Bippus & Eslami, 2013), this study's findings reveal a different perspective. The RARPAP framework benefits from the rich evidence demonstrating the interplay between academic and broader skills development. This is because the evidence of these skills development provides a richer context to goals and outcomes achieved beyond mere performance measurement, which critiques (Ball, 2003; Fairclough, 1992; Hursh, 2005; Ozga, 2000) claim is prioritised, ensuring that learner autonomy and agency remain central.

Evidently, the interplay between language and linguistic competence, alongside broader social skills, observed in this empirical study, offers valuable insights into learners' holistic growth. For instance, Learner 4's ability to maintain a folder of classwork symbolises the interconnectedness of academic and social-emotional development. This sense of pride and ownership reflects her social and emotional growth, demonstrating that building confidence and self-esteem is crucial in helping learners take ownership of their learning journey (Gkonou & Oxford, 2016). Her aspirations for social interaction and future employment exemplify her desire to integrate into the community and contribute to her family's well-being.

In this context, quantifiable outcomes serve as a crucial tool for securing funding and auditing purposes while also allowing for a more nuanced understanding of learners' progress and achievements. Giving consideration simultaneously to academic and broader social skills development enables ESOL learners to be better supported in achieving their goals and to receive better recognition for contributing positively to their communities.

Additionally, in promoting learners' progress and development, targeted feedback plays a pivotal role, as demonstrated by the detailed, progressive input provided in summative assessments. Integrating feedback and scaffolded instruction aligns with the broader goals of social justice in education, ensuring equitable access to learning opportunities (Paris, 2012). By providing individualised support, scaffolding helps learners overcome linguistic barriers and fully engage in the learning process, promoting educational equity (Gibbons, 2009). Arguably, this also helps demonstrate that learners are empowered to take control of their learning as feedback should be developmental in order to aid learners' progress. For instance, Shen and Chong (2022) reveal ways in which learners engage with written corrective feedback cognitively, through making an effort to understand and by their attention to errors highlighted, demonstrating ESOL learners engaging in more self-directed learning and personal growth, contrary to the notion that they are merely working towards predetermined goals to satisfy performance measurement objectives (Court, 2017; Bippus & Eslami, 2013).

Moreover, the balance between rectification and acknowledgment in scaffolded instruction aligns with Walqui's (2006) advocacy for appropriate support to

enable learners to reach their full potential. By utilising ILPs as learning and assessment tools which demonstrates the value of both academic competence and social-emotional development, ESOL education can empower learners to achieve their learning goals and contribute positively to their communities.

6.8 Assessment for Social Justice in Community ESOL

The unique profiles of ESOL learners, including the concept of 'spiky' profiles, highlight the need for tailored assessments to accurately measure their linguistic, literacy, and social skill development (Stacey 2023; Schellekens, 2008, Cooke, 2006; Mallow, 2006). The literature revealed the lack of focus on ESOL assessment in the context of Assessment for Social Justice, which primarily concentrates on higher education. For instance, there is the recognition that greater reflection on the potential shortcomings in assessment procedures is a crucial first step in rethinking assessment in terms of social justice, however, this is only in the context of higher education (McArthur, 2015). Thus, in the context of this research, I have highlighted the marginalised perspectives of adult ESOL learners in community learning settings and their awareness of their learning progress as areas needing attention.

Given the diverse educational backgrounds, literacy levels, and motivations of ESOL learners in adult community learning settings, exams may not be the most suitable assessment tool for this population. Many entry-level ESOL learners face challenges in demonstrating their true abilities and progress due to limited study skills and literacy, as well as varying experiences with formal education (Allemano, 2018). Thus, exams can be unfamiliar and intimidating,

particularly for learners who have had minimal exposure to traditional educational environments.

Furthermore, a study by Sidway (2022) revealed that ESOL learners are often driven by extrinsic factors, such as the desire to integrate into their communities, rather than the pursuit of passing exams and gaining qualifications. This highlights the need for more learner-centred assessment methods in community ESOL settings that consider the unique needs, experiences, and goals of these learners. As such, the ILP is designed to deliver individualised and personalised learning and from its inception, designed as a formative assessment tool by the Skills for Life Quality Initiative (Hamilton, 2009).

Adopting this alternative assessment approach for community ESOL which focuses on individualised and personalised learning, facilitates the creation of a more inclusive and equitable educational environment for ESOL learners. This is particularly crucial when considering the argument that assessment has a major influence on student learning, possibly even more so than teaching, as contended by Boud and Falchikov (2007). Additionally, the tailored nature of ILPs as both formative and summative assessment tools enables learners to showcase their transformative journeys and support their personal, educational, and professional aspirations, ultimately promoting social justice and inclusivity within the community ESOL context and broader societal concepts, such as fairer and more accurate immigrant representation in the media, which can challenge prominent stereotypes of them as non-integrators (Blumell et al., 2020; Lewandowski, 2021; Ager & Strang, 2008; Ndhlovu, 2014).

Moreover, the distinction between career plan and cultural plan pathways, as identified in staff interviews, emphasises the importance of understanding learner outcomes based on their aspirations and goals. This distinction sets the foundation for clearer target-setting and negotiation between tutors and learners, addressing flaws noted in the literature, such as the ILP being overly bureaucratic and unworkable documents imposed by managers for the sole purpose of being performance indicators to meet the demands of audit and inspection (Hamilton, 2009; Isaku, 2014; Tertullien, 2018). Making this clear distinction of learner pathways in the ILP can make the RARPAP better capture hard-to-evidence factors, such as improved well-being, access to civic services, social mobility, increased confidence, and cultural enrichment. Arguably, this would be strengthened further by incorporating better student-centred approaches for RARPAP, such as more input for student evaluation and reflection within the ILP framework itself. This is further supported by a study which highlighted student-centred evaluative and reflection activities, such as keeping a goals diary and setting weekly goals can help learners increase confidence, autonomy and improve their language proficiency (Lewandowski, 2021).

As this research reveals, the ILP is a potentially powerful catalyst for more socially just assessment due to the rich evidence demonstrating learners' transformative learning journeys through ESOL education. However, the ILP necessitates evaluative aspects of implementation, delivery, and recording. Additionally, the cultural aspect of target-setting in the UK must be

acknowledged and addressed rather than ignored to promote a more inclusive and equitable learning environment.

6.9 Practical Aspects of Implementing RARPAP for ILPs

The underrepresentation of ESOL in community learning settings in the literature on Assessment for Social Justice emphasises the need for addressing the logistical and administrative challenges faced in delivering and recording RARPAP for ILPs, as evidenced by the findings in the current study and prior research (Isaku, 2014; Hamilton, 2009; Hillier, 1998; Sunderland & Wilkins, 2004). Hamilton (2009) highlights that the ILP was initially for formative assessment, however, this study has looked at its operation in both formative and summative assessment for entry level ESOL in community adult learning.

A fundamental evaluative aspect of implementing the RARPAP and ILP is prioritising transparency and clarity in assessment. Additionally, ensuring learners comprehend both the assessment process and its purposes is crucial for promoting fairness and inclusivity in the educational setting. Empowering ESOL learners with the necessary knowledge and understanding of the RARPAP and ILP as assessment tools not only supports their academic success but also contributes to building strong, trusting relationships between educators and learners.

This focus on transparency and clarity aligns with the concept of 'fairness' in education, as discussed by McArthur (2015). Furthermore, drawing upon Taras' (2002) assertion that "students perhaps have the right to demand coherent and logical educational processes that are not detrimental to their learning" (p. 501),

provides further support that fostering a clearer understanding of assessment methods and their implications is essential for better learner empowerment and promoting social justice in the classroom.

I argue that emphasising transparency and providing learners with the necessary tools to engage effectively with the assessment process supports learners' individual growth and development. However, there is also further need for addressing the potential constraints of excessive teacher control and limited learner autonomy highlighted in the existing literature, which is crucial in promoting more socially just assessment. This also requires acknowledging target-setting as a cultural practice and contextualising this process for learners from the start to the end of the RARPAP implementation process. This can better empower them as active agents in the goal-setting process of ILPs, ultimately fostering more inclusive and culturally sensitive educational experiences rather than being passive agents in their learning journeys.

6.9.1 Delivery and Recording

Effectively delivering and recording the RARPAP for ILPs involves logistical and administrative challenges especially for teaching staff as revealed by the findings in this study and the literature on ILPs (Isaku, 2014; Hamilton, 2009, Hillier, 1998, Sunderland & Wilkins, 2004). For instance, Isaku's (2014) study findings report that tutors find it to be a 'nonsense' paperwork which

'disempowers learners by asking them to sign a piece of paper they do not understand' (p.55). Indeed, this offers a bold perspective on the ineffectiveness of certain bureaucratic processes in ESOL education. In this case, the requirement for students to sign paperwork they do not comprehend not only undermines their learning experience but also highlights a broader issue of systemic inefficiencies. It is undeniably important for educational institutions to evaluate their processes continually and ensure they serve the intended purpose of enhancing learning and empowering students. Thus, transparency is crucial, as it helps build trust between learners and educators and therefore all stakeholders (particularly learners) should have a clearer understanding of the process, including how goals are set, monitored, and revised. This predominantly means integrating a teaching and learning of essential RARPAP and ILP terminology and acknowledgment of as a cultural practice which requires contextualising and embedding for effective comprehension.

As revealed by the survey findings of this study, a significant proportion of adult ESOL learners struggle to comprehend essential assessment terms, such as RARPAP and ILP. Notably, 53% of learners lacked understanding of RARPAP, while 52% faced challenges with ILP comprehension. This highlights the pressing need for greater transparency and more focused instruction on these key concepts within the curriculum.

Therefore, to better deliver RARPAP through ILPs, it is crucial that all stakeholders have a clear understanding of the RARPAP and ILP processes, including goal setting, monitoring, and revision. One mode of ensuring this is through integrating targeted teaching and learning of this essential assessment

terminology which puts learners at the heart of the RARPAP process to better ensure the ILP is a useful document that helps tutors design 'tailored programmes and activities that meet individual learning needs' (Petty, 2009). Tutors should therefore focus on designing a variety of student-centred activities that incorporate both traditional drilling techniques (Thornbury, 2006; Zwier & Boers, 2022) and more interactive methods like scenarios and role-plays. Role-playing as a classroom activity aligns with the goal of realism by allowing students to practice real-life tasks like greetings, making suggestions, asking for directions, or handling situations at a bank, post office, or airport (Al-Arishi, 1994). Through this, tutors can create engaging and effective learning experiences that promote understanding of key terminology as role-playing allows for, 'the limitations of the classroom' to be overcome (Littlewood, 1981, p. 62, as cited in Al-Arishi, 1994) because students are expected 'to behave as if the situation really existed'. This approach would also have the added benefit of integrating the four language skills – listening, reading, speaking, and writing – which can further enhance overall language proficiency (Celce-Murcia, Dörnyei, & Thurrell, 1997).

6.9.2 Balancing Control and Tutor Expertise

In transitioning my focus to the topic of balancing control and tutor expertise, it is crucial to emphasise the importance of a more student-centred approach in negotiating targets in order to address the prominent issue of 'putting words in their mouths' as Hamilton (2009) describes. This notion points to the way she

asserts that teaching and learning identities are shaped by the ILP and how tutors are driven by their dedication to student-centred learning while balancing the need for collaboration, time-efficiency, and managing administrative demands within their work environment. Isaku (2014) expands further, providing evidence from tutors that claims they are required to express SMART learning goals in a language that satisfies funding bodies. The goals therefore become non-negotiable and tutor-led as the 'metalanguage is beyond these learners'.

The interview findings from this study confirm these sentiments and further reveal tutors' views one of the main challenges with RARPAP is that control is with the teacher while they believe that it is important for students to feel empowered in taking more ownership in their progress and achievement.

Both the CCL Coordinator and ESOL Course Manager who both teach and are involved in the internal verification and moderation process of ILPs suggest that more student awareness and involvement of their targets and the purpose of setting these targets are a necessary aspect of evaluation and improvement. There were further suggestions in line with Lewandowski's (2021) study that a shift towards learner provision of their learning evidence for RARPAP would be beneficial in involving learners in the process of setting and negotiating their targets. Here, suggestions for an 'ILP student-facing app would solve many of the ILP logistics' as this would provide for learners to actively collect and record evidence of their learning, present it through a 'scrapbook' or 'portfolio showcasing the learner's academic work and social skills development for evidence of working towards their target'. It was also highlighted that this would help resolve issues arising from privacy policies that restrict teachers from

recording students' progress in speaking or writing on their personal devices due to GDPR legislation. Tutors clearly expressed that this potential ease for both teachers and students not only guarantees that the goals are meaningful and achievable from the students' perspective but also highlights the significance of striking a balance between student-centeredness and tutor input.

I must emphasize, however, while acknowledging the expertise of tutors in facilitating meaningful goal setting, it is equally important to recognise that fostering autonomy in the learning process empowers students to take ownership of their education. This balance between control and tutor expertise can be effectively achieved by incorporating reflective and self-evaluative practices, such as keeping a diary, as suggested by Lewandoski (2021). Through this approach, the essential role of tutor expertise is preserved while promoting a learner-focused environment that respects the individual needs and perspectives of students.

Additionally, this approach is particularly effective in community ESOL settings, taking into account the varied educational backgrounds and needs of learners which requires more diligent negotiation practices. Such approaches not only enhance learner motivation but also aligns educational objectives with personal aspirations, leading to more meaningful learning outcomes.

6.10 Summary

This chapter highlights the transformative potential of ILPs within ESOL education, moving beyond their traditional framing as bureaucratic tools tied to perceived neoliberal targets. Through the soft application of Nussbaum's

Capabilities Approach, the discussion repositions ILPs as tools that promote learners' linguistic, literacy, and broader social skills necessary for personal development, social integration, and civic participation.

Furthermore, the findings emphasise the holistic development fostered by ILPs, including the enhancement of academic competencies, practical reasoning, and social connections. These are demonstrated through contextualised learning, with ILPs reflecting real-life applications, such as managing everyday tasks, engaging in community life, and pursuing personal and professional goals. The chapter advocates for culturally relevant, reflective assessment practices, championing learner-centred, transparent approaches that address the diverse needs and aspirations of ESOL learners.

Key challenges include the tension between bureaucratic requirements and fostering learner autonomy, as well as the need for ILPs to better capture the authentic learning journeys of ESOL students. Suggestions for improvement include embedding reflective, learner-centred practices, integrating technology for evidence collection, and ensuring ILPs document both measurable achievements and less tangible growth, such as confidence and community engagement.

In conclusion, ILPs are recognised as powerful tools for fostering equitable, meaningful education, aligning ESOL learning with the broader goals of social justice. By addressing systemic challenges, such as limited cultural understanding of assessment practices and administrative pressures on

educators, the study calls for a renewed focus on personalised, learner-led approaches that empower individuals and contribute to societal transformation.

Chapter 7: Conclusions & Recommendations

7.1 Introduction

This research revealed varying levels of awareness among entry-level community ESOL learners at an Adult Education provider in London regarding their learning and progression, influenced by factors, such as assessment processes, learner agency, and real-life language use. The study suggests a

more personalised approach to adult ESOL education, particularly in assessment, is essential for improving learners' awareness of their development and providing evidence of progress, not only for compliance with performance metrics but also to enhance their learning experiences.

7.2 Learner Awareness of Learning and Progression

Interviews highlighted that learners understood ongoing learning and assessment but struggled with terms like "assessment," "ILP," and "RARPAP". To address this, educators should provide explicit explanations and resources that help learners understand assessment procedures from the start. Enhanced awareness enables learners to engage more actively, prioritising practical learning and personal growth over compliance with institutional and government policies (Norton, 2000). Additionally, improved communication among educators, learners, and stakeholders can further support effective engagement in target-setting (Arkoudis et al., 2013).

7.3 Pride and Ownership: Key Elements of Learner Engagement

Learners' pride and ownership of their learning emerged as key elements of engagement as interviews revealed that students value tangible evidence of their achievement, such as classwork and homework. Thus, RARPAP which provides physical validation of their progress is a powerful learning tool which fosters pride and ownership of student achievement. Furthermore, this sense of ownership boosts self-esteem and fosters a proactive learning attitude (Zimmerman, 2002), particularly important for community learners considered less confident (Dweck, 2006). This study strongly suggests encouraging study

skills alongside academic targets can help learners develop soft skills and confidence. A flexible approach to RARPAP also allows for gradual improvement in soft skills, such as confidence, while supporting language acquisition. ESOL educators should therefore use more diverse instructional strategies tailored to various learning styles (Felder & Brent, 2005), integrating real-life examples and interactive activities as early integration of key assessment terms and formative tasks will enable timely support (Krashen, 1985).

7.4 Assessing Alignment: Diagnostic Results, ILP Objectives, and Contextualised Learning

This study also considered the alignment between diagnostic assessments and ILP objectives, revealing disparities in some portfolios. Thus, it recognised that a more robust connection between diagnostic results and ILP goals is necessary to ensure that learners' needs, including study skills and civic skills, are adequately addressed. A soft application of Nussbaum's Capabilities Approach (1997, 2006) helped emphasise the need to contextualise learning based on learners' lived experiences, yet some ILPs overlooked essential capacities for democratic citizenship.

Consequently, the study also found gaps in ILP targets' alignment with the SMART criteria (Doran, 1981), with some targets lacking specificity and measurability. This further highlights the need for ILPs to better reflect learners' individual needs and learning trajectories (Larsen-Freeman, 1997).

7.5 Refining ILPs by Enhancing SMART Compliance and Soft Skills Development

The study also revealed that ILP targets often fail to meet SMART criteria, hindering their effectiveness for learners at different proficiency levels. Additionally, the absence of soft skills in ILPs limits learners' holistic development. However, through introducing some of Nussbaum's Central Capabilities as a soft lens, the study demonstrates how incorporating soft skills in ILPs, such as critical thinking and employability, can enhance learners' progression both academically and socially (Majid, 2012; Nussbaum, 2006). Although often overlooked, opportunities to develop soft skills, like using a pen instead of a pencil in assessments, should be integrated into ILP goals to promote broader skills imperative to societal integration alongside academic achievement.

Additionally, refining ILPs requires a stronger connection between assessment outcomes and learning goals. Hence, this study strongly advocates for the inclusion of soft skills, and aligning with Nussbaum's Central Capabilities. This approach would ensure ILPs better support learners' academic, social, and employability skills.

7.6 Strengthening Feedback for More Effective Outcomes

Effective feedback is crucial for learning, particularly in second language acquisition (Hyland & Hyland, 2019). However, the study found that feedback

within ILPs was often vague, hindering learners' understanding of their progress. To improve this, feedback should be specific, targeted, and constructive, following guidelines from Graham (1987) and Hattie and Timperley (2007). More importantly, incorporating dialogic feedback, peer feedback and self-assessment (Ebadi et al., 2020) can foster a more engaging learning environment that views students as active participants in their RARPAP journey.

Integrating technology-mediated feedback tools (Wang & Li, 2022) and continuous professional development for teachers will also enhance feedback practices. This will also be beneficial in addressing challenges, such as time constraints and language barriers which are essential to providing feedback that is better aligned with learners' needs and goals, supporting their growth and fostering a culture of continuous improvement.

7.7 Conceptual Contributions

7.7.1 The Importance of ILPs in Complex Educational Landscapes

This study contributes to understanding the role and potential of ILPs in the UK adult education sector, specifically within ESOL education in community learning settings. While ILPs have been heavily critiqued for focusing on performance metrics driven by funding and government immigration policies (please see Chapter 2), this research identifies them as tools for fostering personal and social development, especially within the diverse landscape of adult ESOL education.

The study acknowledges the multidimensional challenges adult learners face, particularly in light of government policies that may inadvertently restrict learning opportunities. A close examination of entry-level students' ILPs through document analysis, informed by the Nussbaumian development of the Capabilities Approach, highlights the need for more inclusive practices in adult ESOL education.

Furthermore, this study emphasises the importance of culturally relevant methods and authentic assessments that allow learners to engage meaningfully with the target language. Advocating for this holistic approach, including formative assessments early in the programme, self-assessments, and student-led portfolios, demonstrates how this research contributes to a deeper understanding of how ILPs can support the diverse needs and aspirations of learners. Ultimately, it demonstrates the potential of ILPs in fostering equitable, transformative learning experiences for adult ESOL learners in the UK.

7.7.2 Introducing the Nussbaumian Capabilities Approach as a Valuable Lens for Examining Social Justice Aspects of ESOL Learning

This study's use of Nussbaum's Capabilities Approach (Sen, 1999; Nussbaum, 2000, 2011) as a soft lens to examine the transformative potential of ILPs for supporting the holistic development of ESOL learners allows for a more flexible understanding of learners' needs, particularly when combined with RARPAP. By suggesting a move beyond language education models which are heavily outcome-based and driven by performance measurement, this approach effectively highlights the more transformative nature of ILPs in fostering

linguistic, literacy, and soft skills while promoting personal and social growth (Pantić & Florian, 2015; Shohamy, 2020).

Nussbaum's argument that every individual deserves a minimum set of capabilities as a matter of justice (Bridgehouse & Robeyns, 2010; Vecchio & Martens, 2021) becomes especially relevant in the ESOL context.

Consequently, this research highlights the significance of three key capabilities: life, practical reason, and affiliation, in facilitating human flourishing. Through application of these to the findings of this study, the need for a more comprehensive understanding of ESOL learners' needs and the development of innovative teaching strategies that can enhance their overall well-being becomes more evident.

The analysis demonstrated that ILPs can contribute to the development of learners' capabilities through everyday tasks and real-world applications. These competencies align with Nussbaum's (2011) focus on enabling individuals to lead fulfilling lives through practical engagement, social participation, and personal growth. As outlined in Table 5 (Chapter 6), ILPs present both challenges and opportunities, with practical responses that enhance language proficiency, empower learners to engage socially, and support flourishing in their new cultural and linguistic contexts (see also Appendix 11 for extended examples).

These examples demonstrate how ILPs enable learners to bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application. Focusing on real-life tasks enables learners to develop practical reasoning and social engagement

skills essential for participation in society. The capabilities nurtured through ILPs align with Nussbaum's emphasis on fostering human flourishing, promoting personal growth, and enhancing social inclusion.

In contrast to critiques that frame "capabilities" in higher education narrowly around employability, this research showcases the broader potential of ILPs, particularly in ESOL contexts. The development of these competencies extends beyond workforce readiness to embrace principles of social justice and ethical evaluation. Evidently, through engaging learners in meaningful activities, ILPs clearly demonstrate the transformative power of ESOL education in enabling all learners to lead more dignified and fulfilling lives.

For a detailed breakdown of additional capabilities and their corresponding skill development, please refer to Appendix Eleven.

7.7.3 Illustrating ILPs as a Tool for Assessment for Social Justice

This research highlights the impact of ILPs as tools for assessment in community learning settings, offering an alternative to traditional summative assessments. As I have previously highlighted, the developmental nature of ILPs makes them powerful tools for promoting language development, social inclusion, and personal growth, which traditional assessments cannot capture as effectively. Thus, fostering more equitable learning environments.

Conceptually, ILPs align with social justice principles by recognising the diverse needs and challenges of ESOL learners. In community settings, ILPs enable educators to engage learners in the assessment process, encouraging

ownership of learning and facilitating personalised goal-setting. This addresses the concerns of “putting words into their mouths” as suggested by Hamilton (2009) by ensuring that the learners’ voices are central to the process of negotiating learning targets for their RARPAP.

Additionally, the learner-centred approach of ILPs can promote empowerment and social inclusion through considering each learner’s unique circumstances. ILPs when utilised to be as learner-centred as possible can better shape teaching and learning relationships, aligning both tutor and student identities. Lastly, ILPs allow for comprehensive assessments of learners’ progress across linguistic, personal, and social domains, ensuring that learners from diverse backgrounds feel supported and included in their learning journey.

7.8 Contributions

7.8.1 Contributions to Knowledge

7.8.1.1 Offering Actionable Recommendations for Improving Community ESOL Education

This research provides practical solutions for restructuring ILPs to better meet the diverse needs of ESOL learners. Key recommendations align with learner-centric approaches, such as promoting student autonomy (Lai & Li, 2011) and personalised learning experiences (Lewandowski, 2021). These include shifting towards more learner-centred ILPs, addressing diversity, integrating soft skills, and redesigning inclusive assessment practices.

Additionally, a shift to learner-centricity would foster student autonomy and confidence. Tools like goal diaries (Lewandowski, 2021) and weekly objectives help students take ownership of their learning. Transitioning from paper-based ILPs to digital formats (Carrier, Damerow, & Bailey, 2017; Coryell & Chlup, 2007) would enhance personalisation and encourage students to track their progress, fostering self-reliance.

This research also highlights the crucial need to address language barriers in assessment terminology. Targeted interventions, such as pre-teaching key terms through translations, matching activities, and audio-visual aids, would significantly help students navigate the RARPAP process and build confidence in academic contexts.

Further recommendations emerging from this research include promoting soft skills development through more culturally relevant learning, fostering intercultural competence, and designing more inclusive assessment methods to create a fairer, more equitable evaluation process.

7.8.2 Contributing to ESOL Education Discourse

This research bridges theory and practice, opening avenues for future studies on creating more inclusive ESOL environments. It has the potential to impact policy, programme design, and scholarship within ESOL education (O'Rourke, 2017), emphasising the need for more learner-centred approaches and inclusive practices (Canagarajah, 2013; Norton, 2000).

Another fundamentally valuable contribution this study makes is giving entry-level ESOL learners a voice, which is crucial for understanding their experiences in community settings. Recognising the perspectives of marginalised learners ultimately enhances programme relevance (Cooke & Peutrell, 2010) and aligns with sociocultural theories of language learning (Vygotsky, 1978).

Furthermore, this research promotes engagement, ownership, and empowerment, fostering an inclusive ESOL system that supports social inclusion and personal growth by incorporating valuable learner feedback into curriculum design (Gee, 2008).

This study also highlights the under-researched area of community ESOL assessment as community programmes often receive less attention than other educational contexts. However, this study addresses this gap by exploring assessment practices tailored to adult migrant learners. As O'Neill and McMahon (2015) argue, assessment in community settings must consider the complex identities of learners, moving beyond standardised testing.

Finally, this research contributes to filling the gap in effective assessment practices for community ESOL, offering meaningful insights that support social inclusion, personal growth, and transformative learning. Subsequently, the findings from it align with research on formative assessment (Black & Wiliam, 1998; Hattie & Timperley, 2007).

7.9 Recommendations

7.9.1 Recommendations for Community ESOL Provision

This research highlights key areas for improvement in ILP implementation in community ESOL education. The key recommendations are summarised in the table below, focusing on improving learner understanding of assessment terminology, aligning ILP targets with SMART criteria, and integrating soft skills development into ILPs to enhance employability and personal growth. These recommendations are drawn from the previous discussions in this thesis on a more learner-centred approach aligned with values of inclusivity and holistic development.

Area	Current Issues	Proposed Solutions
1. Feedback practices	Feedback in ILPs is vague, generic, and not actionable.	Adopt targeted, dialogic, and task-oriented feedback; integrate peer feedback and self-assessment; provide training for educators on more effective feedback strategies.
2. Digital ILPs	Paper-based ILPs are less adaptable and are more difficult in fostering learner ownership.	Transition to digital ILPs for personalised learning experiences and easier evidence tracking.
3. Cultural and contextual relevance	ILPs and assessments do not always reflect learners' lived	Incorporate more culturally relevant tasks and real-life scenarios into learning objectives.

	experiences or cultural contexts.	
4. Linking diagnostic outcomes to formative assessments	Gaps in alignment between diagnostic results and ILP objectives; lack of integration with formative assessments.	Strengthen the connection between diagnostics and ILP targets; provide ongoing formative assessments tailored to learner needs.
5. Learner agency	Learners are not fully engaged in the target-setting process, reducing ownership and involvement.	Facilitate learner-led ILP content creation, such as goal diaries and weekly targets, to promote autonomy.

Table 6: Areas of recommendation, current issues and proposed solutions

7.9.1.1 Shifting Towards Learner-Centricity

ILPs should focus on fostering learner autonomy, particularly within the RARPAP process, where learners take an active role and responsibility for presenting evidence of their learning. Lewandowski (2021) highlights how maintaining a goals diary can improve language use, confidence, and autonomy. Additionally, Coryell and Chlup (2007) support the transition to digital ILPs, which they contend would help ensure better content delivery, learner interaction, and progress tracking.

7.9.1.2 Cultivating Better Understanding of Assessment Terminology

A key challenge identified is learners' difficulty understanding assessment terminology, such as "assessment," "ILP," "RARPAP," "targets," and "tutorials."

To address this, pre-teaching strategies, such as translation, matching activities, and audio-visual tools, should be implemented to clarify these terms.

7.9.2 Recommendations for Future Research

Pre-entry level learners in ESOL education often face significant barriers to language and literacy acquisition. As discussed in chapter two of this thesis, many of these learners come from backgrounds of forced migration, having fled conflict zones and war-torn countries. As a result, they may have little to no formal education, severely limited literacy skills, and minimal or no proficiency in the language of instruction. These circumstances present unique challenges not only in learning a new language but also in engaging with conventional educational tools and assessment methods. For such learners, traditional assessment frameworks may fail to capture their progress or potential, requiring adaptations to better reflect their lived experiences, needs, and abilities.

Addressing these challenges is critical in providing the most equitable learning opportunities and ensuring that pre-entry learners receive the key support they need to succeed (Barton & Hamilton, 2000; Cummins, 2000). These learners require assessments that are sensitive to their specific needs and contexts, as well as pedagogical practices that consider their social and cultural backgrounds (Wrigley, 2007).

Given these challenges faced by pre-entry learners, it is essential that research focuses on developing effective, inclusive teaching and assessment strategies tailored to this group:

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1. **Low-Level Learners (Pre-Entry Level):** Research is needed on the specific needs of pre-entry level learners in ESOL education. These learners face unique challenges in language and literacy acquisition, and alternative assessment methods (e.g., oral assessments, interactive tasks) may better suit their needs (Wrigley, 2007).
 2. **Assessment for Social Justice:** Future research should explore how ILPs can implement socially just assessments for pre-entry learners. Gipps (1994) and Biesta (2010) advocate for assessments that consider learners' social contexts and foster inclusion through diverse forms of assessment, including narrative assessments, peer assessments, and collaborative goal-setting.

7.10 Limitation of study and further research

In reflecting upon the findings and contributions of this study, it is imperative to acknowledge the inherent limitations that have shaped its scope and applicability. One such factor is the focused nature of the research, which centred on a single institution within London's Adult Education College network. While this context provided valuable understanding of ILPs' utilisation and impact, it naturally restricts the generalisability of findings to broader educational settings. Future research would benefit from incorporating a more diverse range of institutions, geographical locations, and demographic compositions. This broader approach would enrich our understanding of ILP implementation and effectiveness within the wider ESOL.

Additionally, the study was not able to delve deeply into the experiences of true pre-entry level learners, presenting another area for potential exploration. The research setting and interviews primarily engaged learners with relatively higher levels of fluency despite their low literacy and language competencies in reading and writing. In light of this, future research might consider specifically investigating the unique needs and challenges faced by individuals at the pre-entry level, fostering a more comprehensive understanding of ILP effectiveness across diverse learner profiles and proficiency levels.

Recognising these factors as areas of potential growth, rather than limitations, emphasises the importance of ongoing research initiatives. The ESOL education field can continue to evolve and improve by embracing these opportunities, ultimately promoting more inclusive and empowering learning environments for all learners.

7.11 Summary

This chapter has synthesised the key findings of the study and offered both conceptual and practical contributions to the field of adult ESOL education. It has demonstrated how ILPs, when approached through a learner-centred and socially just lens, can support not only academic development but also learners' personal, civic, and employability growth. Drawing on the Nussbaumian Capabilities Approach, the chapter illustrated how ILPs can foster dignity, agency, and inclusion for marginalised learners within community settings. Recommendations were made to enhance ILP design, feedback practices, and the integration of soft skills, with a particular focus on pre-entry learners. The

limitations of the study were acknowledged, and directions for future research were proposed.

Ultimately, through this thesis, I have argued for a shift away from compliance-driven assessment models toward more humane, inclusive, and empowering practices in ESOL education. I have foregrounded learner voice, experience, and agency to show that ILPs hold far more potential than simply tracking progress. They can serve as tools of transformation, dignity, and belonging. I believe that assessment, when done with intention and care, can contribute not just to educational outcomes but to wider human flourishing. This work stands as both a critique of existing systems and a hopeful contribution toward more equitable futures in adult education.

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Appendix One SMART targets for Lower-Level Learner A and Higher-Level Learner B

Learner Profile	Course Name, Level & Code	Academic Target(s)	Soft Target(s)	Comments from the Learner	Comments from the Teacher
Lower-level learner A	Community ESOL Pre-entry & Entry 1 ES0966CC	1. Read a text about someone and identify at least 8/10 correct answers 2. Gap fill the verbs and nouns in the text by 21/06	None indicated on ILP	'I don't feel I am getting better'	'You have made some progress, particularly in reading'
Higher-level learner B	Community ESOL Pre-entry & Entry 1 ES0966CC	1. Read about two people and answer at least 18/20 questions correctly 2. With correct spelling and punctuation. And 3rd pers. E.g.: 's' by 21/06	None indicated on ILP	'My English not better'	'You have made good progress in all skills'

Appendix Two SMART Targets from Six ILPs

Learner profile	Course name, Level & code	Academic target(s)	Soft target(s)	Comments from the learner	Comments from the teacher
Lower-level learner A	Community ESOL Pre-entry & Entry 1 ES0966CC	1. Read a short text about someone, i.e.: your teacher 2. Fill gaps in this text 3. And give information about yourself	None indicated on ILP	'My English is a little better'	'You have made some progress in reading but not attended enough lessons'
Higher-level learner B	Community ESOL Pre-entry & Entry 1 ES0966CC	1. Read about two people and answer at least 18/20 questions correctly 2. With correct spelling and punctuation 3. And 3 rd pers. E.g.: 's' by 21/06	None indicated on ILP	'My English not better'	'You have made good progress in all skills'
Lower-level learner C	Community ESOL	1. Write an account of a past day using correct simple past verb forms	None indicated on ILP	'My English is better'	'You have made good progress and

	Entry 1 & Entry 2 ES0967CC	2. Compound sentences using <i>but, and, because</i> 3. And spelling and punctuation by 30/6			are starting to use the past tense'
Higher-level learner D	Community ESOL Entry 1 & Entry 2 ES0967CC	1. Write an account of a trip using correct simple past tense forms 2. Compound complex sentences using conjunctions <i>and/or</i> 3. And articles (a, the) by 30/6	None indicated on ILP	'I think I have improved my English and I hope that can make a big progress in future'	'You have made very good progress in all skills'.
Lower-level learner E	Community ESOL Entry 2 & Entry 3 ES0813CC	1. By the end of the course write at least half a page about a familiar topic with correct complex sentences 2. and at least 2 different past	None indicated on ILP	'This is good help for me learning English'	'You have made good progress in all skills.'

		tenses			
Higher-level learner F	Community ESOL Entry 2 & Entry 3 ES0813CC	1. Answer at least two questions about your past activities with correct spelling and punctuation. 2.Simple past verb forms And compound sentences by 29.06 using conjunctions but, and, because, and linking words	None indicated on ILP	'Learner completed early <i>entry made by tutor</i>	'You have made good progress in all skills.'

Appendix Three: Detailed Document Analysis of Student ILPs from ESOL Course Files

Learner profile	Do the portfolios contain sufficient evidence for each learner, organised appropriately?	Are DIAGNOSTIC assessment outcomes linked to ILP targets for both higher and lower-level learners?	Are the learning TARGETS in the ILP S.M.A.R.T? And appropriately CHALLENGING for higher and lower-level learners?	Does the work set allow both higher and lower- learner the opportunity to produce evidence of PROGRESS? i.e. corrections/drafts with corresponding improvements?	Is there evidence of SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT & FEEDBACK to measure achievement of targets?	What could be improved (to be expanded in further chapter on conclusions and recommendations)
Learner A Pre-entry/Entry 1	Learner declaration with summary of success pointers for course such as minimum attendance, punctuality, expected behaviour and homework as well as commitment to study is included	The initial assessment which appears to be in place of a diagnostic test (as it is labelled that way) has summary comments on the assessment which highlight	The 2 targets set for the learner's RARPAP do not fulfil the SMART criteria. For instance, the first target 'read a text about	There is evidence of feedback upon completion of the formative and summative assessments. However, the feedback is vague and considerably lacking in being developmental as	There are 2 summative assessments which are a gap fill activity from a reading comprehension activity. Both pieces of summative assessments	The targets need to be SMARTer by ensuring they fulfil each of the criterion. This could be achieved by ensuring each target is listed independently which would better fulfil the 'specific' criterion and by including an achieve by date for each target,

	at the front of the ILP and signed by both tutor and learner. This is followed by a form with personal information including learner's reasons for studying subject, factors which might affect attendance/achievement on course and intended destinations/progression – although this is not specified where or what the progression is to. An ILP review report is also included which	the learner is competent in letter (alphabet gap fill and matching, picture and word matching) and makes a fair attempt at correct spelling and transfer of words to the correct picture. However, the learner is shown to have made no attempt to read a short paragraph or answer the comprehension questions from this. The summary also indicates no attempt to write personal details or any sentences.	someone and identify at least 8/10 correct sentences' is not specific. It is not clear what the topic of the text is and therefore the purpose of this is unclear. Furthermore, it is not specific enough in terms of how many sentences the learner is required to achieve, whether 8 or 10. The two targets set are also not clearly	the only comment made on the feedback for the formative assessment draft ½ is 'can you write in complete sentences'. Also, the learner, completes the assignment by answering question in pencil. The tutor could have linked this to a soft target to be set and this would have been development for the learner to be able to write answers using pen, for instance, the tutor could have feedback 'you write using pencil, next time,	appear less challenging than the formative assessment. The feedback given is corrective marking for the linguistic errors and a final comment 'Well done' Targets achieved'	this would also fulfil the 'timely' criterion. In additional, it is useful to include targets for soft skills. This will help students achieve their academic targets to the fullest potential, for instance, writing in pen is an important employability and wider social skill for civic life e.g.: filling in forms, banking, etc
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	contains the targets listed and the evaluation, whether the target has been met, partially met or not met. There are also comments from both tutor and learner on the progress made although these do not reflect or point to the targets set. Learner work as evidence of the targets and achievement of RARPAP are also contained in the ILP. This includes an initial assessment which appears to be in place of the diagnostic assessment followed by a	Subsequently the learner is reported to be able to read basic words and is emerging at Entry level 1 in both writing and speaking. Of the 2 targets set for the learner, there is a link between the learner's inability to read a paragraph and the target set.	distinguishable, for instance, the review form allows for each target to be entered according to number. Therefore, the two targets should be clearly listed as target number 1 and target number 2 instead of as one target with the conjunction 'and'. There is only one date for both targets which is listed as 'by 21.06'. Again, each of the targets	please try to write using pen'.		
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	reading comprehension activity as a formative piece and 2 additional pieces of learner work for formative assessment.		should be independent in order to fulfil the specificity criteria and in turn, each target should have its own date to be achieved as it is not necessary that both targets will or need to be achieved by the same date. Therefore, this does not fulfil the 'timely' criterion.			
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Learner B Pre-Entry/Entry 1	There is a clear diagnostic assessment, evidence of formative assessment and 2 drafts of the summative assessment. Other ILP documentation is also included, learner declaration is complete, information on learner's reasons for studying the subject, factors that might affect attendance/achievement and learner's intended destinations. It is also clear learner have completed induction at WAES.	The diagnostic is a set of questions and answers on personal/everyday topics such as 'what is your name', 'what time is it?' where the student has written both questions and answers by hand. Learner writes all text in pencil, however, there is no soft target for the learner to write in pen. Also, the learner does not include their name or date on their work. Again this is a missed opportunity to set this as a soft target for learner to develop fundamental	The 3 targets set do not meet all the SMART criteria. It can be argued, however, that at this level being able to read about 2 people and answer at least 18-20 questions correctly could be quite challenging unless the learner is strong in their reading skills (spiky profile). Where the tutor sets the second target as 'with correct	The work set for both formative and summative assessment are scaffolded writing activities* requiring learner to complete gaps with correct grammatical/linguistic answers. There are also 2 reading comprehension activities on a short text about a person and questions about the text focusing on use of the 3rd personal singular present tense. There is little evidence of progress as I cannot ascertain much difference in	Yes, however, the feedback given are too generic, e.g. 'Well done! Targets achieved!' Again, this is a missed opportunity to hone learner's wider skills such as study and social skills. Learner could have been given more bespoke feedback more relevant to their personal development.	It would be better to start with a diagnostic assessment that has clearer set outcomes, even if it is a piece of free-writing which the learner is required to do, as this would help ensure that more appropriately challenging targets are set essential for the learner's academic and personal development journey. This would also help set more relevant academic and wider skills targets to learner's life/experience/future aspirations Targets need to be fulfil all the SMART criteria according to ensure the above.
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		study skills beneficial for their academic progress. The academic targets set do not directly link to the diagnostic assessment outcomes as the tutor marks 'prep' for prepositions as the only noticeable grammatical error on the diagnostic assessment while setting 3 academic targets not directly related to the learner's diagnostic assessment outcome.	spelling and punctuation', it would have been useful to note the exact words, or perhaps indicate the topic/theme commonly occurring at that level or a familiar topic which has been studied previously by learner.	student's progress from the diagnostic to the summative assessment outcome. I would have been able to ascertain this had the learner been given the opportunity to produce a freely written piece of text about their own life/experience based on the feedback they received from the previous gap fill scaffolded formative assessment. This would have also been an opportunity to assess learner's development of soft targets for their study skills		The feedback needs to be more bespoke to be able to better, measure the learner's achievement of targets. This is for the better of the learner as well as the assessor. Tutor should take the opportunity to develop learner's academic skills to the fullest by setting both academic and soft targets that are relevant to learner and appropriately challenging as possible.
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		Furthermore, it is not clearly whether the learner expressed intention for these targets to be set according to what their own learning outcomes are.		such as using pen and writing name and date on their work		
Learner C E1/2	Learner declaration with summary of success pointers for course such as minimum attendance, punctuality, expected behaviour and homework as well as commitment to study is included	The diagnostic assessment outcomes for learner be are sufficiently linked to the 3 targets set as the tutor's feedback for the diagnostic assessment	The targets set for lower level learner C appear to be sufficiently challenging based on the diagnostic assessment summary. However, all 3	There is clear evidence of detailed corrective feedback on the first and second drafts of the formative assessments for target 1. The tutor includes clear recognition and	The summative assessment feedback for learner C includes some further corrections on spelling and correct past tense of irregular verbs. The tutor	All targets need to fulfil all criteria of SMART individually. They need to clearly state the topic and theme as this will not only make it more specific but also provide more context for learner to work towards the targets, thus making it more

	at the front of the ILP and signed by both tutor and learner. This is followed by a form with personal information including learner's reasons for studying subject, factors which might affect attendance/achievement on course and intended destinations/progression – although this is not specified where or what the progression is to. An ILP review report is also included which	states 'work on simple past and spellings, compound sentences'.	targets do not fulfil the SMART criteria. For instance, the first target set, 'Write an account of using correct simple past verb forms a past day [sic]' is not specific. It is not possible to ascertain how many words or sentences the learner is required to produce in order for the target to be measurable in addition to what topic the account is on. This also makes it less realistic or	praise of learner's development in using correct spellings and punctuation, past tense verb forms and conjunctions. No developmental feedback for further progression to next stage is given.	writes praise for learner's effort and advises that learner should 'check spellings'. The final commentary is 'targets achieved' which briefly feedbacks to measure achievement of targets.	realistic and relatable to the personal goals they highlighted as reasons for studying. Feedback also need to be more developmental and showing a clear link for learner to progress between drafts and measure the achievement of targets in final summative pieces. This could be facilitated through the 'medal mission' style of feedback
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	contains the targets listed and the evaluation, whether the target has been met, partially met or not met. There are also comments from both tutor and learner on the progress made although these do not reflect or point to the targets set. Learner work as evidence of the targets and achievement of RARPAP are also contained in the ILP. This includes a diagnostic assessment at the start of the ILP: a writing activity 'What did you do last week?' followed by what appears to		relevant as it does not exemplify any true relevance to the learner's reasons for studying the subject as declared at the start of the ILP whereby it is indicated that one of the learner's reasons for studying is to 'increase participation in my local community'. The second and third targets also fail to meet all the SMART criteria. We			
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	be 2 pieces of formative assessments. These are 2 redrafts of the same activity did as a diagnostic 'What did you do yesterday?' which corresponds to the first target set 'write an account of using correct simple past verb forms a past day [sic]'. There is an additional formative piece of work which is a grammar activity on 'using joining words' and, but, then, so, because and contains 3 gap filling exercises. This appears to correspond to the second target set		can see 'compound sentences using e.g <i>but</i>, <i>and</i>, <i>because</i>' and 'and spelling and punctuation by 30.06' listed, however, these are not specific or measurable, we do not know how many compound sentences the student is working on achieving, neither is it clear how many words they are working on improving the spelling of, moreover, what topic are			
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	on compound sentences using <i>but</i>, and <i>because</i>. The final piece of learner work contained in the ILP is a summative assessment in the form of a grammar-based gap fill exercise on irregular verbs in the past simple containing a total of 25 sentences.		the words on. For instance, is it on a previously studied topic, a topic familiar to the learner or a set of commonly recurring words at Entry 1 and Entry 2 ESOL. Lastly, only one the third target indicates the time which the target is to be achieved by the student. As I previously mentioned, it is necessary to put a time by which each target is to be			
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			achieved ad different skills have different development time scales and it is likely that easier targets are achieved sooner than less difficult ones. Furthermore, there is no provision of development of soft skills. The learner completed the diagnostic assessment writing activity in pencil and proceeded to complete the rest of the ILP evidence in			
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			pencil. This is a missed opportunity to help the learner develop a lifelong and important study skill for instance, using pen for important writing activities.			
Learner D E1/2 ESOL	Learner ILP is neatly organised and contains relevant personal information for learner journey and intended destinations. IKP contains diagnostic assessment, two drafts of formative	Task instructions for diagnostic assessment is not clear, however, we are able to see a written piece of text whereby the learner writes an account of their visit to Greenwich Park. From the feedback given by the tutor,	The first target 'write an account of a trip using the correct simple past tense verbs' set appears to satisfy the specific and realistic/relevant criteria although it can be argued this target could	There is evidence of progress in the form of redrafted formative assessments, however, the feedback given for the first draft although is detailed in the grammatical and linguistic capacity, there does not appear to be further stages	There is work from the learner which is submitted within the ILP as evidence of summative assessment, which is a gap fill exercise on using joining words 'and, but, then, so, because'.	Making each individual target SMART, fulfilling the specific and measurable criteria in order to ensure the target has been achieved. Adopt a 'medal-mission' style feedback approach to ensure feedback corresponds to drafts and

	assessment and a conclusive summative assessment in the form of grammar exercises extracted from an activity book.	learner is advised to 'work on compound/complex sentences, more simple past tense forms, articles'. From this it appears the targets are set in three independent entries.	be made more specific by clarifying the topic or theme. Furthermore, it is not measurable as the tutor does not specify the length of the writing or how many 'correct' sentences the learner is required to achieve. The 'timely' criteria is also not satisfied. Although there is an entry for the third target to be achieved 'by 30/6', it is not clearly stated for the first and	which are comprehensive for the learner to make progress. For instance, aside from the error corrections made by the tutor on the diagnostic task, the only advice given to the student is to 'work on compound/complex sentences, more simple past tense forms, articles'. This may not be the most effective style to encourage progression to the next stage. The first draft of the formative assessment also contains detailed correction of	The second worksheet is also a grammar gap fill exercises where the learner is required to complete the gaps with the correct past simple of the verbs in brackets. This summative assessment could have better measured the learner's achievement of the targets had the targets been more specific and measurable, for instance, 'by 30/6, learner will	corrections can help learner to progress and achieve target.
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			second targets. These are the same set of targets as lower-level learner C. In order to make the targets more appropriately challenging for both the higher and lower-level learners in at this level, the tutor could ensure the targets are more specific and measurable. These are variables which could be tailored to	errors, while this is useful for the learner to be able to see the correct grammatical forms, there is no 'medal-style' feedback given. The second draft of the formative assessment contains some correction of errors but less than the previous draft. However, there is a comment of praise 'Well done! You have used correct simple tense forms, one future tense and conjunctions and a relative pronoun and articles. This seems highly	be able to write at least 10 correct sentences using correct forms of past simple verbs'. This way, we can objectively measure the learner's progress.	
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			address the learners' individual learning styles as well as their proficiency level.	technical for learner comprehension for development. The learner in turn comments on their ILP review form 'My listening and writing getting better, speaking not well'. This does not correspond with the feedback given for the formative work and does not indicate adequate learner comprehension.		
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Appendix Four: Student Survey – Phase I

Entry Level ESOL Learner Awareness of RARPAP/ILP

Start of Block: Learner Demographic

Q1 How long have you lived in the UK?

0-1 year (1)

2-5 years (2)

6-10 years (3)

11-15 years (4)

16-20 years (5)

More than 20 years (6)

Q2 What is your first language?

Q3 What country are you originally from?

Q4 What is your age group?

Under 20 years old (1)

21-29 years old (2)

30-39 years old (3)

40-49 years old (4)

50-59 years old (5)

over 60 years old (6)

End of Block: Learner Demographic

Start of Block: Use of English

Q5 How many times do you use English outside class?

Everyday (1)

4-5 times a week (2)

2-3 times a week (3)

Once a week (4)

Almost never (5)

Never (6)

Q6 How many times do you use English at home?

Everyday (1)

4-5 times a week (2)

2-3 times a week (3)

Once a week (4)

Almost never (5)

Never (6)

Q18 What do you use English for, outside class (for example, watch tv, listen to the radio, speak to neighbours, at work, with my child's teachers, with my friends)?

End of Block: Use of English

Start of Block: Education and Work

Q10 What is your highest level of education (in your country and/or the UK)?

Primary school level (1)

Secondary/high school (2)

College/diploma (3)

University or Higher (4)

Other, please specify (5)

Q11 Have you studied English before?

Yes, at this college (1)

Yes, at another college in the UK (2)

Yes, I studied English before I came to the UK (3)

No (4)

Q12 Please tell me about your work:

I am working here in London (1)

I was working before, but now I do not have a job (2)

I want to work/ I am looking for a job (3)

I worked before in another country (4)

I am not working/ I am not looking for a job/ I do not want a job (5)

Other, please specify: (6)

End of Block: Education and Work

Start of Block: Future Plans

Q13 Why are you learning English? (Please choose as many answers)

I want to improve my speaking and listening (1)

I want to improve my reading and writing (2)

I want to study more in the future (3)

I want to improve my study skills (4)

I want to help my family and/or children (5)

I want to be more independent (6)

I want to help my community (7)

I need English for my health and well-being (8)

Other, please specify (9)

Q19 What are your plans for employment and studies in the future? What would you like to do after this course?

End of Block: Future Plans

Start of Block: Skills

Q14 Do you find the actions below easy or difficult? Please mark each of them.

	No problem (1)	Sometimes I need help (2)	I have a problem with this (3)	I don't know what this is (4)
Using a smartphone (1)				
Sending an email (2)				
Using Microsoft Teams (3)				
Using Outlook to see my college emails (4)				

Q15 Do you find the actions below easy or difficult? Please mark each of them.

	No problem (1)	Sometimes I need help (2)	I have a problem with this (3)	I don't know what this is (4)
Reading gas/electricity/water bills (1)				
Reading letters/emails from my children's school (2)				
Filling in forms for the council/job centre (3)				

Q7 I can talk to my GP (doctor) in English:

Yes (1)

No (2)

A little bit (3)

Q8 I can talk to people and ask for things in shops in English:

Yes (1)

No (2)

A little bit (3)

Q9 I can listen and understand people on the phone in English:

Yes (1)

No (2)

A little bit (3)

Q16 What kind of activities do you like doing in class? Tick all the things you like doing:

Talking to other students (1)

Learning about grammar (2)

Learning to use new words (3)

Doing games and quizzes (4)

Writing letters, emails and stories (5)

Learning about British Culture (6)

Reading stories and answering questions (7)

Learning about interesting facts, people, places and things (8)

Something else, please specify: (9)

End of Block: Skills

Start of Block: RARPAP/ILP Awareness

Q17 Do you know what these words mean? Please don't use a translator!

Please mark each of them.

	I understand (1)	I don't understand (2)	I am not sure (3)
Assessment (1)			
ILP (2)			
Individual Learning Plan (3)			
RARPAP (4)			
Targets (5)			
Tutorial (6)			

Q20 What do you want from this course? How will your English be better at the end of this course? Please tell me:

End of Block: RARPAP/ILP Awareness

Appendix Five: Student Survey – Phase II

Entry Level ESOL Learner Awareness of RARPAP/ILP - Stage 2 (End of Term)

Start of Block: Learner Demographic

Q1 How long have you lived in the UK?

0-1 year (1)

2-5 years (2)

6-10 years (3)

11-15 years (4)

16-20 years (5)

More than 20 years (6)

Q2 What is your first language?

Q3 What country are you originally from?

Q4 What is your age group?

Under 20 years old (1)

21-29 years old (2)

30-39 years old (3)

40-49 years old (4)

50-59 years old (5)

over 60 years old (6)

End of Block: Learner Demographic

Start of Block: Use of English

Q5 How many times do you use English outside class?

Everyday (1)

4-5 times a week (2)

2-3 times a week (3)

Once a week (4)

Almost never (5)

Never (6)

Q6 How many times do you use English at home?

Everyday (1)

4-5 times a week (2)

2-3 times a week (3)

Once a week (4)

Almost never (5)

Never (6)

Q18 What do you use English for, outside class (for example, watch tv, listen to the radio, speak to neighbours, at work, with my child's teachers, with my friends)?

End of Block: Use of English

Start of Block: Education and Work

Q10 What is your highest level of education (in your country and/or the UK)?

Primary school level (1)

Secondary/high school (2)

College/diploma (3)

University or Higher (4)

Other, please specify (5)

Q11 Have you studied English before?

Yes, at this college (1)

Yes, at another college in the UK (2)

Yes, I studied English before I came to the UK (3)

No (4)

Q12 Please tell me about your work:

I am working here in London (1)

I was working before, but now I do not have a job (2)

I want to work/ I am looking for a job (3)

I worked before in another country (4)

I am not working/ I am not looking for a job/ I do not want a job (5)

Other, please specify: (6)

End of Block: Education and Work

Start of Block: Future Plans

Q13 Why are you learning English? (Please choose as many answers)

I want to improve my speaking and listening (1)

I want to improve my reading and writing (2)

I want to study more in the future (3)

I want to improve my study skills (4)

I want to help my family and/or children (5)

I want to be more independent (6)

I want to help my community (7)

I need English for my health and well-being (8)

Other, please specify (9)

Q19 What are your plans for employment and studies in the future? What would you like to do after this course?

End of Block: Future Plans

Start of Block: Skills

Q14 Do you find the actions below easy or difficult? Please mark each of them.

	No problem (1)	Sometimes I need help (2)	I have a problem with this (3)	I don't know what this is (4)
Using a smartphone (1)				
Sending an email (2)				
Using Microsoft Teams (3)				
Using Outlook too see my college emails (4)				

Q15 Do you find the actions below easy or difficult? Please mark each of them.

	No problem (1)	Sometimes I need help (2)	I have a problem with this (3)	I don't know what this is (4)
Reading gas/electricity/water bills (1)				
Reading letters/emails from my children's school (2)				
Filling in forms for the council/job centre (3)				

Q7 I can talk to my GP (doctor) in English:

Yes (1)

No (2)

A little bit (3)

Q8 I can talk to people and ask for things in shops in English:

Yes (1)

No (2)

A little bit (3)

Q9 I can listen and understand people on the phone in English:

Yes (1)

No (2)

A little bit (3)

Q16 What kind of activities do you like doing in class? Tick all the things you like doing:

Talking to other students (1)

Learning about grammar (2)

Learning to use new words (3)

Doing games and quizzes (4)

Writing letters, emails and stories (5)

Learning about British Culture (6)

Reading stories and answering questions (7)

Learning about interesting facts, people, places and things (8)

Something else, please specify: (9)

End of Block: Skills

Start of Block: RARPAP/ILP Awareness

Q17 Do you know what these words mean? Please don't use a translator!

Please mark each of them.

	I understand (1)	I don't understand (2)	I am not sure (3)
Assessment (1)			
ILP (2)			
Individual Learning Plan (3)			
RARPAP (4)			
Targets (5)			
Tutorial (6)			

End of Block: RARPAP/ILP Awareness

Start of Block: End of course

Q20 What have you learnt from this course? How has your English improved at the end of this course? Please tell me:

Q21 What did you like about your class. Please tell me:

Q22 Was there anything difficult in your class? Please tell me:

End of Block: End of course

Appendix Six: Participant Information Sheet (for staff)

For further information about how Lancaster University processes personal data for research purposes and your data rights, please visit our webpage: www.lancaster.ac.uk/research/data-protection

Dear Participant,

I am a PhD researcher at Lancaster University in the Dept. of Educational Research. I would like to invite you to take part in a research project titled '**Redefining Student Success in ESOL: Individual Learning Plans as a Catalyst for Holistic Growth and Social Justice**'.

Please take time to read the following information carefully before you decide whether or not you wish to take part.

What is the study about?

This research focuses on the external aims of SMART-target driven Individual Learning Plans (ILPs) and the social justice aspects in the English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) and literacy area of adult education. It aims to explore the learners' own awareness and experiences of recognising and recording progress, achievement and progression (RARPAP) of their learning through the use of ILPs through a qualitative study imploring a mixed-method data collection approach. It is intended that through the use of semi-structured interviews, student surveys as well as document analysis, these learners will be given a voice which amplifies their experience of how the ILP facilitates their RARPAP in developing both their academic and wider social skills needed for employability and civic life in the United Kingdom considering the issue of these learners often being at the centre of heavy political debate regarding immigration, integration and unemployment.

Why have I been invited?

I have approached you because you either have been involved or are currently involved in the RARPAP ILP administering process at the college. I would like to listen to your training and/or teaching experiences in ILP use and possible opinions you have on its use in adult education. You may find these conversations genuinely interesting and helpful as an educator.

What will I be asked to do if I take part?

If you decide to take part, you will participate in an hour-long semi-structured interview, which will take place using a web-conferencing tool (Zoom) or in person at your convenient time.

What are the possible benefits from taking part?

Taking part in this study will allow you to reflect on and share your previous and present training experiences. This reflection can be useful to improve the quality of future training, teaching and learning experiences for both staff and students. You can also discuss how to increase effectiveness of RARPAP and ILP use by identifying different factors leading to the (un-)successful external aims.

Do I have to take part?

No. It's completely up to you to decide whether or not you take part. Your participation is voluntary. If you decide not to take part in this study, this is absolutely fine.

What if I change my mind?

If you change your mind, you are free to withdraw at any time before and during your interview. You can also withdraw within 2 weeks after your interview, without giving any reason. If you want to withdraw, please let me know, and we will extract any data you contributed to the study and destroy them.

What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?

It is unlikely that there will be any major disadvantages to taking part.

Will my data be identifiable?

After the interviews, only my supervisor and I will have access to the data. We will keep all personal information about you (e.g., your name and other information about you that can identify you) confidential. We will only use anonymised data in our publications, so that you cannot be identified. All draft publications that include your data will be shared with you before the publication for the purpose of member-checking. If you have any concerns about how your voices and ideas are presented in those drafts, you may ask for modification and/or removal.

How will we use the information you have shared with us and what will happen to the results of the research study?

I will use it only for research purposes. This will include submission in my doctoral thesis and potential publications in academic journals. We may also present the results of this study at academic conferences.

How will my data be stored?

Audio recorded data will be removed from the recording device on the day of recording and stored, in an encrypted form, on password-protected and encrypted laptops and on the University network. Only the project team members will have access to the dataset. No hard copies will be used in this project since data will be managed digitally. In accordance with University guidelines, we will keep the data securely stored for a minimum of ten years.

What if I have a question or concern?

If you have any queries or if you are unhappy with anything that happens concerning your participation in the study, please feel free to contact me:

Nafisa Baba-Ahmed (n.baba-ahmed@lancaster.ac.uk)

If you have any concerns or complaints that you wish to discuss with a person who is not directly involved in the research, you can also contact: Paul Ashwin (paul.ashwin@lancaster.ac.uk; +44 (0)1524 594443; County South, Lancaster University, Lancaster, LA1 4YL, UK)

This study has been reviewed and approved by the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences and Lancaster Management School's Research Ethics Committee.

Thank you for considering your participation in this project.

Appendix Seven: Consent Form (for staff)

Project Title: Redefining Student Success in ESOL: Individual Learning Plans as a Catalyst for Holistic Growth and Social Justice

Name of PhD Researcher: Nafisa Baba-Ahmed

Email: n.baba-ahmed@lancaster.ac.uk

Please tick each box

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet for the above study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily.	☐
2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time during my participation in this study and within two weeks after I took part in the interview, without giving any reason.	☐
3. I understand that any information given by me may be used in future reports, academic articles, publications or presentations by the researcher/s, but my personal information will not be included and all reasonable steps will be taken to protect the anonymity of the participants involved in this project.	☐
4. I understand that my name/my organisation's name will not appear in any reports, articles or presentations without my consent.	☐
5. I understand that any interviews will be audio-recorded and transcribed and that data will be protected on encrypted devices and kept secure.	☐
6. I understand that data will be kept according to University guidelines for a minimum of 10 years after the end of the study.	☐
7. I agree to take part in the above study.	☐

Name of Participant

Date

Signature

I confirm that the participant was given an opportunity to ask questions about the study, and all the questions asked by the participant have been answered correctly and to the best of my ability. I confirm that the individual has not been coerced into giving consent, and the consent has been given freely and voluntarily.

Signature of Researcher /person taking the consent _____

Date _____ **Day/month/year**

Appendix Eight: Participant Information Sheet (for learners)

For further information about how Lancaster University processes personal data for research purposes and your data rights, please visit our webpage: www.lancaster.ac.uk/research/data-protection

Dear Participant,

I am a PhD researcher at Lancaster University in the Dept. of Educational Research. I would like to invite you to take part in a research project titled '**Redefining Student Success in ESOL: Individual Learning Plans as a Catalyst for Holistic Growth and Social Justice**'.

Please take time to read the following information carefully before you decide whether or not you wish to take part.

What is the study about?

This research focuses on the external aims of SMART-target driven Individual Learning Plans (ILPs) and the social justice aspects in the English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) and literacy area of adult education. It aims to explore the learners' own awareness and experiences of recognising and recording progress, achievement and progression (RARPAP) of their learning through the use of ILPs through a qualitative study exploring a mixed-method data collection approach. It is intended that through the use of semi-structured interviews, student surveys as well as document analysis, these learners will be given a voice which amplifies their experience of how the ILP facilitates their RARPAP in developing both their academic and wider social skills needed for employability and civic life in the United Kingdom considering the issue of these learners often being at the centre of heavy political debate regarding immigration, integration and unemployment.

Why have I been invited?

I have approached you because you either have studied or are currently enrolled on a RARPAP ESOL course at this college. I would like to listen to your learning experiences particularly in ILP use and possible opinions you have on its use in adult education. You may find these conversations genuinely interesting as you will be able to contribute to student voice.

What will I be asked to do if I take part?

If you decide to take part, you will participate in an hour-long semi-structured interview, which will take place using a web-conferencing tool (Zoom) or in person at your convenient time.

What are the possible benefits from taking part?

Taking part in this study will allow you to reflect on and share your previous and present learning experiences. This reflection can be useful to improve the quality of future training, teaching and learning experiences for both staff and students. You can also discuss how the benefits or challenges of RARPAP and ILP use by identifying different factors leading to the (un-)successful completion of your course.

Do I have to take part?

No. It's completely up to you to decide whether or not you take part. Your participation is voluntary. If you decide not to take part in this study, this is absolutely fine.

What if I change my mind?

If you change your mind, you are free to withdraw at any time before and during your interview. You can also withdraw within 2 weeks after your interview, without giving any reason. If you want to withdraw, please let me know, and we will extract any data you contributed to the study and destroy them.

What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?

It is unlikely that there will be any major disadvantages to taking part.

Will my data be identifiable?

After the interviews, only my supervisor and I will have access to the data. We will keep all personal information about you (e.g., your name and other information about you that can identify you) confidential. We will only use anonymised data in our publications, so that you cannot be identified. All draft publications that include your data will be shared with you before the publication for the purpose of member-checking. If you have any concerns about how your voices and ideas are presented in those drafts, you may ask for modification and/or removal.

How will we use the information you have shared with us and what will happen to the results of the research study?

I will use it only for research purposes. This will include submission in my doctoral thesis and potential publications in academic journals. We may also present the results of this study at academic conferences.

How will my data be stored?

Audio recorded data will be removed from the recording device on the day of recording and stored, in an encrypted form, on password-protected and encrypted laptops and on the University network. Only the project team members will have access to the dataset. No hard copies will be used in this project since data will be managed digitally. In accordance with University guidelines, we will keep the data securely stored for a minimum of ten years.

What if I have a question or concern?

If you have any queries or if you are unhappy with anything that happens concerning your participation in the study, please feel free to contact me:

Nafisa Baba-Ahmed (n.baba-ahmed@lancaster.ac.uk)

If you have any concerns or complaints that you wish to discuss with a person who is not directly involved in the research, you can also contact: Paul Ashwin (paul.ashwin@lancaster.ac.uk; +44 (0)1524 594443; County South, Lancaster University, Lancaster, LA1 4YL, UK)

This study has been reviewed and approved by the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences and Lancaster Management School's Research Ethics Committee.

Thank you for considering your participation in this project.

Appendix Nine: Consent Form (for learners)

Project Title: **Redefining Student Success in ESOL: Individual Learning Plans as a Catalyst for Holistic Growth and Social Justice**

Name of PhD Researcher: Nafisa Baba-Ahmed

Email: n.baba-ahmed@lancaster.ac.uk

Please tick each box

8. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet for the above study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily.	☐
9. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time during my participation in this study and within two weeks after I took part in the first interview, without giving any reason.	☐
10. I understand that any information given by me may be used in future reports, academic articles, publications or presentations by the researcher/s, but my personal information will not be included and all reasonable steps will be taken to protect the anonymity of the participants involved in this project.	☐
11. I understand that my name/my organisation's name will not appear in any reports, articles or presentations without my consent.	☐
12. I understand that any interviews will be audio-recorded and transcribed and that data will be protected on encrypted devices and kept secure.	☐
13. I understand that data will be kept according to University guidelines for a minimum of 10 years after the end of the study.	☐
14. I agree to take part in the above study.	☐

Name of Participant

Date

Signature

I confirm that the participant was given an opportunity to ask questions about the study, and all the questions asked by the participant have been answered correctly and to the best of my ability. I confirm that the individual has not been coerced into giving consent, and the consent has been given freely and voluntarily.

Signature of Researcher /person taking the consent_____

Date _____ **Day/month/year**

An Example of Semi-Structured Interview Questions/Prompts (for learners)
The specific questions below may be amended and finalised, this is just an example.

1. How and why did you enrol on the ESOL programme?
2. How and where did you learn about the ESOL course at the college?
3. What did you imagine and expect to learn from this course?
4. Why do you want to improve your English?
5. Did you know which skills you would learn?
6. Do you know how you will learn these skills?
7. Do you know how your teacher will check your learning?
8. What do you know about Individual Learning Plans?
9. What do you know about RARPAP/ILP/targets/tutorials?
10. How did you find the course at the beginning of the programme, anything particular to remember?
11. How did you find the course in the middle of the programme, anything particular to remember?
12. How did you find the course at the end of the programme, anything particular to remember?
13. What are the biggest difficulties for you on this course?
14. What are the biggest benefits (positive aspects of the training) you have experienced on this course?
15. How did your teacher help you?
16. How do you know you have achieved what you wanted?
17. If you have successfully completed the course, what helped make you successful?
18. If you have dropped out of the programme, what made it difficult for you?
19. Please tell me some stories about your learning experiences?

An Example of Interview Questions/Prompts (for staff: education, training managers, moderators and tutors)

The specific questions below may be amended and finalised, this is just an example.

1. What is your role within the organisation?
2. What is your role in the RARPAP and ILP process in pre-entry ESOL teaching and learning?
3. How and why do learners enrol on pre-entry ESOL programmes?
4. How and where do they learn about the ESOL programmes offered by the college?
5. Do you think your trainees have a good understanding and expectations of the ESOL course before the programme?
6. Do you think your trainees are clearly aware of the skills they will acquire on the course?
7. What awareness do you think learners have of assessments, both summative and formative?
8. How do you make it clear what assessment is and how they will be assessed?
9. How did you find your learners' awareness of RARPAP and ILPs at the beginning of the programme, anything particular to remember?
10. How did you find your learners awareness of RARPAP and ILPs at the middle of the programme, anything particular to remember?
11. How did you find your learners awareness of RARPAP and ILPs at the end of the programme, anything particular to remember?
12. What are the biggest challenges your learners (and you) have experienced in RARPAP and ILP use during the course?
13. What are the biggest benefits learners (and you) have experienced in RARPAP and ILP use during the course?

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14. If your learners have completed and achieved, what are the main factors contributing to the success?
 15. If your learners have dropped out of the programme, what are the main factors contributing to this?
 16. Could you please share a couple of stories or anecdotes related to your teaching experiences regarding the RARPAP process and ILP use?

Appendix Ten: Confidentiality Agreement for the Interpretation of Qualitative Data

Title of Study:	Redefining Student Success in ESOL: Individual Learning Plans as a Catalyst for Holistic Growth and Social Justice
Study PI:	Nafisa Baba-Ahmed (PhD researcher)

In accordance with the Research Ethics Committee at Lancaster University (UREC), all participants in the above-named study are anonymised. Therefore, any personal information or any of the data generated or secured through interpretation will not be disclosed to any third party.

By signing this document, you are agreeing:

- not to pass on, divulge or discuss the contents of the audio material provided to you for interpretation to any third parties
- to ensure that material provided for interpretation is held securely and can only be accessed via password on your local PC
- to destroy any audio and electronic files if held by you and relevant to the above study immediately after interpretation have been provided to the research team, or to return said audio files.
- to assist the University where a research participant has invoked one of their rights under data protection legislation
- to report any loss, unscheduled deletion, or unauthorised disclosure of the audio material to any third parties, to the University immediately
- only act on the written instructions of the University/researcher
- to, upon reasonable request, allow the researcher, or other University representative, to inspect the location and devices where the audio material is stored to ensure compliance with this agreement
- to inform the University's Data Protection Officer if you believe you believe you have been asked to do something with the audio material which contravenes applicable data protection legislation
- to not employ any other person to carry out the work on your behalf.

Your name (block capitals) _____

Address at which interpretation will take place

Your signature

Date

Appendix Eleven: Detailed Breakdown of Additional Capabilities and Their Corresponding Skill Development

Example of capability	Evidence of academic skill development	Evidence of soft skill development
Making appointment over the telephone to see a doctor	Ability to use target language: vocabulary for health/making a phone call (or other familiar topic)	- Communication skills for daily life - Telephony skills - Conversation practice
Going to the gym and making small talk with people outside community	Ability to use target language: vocabulary for health/wellbeing, functional grammar for asking and answering questions	- Communication skills for daily life - Greeting strangers - Social skills for integration and well-being - Conversation practice
Being able to shop online and in famous shops	- Ability to read and practice reading subskills: skimming/scanning product description/reviews/prices - Developing practical literacy	- Communication skills for daily life - Social skills for integration and well-being - Navigating public spaces - Asking questions - Making purchases confidently

Helping children with homework	• Ability to read and practice reading subskills: reading for detailed understanding of complex information • Developing practical literacy	• Communication skills for daily life • Storytelling • Teaching and mentoring skills ○ Developing patience ○ Developing empathy
Getting a promotion at work	• Ability to use target language: vocabulary for jobs/work/business (or other familiar topic) • Developing practical literacy	• Communication skills for daily life and work ○ Problem-solving skills ○ Developing confidence • Social skills for integration and well-being
Being able to order favourite latte drink in coffee shop	• Ability to use target language: vocabulary for food/shopping, grammar for asking and answering questions/placing an order • Ability to read and practice reading subskills: skimming/scanning product description/ingredients/prices/reviews	• Communication skills for daily life • Social skills for integration and well-being ○ Navigating public spaces ○ Ask questions ○ Make purchases confidently
Make a shopping list being when going to the grocery store	• Ability to use target language: vocabulary for food/shopping for writing • Developing practical literacy: writing	• Organisation skills for personal development • Writing skills for social situations

Being able to give directions when asked by strangers in the street	• Ability to use target language: vocabulary for transport/directions for speaking, functional grammar for asking and answering questions	• Communication skills for daily life • Social skills for integration and well-being ○ Navigating public spaces ○ Ask/answer questions with confidence • Developing empathy
Being able to get a cup of coffee before class	• Ability to use target language: vocabulary for food/shopping, grammar for asking and answering questions/placing an order • Ability to read and practice reading subskills: skimming/scanning product description/ingredients/prices/reviews	• Communication skills for daily life ○ Make purchases confidently • Social skills for integration and well-being ○ Ask questions ○ Developing independence ○ Exercising personal choice
