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## About the Organization

LESLLA aims to support adults who are learning to read and write for the first time in their lives in a new language. We promote, on a worldwide, multidisciplinary basis, the sharing of research findings, effective pedagogical practices, and information on policy.

## LESLLA Symposium Proceedings

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# **What is happening to specialist provision for LESLLA learners in the UK and why does this matter?**

Ann Cowie

At a time of large reductions in ESOL provision across England as a result of reduced funding, the learning needs of LESLLA learners seem to be getting largely overlooked. England lacks a national strategy for ESOL and this seems to have contributed to a rather piecemeal approach to provision, with providers concentrating on students who achieve their outcomes and therefore bring in funding, rather than on the needs of local learners. This small-scale study investigates the current state of provision in a number of institutions, using questionnaires to providers and interviews with teachers, to determine how this group of learners are being provided for in the climate of austerity. It then makes the case for specialist provision for LESLLA learners.

**Keywords:** LESLLA learners, ESOL literacy provision, Pre-entry learners.

## **1. Introduction**

When I started teaching ESOL literacy to groups of women mainly from the Horn of Africa, I assumed the argument for specialist ESOL classes for LESLLA learners centred on the learners' need to develop the initial sub-skills of reading and writing already possessed by their literate peers, and this was reinforced when I attended specialist training on working with this group of learners. The course was entitled "Teaching Basic Literacy to ESOL Learners" and as the title suggested, it focussed on developing learners' reading and writing skills. There was little mention of strategies for teaching ESOL to learners with low literacy. Reflecting on my practice it was clear that it was necessary to largely avoid using the written word for explanations, task instructions, and prompts.

As I spent longer with the group, I realised that there was also something else going on as learners seemed to have difficulty with some beginner level grammar features as they were, for example, generally unable to hear or repeat the 3<sup>rd</sup> person 's'. I also found that

learners were confused by scenarios that involved fictitious characters as found in typical course books, but responded much better to stories about real people.

It was when I took a module in second language acquisition as part of my MA that I became aware of the work on noticing by Richard Schmidt (1983) and later work by Bigelow and Tarone (2004), Tarone, Hansen and Bigelow (2013) and others on the effects of not being literate in any language on your ability to process grammatical phonemes. This prompted me to undertake my own research; a case study of a non-literate learner. Using an interview, analysis of some free conversation and an elicited imitation task in which the learner was asked to repeat sentences including regular and irregular past tense verbs, question words with *do/does/did*, and plural nouns, it became clear that he was unable to perceive or to reproduce the grammatical morphemes, but was able to utilise other indicators of time and number. This reflected the findings of other work done with non-literate learners of English. My participant also reported being more focussed on communication of meaning rather than in accuracy, and saw learning a language as a process of acquiring words to express meaning. Like Schmidt's subject Wes (1983), my participant, whom I shall refer to by the pseudonym Thierry, possessed strong speaking skills and saw himself as a good communicator. The work of Olson (1996) seemed to explain the difficulties learners had with abstract concepts. This led me to reflect on the fact that this rather different approach to language learning, along with the processing challenges arising from lack of literacy, and possibly stronger speaking skills as a result of growing up in a largely oral culture, provided additional reasons for LESLLA learners to be taught in specialised classes that would take account of their difficulties and build on their strengths.

From 2006 onwards, "saving ESOL" had become almost an annual event in the ESOL teaching community in England, as funding cuts further threatened provision that never had been sufficient to cater to all who wanted it. Hearing on the grapevine that specialist provision for LESLLA learners was being particularly hit by funding cuts, I was prompted to conduct a study to determine whether this was the case. I produced a survey which was distributed via an online discussion forum of ESOL practitioners, and also interviewed 6

teachers working in a variety of contexts in London. They were asked for details of provision for LESLLA learners in their institution, and how they felt that LESLLA learners were faring both in specialist provision and in “mainstream” ESOL classes.

## **2. Policy and funding background**

Since a high point of state funding for ESOL in England in 2006 when half a million students attended classes, funding for ESOL provision has steadily declined with a significant impact on learner numbers (NATECLA 2016). Between 2010 and 2016 the ESOL budget was halved from £203m in 2009/10 to £90m in 2016 by which time learner numbers had fallen to 90,000 (Marsden 2018). Full funding for ESOL learners (other than for those actively seeking work) ended in 2006, resulting in the introduction of fees for many learners. Research conducted by the college teachers’ union found significant numbers of learners no longer able to afford classes, identifying women on low incomes experiencing fees as a significant barrier to accessing classes (UCU 2007). At the same time, cuts to college budgets led to closure of support services such as college nurseries, which again severely impacted women with young children (Wonder Foundation 2016). A further consequence of reduced funding for ESOL seems to be a reduction in the variety of courses providers were able to offer. The UCU report quoted providers stating that more specialised courses such as ‘ESOL literacy’ were closed in favour of generic ESOL courses for learners at higher levels. Therefore, it appears that cuts in funding have affected some groups of learners more than others.

Unlike Scotland and Wales, England lacks any national strategy for ESOL. According to a DEMOS report this has resulted in “a poor understanding of the scale of need and of the quality of provision, as well as a dearth of information for potential learners” (Paget and Stevenson 2017: 11). The report also describes ESOL policy as suffering from “fragmentation, a lack of clarity about the aims and intended outcomes of learning, disagreement over the analysis and description of English language levels and abilities, and a general tendency to take a short-term view” (Paget and Stevenson 2017: 11).

With the forthcoming devolution of funding for adult education to mayoral authorities in August 2019, this lack of consistency can only get worse. One consequence of this absence of a national policy is the lack of agreement concerning the name of provision for LESLLA learners. The national curriculum uses the term “pre-entry”, previously used to refer to learners with special educational needs, to describe learners whose skills are below entry 1. However, it seems that while some providers use “pre-entry” to describe learners with low literacy, little or no formal education but whose speaking skills may be elementary or higher, others use this term to refer to learners who are literate in their L1 but are complete beginners in English, which is typical of some newly arrived migrant workers from the EU. As will be discussed later, these groups have very different needs. Other terms such as “ESOL beginners” or “Emerging Entry 1” are equally ambiguous (Learning and Work Institute 2016). “ESOL Literacy” or “Basic Literacy for ESOL” may be clearer but not used consistently by providers.

Organisations such as Action for ESOL and NATECLA (National Association for Teaching English and other Community Languages to Adults) have called for a national strategy incorporating a statutory entitlement to ESOL classes which it is felt would safeguard quality provision that would meet the needs of a diverse group of learners. The ESOL Manifesto emphasises the need to recognise that ESOL learners are a diverse group and calls for a range of provision including “beginner literacy” (Action for ESOL 2012). The NATECLA document “Towards an ESOL Strategy for England” calls for recognition that skills levels of adult migrants vary enormously and that a variety of programmes is needed. It mentions teaching literacy to new readers and writers as being “particularly challenging” (2016: 5). Elsewhere it mentions the need for “different kinds of ESOL, including delivery that is not based on achieving qualifications” (2016: 10). It does not call specifically however for discrete provision for LESLLA learners.

The Association of Colleges in its report “ESOL Qualifications and funding in 2014: issues for consideration”, is very clear that in provision of ESOL there is considerable diversity of needs and “One size does not fit all”. It states that both the funding system and the qualification framework are based on the concept of an “average

ESOL learner”, who probably does not exist (2013: 9). It makes the point that the amount to be learned between one level of the ESOL curriculum and the next is considerably larger than for example its literacy counterpart. An NRDC report (2007) found that learners with less experience of schooling took longer to make the same progress to the next level. This group of learners took time to adapt to learning in a formal setting, and needed time to develop study skills and also their confidence as learners. Providers are encouraged to use nationally accredited qualifications for learners and as the funding depends on learner outcomes (i.e. achieving qualifications), they need to pay close attention to success rates. The AOC report states that “for learners at the lowest level of skills, particularly those with little or no educational background, there is a need to make it possible to mark achievement in a longer, slower process, through smaller steps in qualifications or by finding ways to fund a ‘slow track’” (2013: 6). Unfortunately, from 2013 qualifications have been funded at a fixed rate regardless of hours needed for delivery, which means that providers are reluctant to take on learners who will take longer to achieve. There is a possibility of using non-regulated provision for limited groups of learners including those assessed at Entry 1a (the lowest entry point) for a year or two until they are deemed ready to achieve a qualification. According to research quoted in the same report, it has been estimated that an average of 150-200 hours of study is required for a learner to progress one level of the UK ESOL curriculum (2013). For a 36-week year this would mean 4.5-5.5 hours of study per week for the “average learner”. As we have seen, students who have missed out on previous schooling would seem to need longer.

In addition to direct changes to provision, there are also indirect consequences of Government policy agendas. Teachers in the post 16 sector are experiencing worsening conditions of service as their employers are forced to make financial savings. New contracts have been introduced whereby teachers have a higher weekly teaching commitment and consequently fewer hours for lesson preparation and providing individual support for their learners. Cuts to support services within colleges and outside, such as welfare and careers advice, as well as to administrative support, have teachers feeling obliged to take on some of these roles with regard to their students.

The strong focus on pass rates and general accountability has led to an increase in recordkeeping which again prevents teachers from focussing on their lesson preparation. The teacher's union recently reported 74% of teachers feeling stressed by excessive paperwork and "change fatigue" (UCU 2018).

Finally, in the UK, as in many other places in the world currently, and particularly since the Brexit referendum, there has been a rise in right wing rhetoric that has attempted to blame immigrants for the painful consequences of the austerity agenda. Refugees and asylum seekers are particularly targeted, as is the Muslim community. David Cameron's Government in 2016 blamed low educated Muslim women for the increase in radicalisation, suggesting that they were reluctant to learn English or to integrate (Mason and Sherwood, 2016). According to Home Office statistics, there was a sharp spike in race-hate crime at the time of the EU referendum (Dearden 2017). The Coalition and Conservative Governments, via two immigration acts in 2014 and 2016, have deliberately created a "hostile environment" aimed at making life as unpleasant as possible for immigrants by denying them to employment, benefits, housing, healthcare, education, banking and other basic services in the hope that they would give up and leave, and in order to deter further arrivals (Liberty 2018). Asylum seekers from outside the EU are frequently given the status "no recourse to public funds" as their application progresses, leaving them potentially destitute and unable to access state-funded ESOL classes. This is the reality of daily life for many current and potential LESLLA learners.

### **3. The study**

This small scale mixed-methods research study took place in May-June 2018. Data was collected via semi-structured interviews with six teachers working in further and adult education in London and from an on-line questionnaire on the ESOL Research Forum. Invitations to participate in the study were sent out to 43 ESOL teachers teaching ESOL in the sector and six responded. The teachers were all known to the researcher, which is of course a source of potential bias as perhaps the volunteers saw the process as an opportunity to complain about

the current state of affairs. This should not be seen to be a problem as long as the data collected is viewed as a snapshot into how some teachers think and work, rather than an attempt to generalise (Dornyei 2007).

Semi-structured interviews were conducted in the workplace and were recorded and then transcribed. Common themes were identified in the first reading and these were then used as the basis for structuring the results. In addition a couple of vignettes emerged. The on-line survey, designed on Survey Monkey, consisted of 10 questions relating to “ESOL provision for learners with little or no literacy“. It was felt that this terminology was more widely understood amongst teachers than “LESLLA learner”. Invitations to respond were sent out via the ESOL Research Forum. Responses were received from 26 ESOL teachers and organisers, working across England, including 13 from Further Education colleges, nine from adult education centres and two community organisations. The fact that the 26 respondents from a population of over 1,000 volunteered to complete the survey rather than being selected at random, again means that the results cannot be seen as representative.

### 3.1. Results from the surveys

The first question asked respondents whether their institution had discrete provision for “ESOL learners who have low levels of literacy”, and if so, at how many levels. Of 26 institutions, nine had no specialist provision for LESLLA learners, and a further 10 had only one level. Three institutions provided two levels and four provided three or more levels. It is not clear whether learners in institutions where there was only one level were allowed to repeat the year. When asked what happened to LESLLA learners when there was not a discrete class for them, 10 institutions of the 26 reported putting them in mainstream ESOL classes and a further three turned them away. The next question asked about the number of taught hours per week provided for LESLLA learners. The results showed that nine providers had no specialist provision; seven provided 1-3 hours per week; six provided 3-6 hours per week; two provided 6-9 hours per week; and one provided more than nine hours per week.



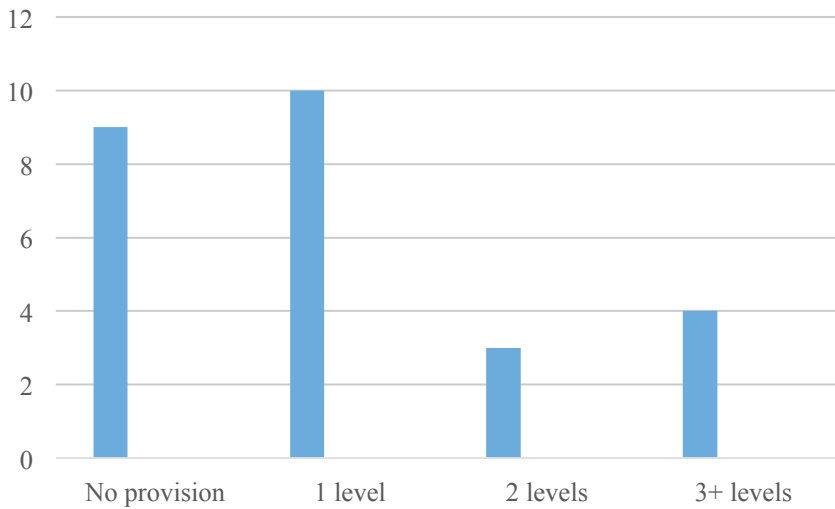


Figure 1. Number of levels of specialist provision for LESLLA learners. Total = 26.

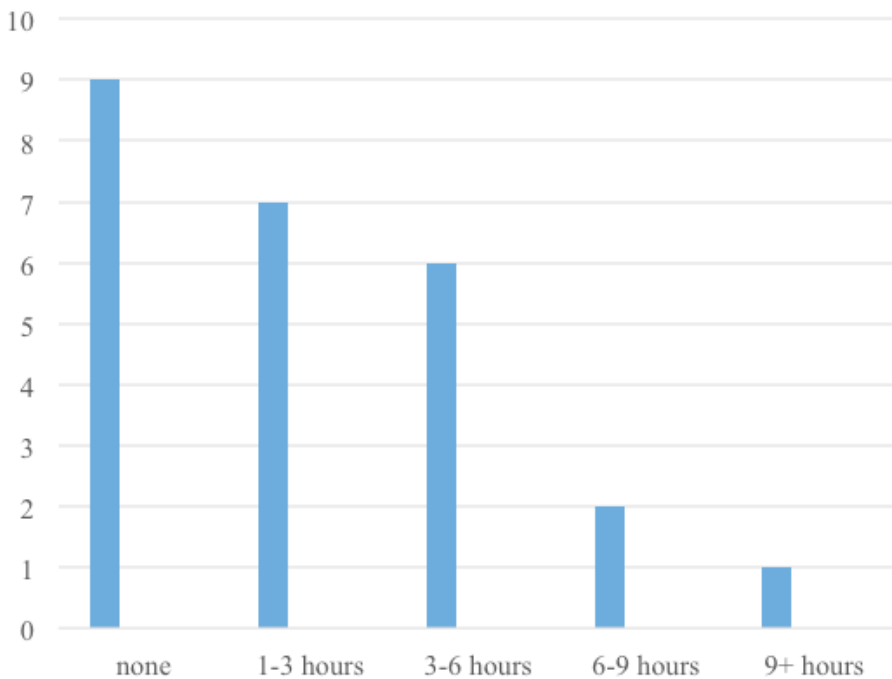


Figure 2: Hours per week of classes provided for LESLLA learners.

Respondents were then asked about the accreditation used, if any, for LESLLA learners. While eight institutions used the Recognising and Recording of Progress and Achievement (RARPA) system, meaning that learners were accredited for individual targets set, and one used a college certificate which again could presumably be tailored to individual needs, the rest relied on formal exams such as those designed for ESOL by exam boards including ESB, Ascentis and Functional Skills.

The next question was problematic as it asked whether teachers at the institution had received any specialist training for working with LESLLA learners but it became clear that several respondents did not have access to information regarding staff training. Two respondents reported that teachers at their institution had received specialist training for working with LESLLA learners of more than two days, and a further four stated that teachers had received half to a full day of specialist training. Due to the ambiguous question, it was not clear from the responses how many teachers employed at the institution were working with LESLLA learners, and of these how many had received any specialist training.

Question nine asked whether the overall provision for LESLLA learners at the institution had grown, shrunk or remained the same over the previous five years. In four cases the provision had grown, whereas in four it had shrunk in terms of hours per week and in a further three it had shrunk in terms of the number of levels offered. In ten institutions the level of provision remained the same. One respondent mentioned a rapid increase in the number of classes provided for students sent by the Job Centre as a condition of retaining their benefits.

Finally, respondents were asked for any comments they wished to make. The comments mostly related to the desire to provide more for this group of learners, and regret that funding cuts were making this impossible:

The part time ESOL was originally ACL provision and ESOL literacy classes were provided from Pre-Entry to Level 1, however when the provision moved to FE, ESOL literacy was no longer delivered. This was due to a lack of understanding of the needs of these learners by new managers of the provision. I am still highlighting the need for this.

We receive many referrals of learners the local FE college won't teach because of low literacy. We are a charity relying on volunteer teachers. Some have great experience and expertise but we need professional paid teachers teaching ESOL pre-entry classes too. We need more classes for beginner reader/writers - it should not fall on volunteers.

The 16-18 provision doesn't have any literacy classes, students are placed in mainstream without LSA or 1:1 support. When asked for literacy support for younger students, management says that there isn't funding for it as it is an ESOL/Educational issue and not a learning difficulty or disability. The adult provision has literacy classes at E1 & 2, 10hrs/week.

Provision for basic - pre-entry - ESOL has shrunk. Students with no literacy skills are placed in one session a week S&L classes and the tutor is implicitly expected to teach them to read and write so that they can do the reading and writing exam modules the following year. This is impossible. Tutors may end up doing one to one literacy sessions - unpaid, of course.

### 3.2. Results from the interviews

Respondents demonstrated a similar dissatisfaction with the levels of provision offered by their institution but in addition gave a clearer picture of the challenges faced by teachers trying to accommodate LESLLA learners. This was reported to be a challenge both in discrete classes and also in mainstream classes. As regards course hours it was generally felt that there was not enough time to get through the curriculum: "It's a very steep hill to make up lost education. It takes a very long time. They're [LESLLA learners] not getting it". Those working with LESLLA learners in mainstream ESOL classes found that the fast pace necessitated by reduced course hours made it particularly difficult for LESLLA learners to keep up: "The reduced hours is starting to leave a lot of students out who can't attain these things. Particularly literacy students who need a lot more time. They are not offered enough classes to bring them up enough to do the exams". In the past this had not been such an issue: "When I started students got 15 hours a week of classes. Literacy students were able to integrate more easily". There was some confusion as to the target groups for classes named "pre-entry" or "complete beginners" with a resulting mix of literate newly arrived beginners and LESLLA

learners who may have been in the country for a number of years and whose learning needs were quite different.

Most of the respondents felt that their lessons were overly focussed on getting students to pass their exams: “There’s a lot of pressure to prepare students for inappropriate exams. The exam and attendance become more important than the students’ learning”. Teachers felt there was pressure from managers to maximise success rates and therefore funding for the following year. League tables of individual teachers’ success rates were published in some colleges (with the threat that at some point this might be linked to their pay) and so teachers who were otherwise sympathetic to the needs of LESLLA learners, reluctantly complied with the policy of either not recruiting students who did not appear to be a safe bet for passing their exams, or “managing them out” of the class at an early stage. One teacher reported that his college managers insisted “students have to be ‘exam-ready’ when you interview them, otherwise you don’t take them on the course. It’s so wrong”. As stated earlier, LESLLA learners are seen to need more time to make progress through the curriculum as they are having to learn basic study skills and literacy in addition to the language. The teachers felt they were also less likely to pass exams that often-required good levels of literacy and world knowledge that they might be unfamiliar with having never been to school. “Now that our standard ESOL classes are reduced to four hours per week, it is much harder for learners who have come from a low or no literacy background to pass the exams they need to progress”. They were therefore particularly affected by the ‘exam-ready’ policy, which meant that they were perhaps denied access to classes or that they were asked to leave because of their slow progress.

Three examples provide an insight into the extent to which the focus on exams creates a negative washback effect on other aspects of the curriculum: “With only six hours a week I’m only really following the course book grammar and exam preparation”. This curriculum content is unlikely to suit many students but would be particularly inappropriate for those with weak literacy skills. Another teacher was prevented from taking her LESLLA learners to an organised workshop that may well have been their first opportunity to visit a museum: “I wanted to take my students to the British Museum. It was

doing ESOL workshops. But my boss said, ‘No, you can’t. They have to do exam practice. They don’t need to see the Rodin sculptures’”. A third teacher explained her strategy for preparing students for a writing exam when time was short:

With the writing exam, they get ticks for the criteria to pass, so it doesn’t matter if it’s rubbish what they’ve written, as long as they’ve used 2 adjectives they get a tick for that, as long as they’ve written 1 sentence with a capital letter and full stop they get a tick for that, it could be gibberish what they’ve written, but as long as they get the ticks, they pass [...]. So, this year, we’re just working on the criteria to pass. We’re doing 2 weeks on punctuation, 2 weeks on planning, because planning is another criteria. It’s boring stuff and difficult to make interesting.

LESLLA learners clearly need to work on development of their writing skills, but this very targeted approach, born out of necessity, assumes some prior writing skills and is unlikely to help learners develop their basic skills. Research suggests that LESLLA learners seem to learn best when content is meaningful, relevant and contextualised, finding analytical tasks such as multiple choice or true/false questions that focus on features of language particularly challenging (Vinogradov and Bigelow 2010). This would make some exam preparation work unsuitable for these learners.

A consequence of reduced lesson preparation time appears to mean that instead of preparing their own resources to suit the needs of their learners, teachers tend to use course books or materials downloaded from the internet to a greater extent than before: “I used to knit my own lessons but now you can’t do it quick enough, so I use books”. And: “Now I mainly use course books. It is now very rare that I make something new because I don’t have time”. This again indirectly disadvantages the LESLLA learners. Most EFL course books were written for a very different demographic and the level of literacy assumed, as well as the world knowledge, and Eurocentric viewpoint found in them (Risager 2018) usually renders them unsuitable for use with LESLLA learners. Beginner level teachers reported the type face used in course books, and the spaces provided to write in, were too small for learners who were in the early stages of learning to write. One teacher spoke about the lack of published resources suitable for LESLLA learners and the amount of time she

needed to produce suitable resources for this specialist area of teaching. Two teachers of specialised ESOL literacy classes spoke about the fact that they liked to tailor their resources to the specific learners they have in each class, using for example their names, countries etc. as examples, but with less preparation time they are now rarely able to do so.

Only two of the teachers interviewed had received more than a half day's training in working with LESLLA learners. Both of these had taken a six-day course run by the now defunct Language and Literacy Unit, which they had found to be very useful. Another teacher had recently found a reduced version of the course available at a cost of £200 but her centre was not able to fund this due to budget constraints.

Finally, other areas of cutbacks that impacted disproportionately on LESLLA learners were mentioned, including the disappearance of on-site college nurseries. A large percentage of LESLLA students are women (due to the number of girls globally who miss out on education) and the closure of nurseries has created a barrier for many learners with young children. Also, the reduced funds for Additional Learning Support, that previously could be used to provide extra help in the classroom or outside for students with weak literacy, has meant less help in the classroom for over-stretched teachers and less support for weaker learners.

#### **4. Discussion**

From both sources of data, we get a picture of LESLLA learners being disproportionately disadvantaged by various changes to provision and practice that have arisen as a consequence of underfunding of adult education in general and ESOL in particular. It seems that cuts to provision have in some institutions meant the closure of specialist provision for LESLLA learners. The introduction of fees and the closure of nurseries has led to mothers on low incomes being unable to access classes. Reduced course hours in several institutions have led to an increased pace in lessons, and students who learn at a slower pace are getting left behind, especially when they find themselves in mainstream ESOL classes. Reduced course hours have also resulted,

in some cases, in teachers omitting skills work in favour of a streamlined curriculum focussed on grammar input and exam practice, which would be unlikely to provide LESLLA learners with the literacy and study skills they need. The heavy focus on exam success is a consequence of the funding rules and ultimately the marketization of the sector, and in some cases at least is leading to unfair course entry criteria whereby students who have had less previous education are denied access to classes because they are less likely to pass. This seems to be the ultimate consequence of planning and delivering a curriculum based on maximising funding rather than on student need. If a provider insists that students should be ‘exam-ready’ before they start then LESLLA learners are unlikely to be given the opportunity to develop their skills.

No doubt as a consequence of the approach to recruitment and curriculum planning described above, it seems fair to assume that LESLLA learners unable to access funded courses in FE or adult education centres are now increasingly being taught in voluntary sector provision where teachers may be unpaid and unqualified, as well as lacking in specialist training for working with LESLLA learners. While more informal provision, perhaps without the constraints of outcomes-led funding may suit some LESLLA learners in their initial contact with education, it is unlikely that deprofessionalisation of staffing for this group of learners can sustain their learning in the long term.

The data collected from both the interviews and the surveys paints a picture of teachers who are very committed to their learners but who are finding it increasingly difficult to provide the individualised support needed to give LESLLA learners what they need. They reported going far beyond their contracted hours to do their best to provide an inclusive experience for all their learners: “Teachers end up doing one-to-one literacy sessions – unpaid of course”. One teacher described how bending the rules to help students nearly cost him his job. He allowed a LESLLA learner (who had no hope of passing the exams but seemed to get a lot from the class) to sit in on classes without paying the fees, but the situation was exposed when she had a medical emergency in class and an ambulance had to be called for her.

Neither the respondents to the survey nor the teachers interviewed spoke much about good practice as regards teaching LESLLA learners. It is likely that this was due to the sampling method used and the fact that perhaps it attracted respondents who wanted an opportunity to complain about what they saw as the degradation of provision for LESLLA learners. However undoubtedly good practice still exists in the sector. At three institutions three levels or more of classes were available for LESLLA learners allowing for an extended period of time in specialised classes and the opportunity to progress through several levels. In eight institutions outcomes were measured by achievement of individual targets allowing for an approach centred on the student, her needs and motivations. Some teachers were not only fully qualified in ESOL theory and pedagogy but had also completed a specialist course in working with LESLLA learners. Where possible teachers either adapted published materials to better meet the needs and interests of their group, or they designed their own resources. And in all cases the teachers were firmly committed to doing the best they could for their learners, albeit in difficult circumstances.

## **5. Conclusion**

The arguments for specialist provision for LESLLA learners are compelling. The opportunity to learn the initial stages of reading and writing, as well as learning how to be a student generally, seems to require classes that are slower paced than the average ESOL lesson, and without doubt lessons that focus on the initial sub-skills required for literacy must be preferable to snatched moments of extra support within a mainstream ESOL class. LESLLA students also struggle to keep up with the oral skills work in mainstream ESOL classes as it is often the case that prompts and tasks for speaking and listening activities are presented in written form and there is an assumption that students will be able to read the texts, task instructions etc. In addition to this, from recent research it is clear that being a beginner in literacy also affects one's ability to process grammatical morphemes and therefore to assimilate some of the grammar input they will come across. Furthermore, there is also the view that LESLLA learners are



less able to deal with abstract concepts and respond better to lessons built on concrete real-world situations.

The respondents in this study report that in their institutions the effects of austerity cuts and marketization of provision are disproportionately affecting LESLLA learners in a number of ways that result in them losing access to quality provision. This is in effect denying a second chance of education to women who have already missed out on their first chance. It seems important that in the general defence of ESOL provision and in arguing for a national ESOL strategy, we must be making it clear that ESOL learners have a wide variety of needs and we need classes that are not one-size-fits-all. Within this, it is important to specifically cater for this group of learners who are facing multiple sources of disadvantage. They need specialised provision at several levels and of sufficient hours per week for them to be able to develop basic literacy skills alongside their language development. Anything less will have the effect of excluding this already disadvantaged group from realistic opportunities to develop their skills, and denying them the benefits that language and literacy can bring.

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