

# NAACE

THE EDUCATION TECHNOLOGY ASSOCIATION

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Have we learnt anything in 50 years?

## A letter from the chair of Naace

Dear Members,

I am writing to share with you the Summer Naace Advancing Education journal, which reflects on the past 50 years of teaching and learning and explores new ways to advance education through technology and innovation.

As we reflect on the past 50 years of teaching and learning, it is clear that education technology has played a significant role in transforming the way we teach and learn. Examples over the last 50 years include:

- The introduction of personal computers in the 1980s, which revolutionised the way we access and process information.
- The development of the internet in the 1990s, making it possible to connect with people and resources from around the world.
- The rise of mobile devices in the 2000s, providing access to information and resources on-the-go.
- The emergence of online learning platforms in the 2010s, enabling access for students to education anywhere, anytime.

As we look to the future, it is clear that technology will continue to play a critical role in advancing education and preparing students for the challenges of the 21st century. As you read through this journal, I encourage you to consider the following questions within your own educational context: How has education technology transformed the way we teach and learn over the past 50 years, and what are some of the key trends and developments in this field?

- What are some of the challenges faced by educators in incorporating technology into their teaching practices, and how can we overcome them?
- How can we use technology to promote inclusivity and diversity in education, and what are some of the best practices for doing so?
- How can we leverage gamification to transform learning and keep students engaged in education, and what are some of the key considerations when designing gamified learning experiences?
- What are some of the ethical and social implications of using technology in education, and how can we ensure that we are using technology in a responsible and ethical manner?

I hope that you find this journal informative and thought-provoking, and that it inspires you to explore new ways to advance education through technology and innovation and I encourage you to share it with others in your network.

Thank you, as ever, to Christina and her team for assembling this journal and to all the contributors for their contributions.

*Gavin Hawkins*

*Chair Naace Board of Management*



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## Editorial

*Dr Christina Preston; Visiting Professor of Education Innovation, De Montfort University*

### Have we learnt anything in 50 years?

I think those of us who have been in education for some time will have sympathy with the views expressed in Steve Hall's piece: Doing Education Differently: Re-assessing a vision for the future of education after 50 years of teaching and learning (and still counting!). He is frustrated that three years on from the start of Covid it feels like the politicians and society in general have been keen to return to the status quo and the previous ruts that education had dug for itself and yet but so many people in education have either continued to push and cry out for change, or they have voted with their feet and left the profession, battle-weary and needing some respite from the continuous wrestle with a system that is fundamentally broken.

The points he has to make about how we need to think differently certainly resonate with me. As a result, I challenge Naace members to offer some good news. Where has education responded to the lessons not only of Covid but of the last 50 years since Tony Blair promised us, Education, Education, Education?

What our writers' concentrate on in this issue is the use of technology to engage students in learning. ENGAGE is the name of the programme that Emma Whewell and Alison Power offer; they describe this as an innovative approach in alternative education provision by trialling and evaluating a Student e-Passport with the Northampton Saints Foundation (NSF). This project explored the use of educational technology through piloting the use of Padlet as a digital version of the Student Passport and evaluating its effectiveness in terms of student engagement, monitoring and evaluating progress and its potential for scalability across the franchise.

Lily Meyers explains that the term 'gamification' essentially refers to the use of game mechanics to enhance the engagement of learners. Gamification, she

suggests, has revolutionised the way learning is done in educational institutions, businesses, and organisations around the world. But what does it actually mean? Her article is very informative.

Yasemin Oezcelik is a freelance teacher of German, who explains how much must be done, often without training, to master the technicalities of teaching online. There is an issue here for all teachers about how little training is available for these teachers on the fringes of our profession.

### News

Gavin Hawkins has commented in detail on the TPEA ([tpea.ac.uk](http://tpea.ac.uk)) conference in July in Bedford that Naace members were invited to. Gavin says, "For the second consecutive year, I was delighted to attend the TPEA conference on behalf of Naace, where I had the opportunity to listen to presentations that were enlightening, thought-provoking, innovative, and emotional. The event brought together a diverse group of professionals, researchers, and experts from various fields, creating an atmosphere of intellectual stimulation and exchange of ideas." We do hope you will be there next year". The takeaway publication is here: <https://indd.adobe.com/view/5e185895-7e82-49a7-a1c0-ed64edcc95d5> Look out for announcements about next year's conference.

MirandaNet Fellows were also partners in the TPEA conference. In the past they were often involved in research projects funded by Becta (British Educational Communications and Technology Agency), a public body funded by the Department for Education in the United Kingdom to oversee the procurement and use of computers in schools. Many Naace members will remember that Becta was closed down by the coalition government of 2010–2015. As the MirandaNet Founder, I wrote an article in response, almost an obituary, summing up the loss felt by the wider community and outlining concerns about the future of professional development for technology in teaching and learning: The Demise of Becta 2010: its value on the world stage (<https://mirandanet.ac.uk/the-demise-of-becta-2010-its-value-on-the-world-stage/>).

Naace members are requested to contribute to this section of the MirandaNet Knowledge Hub before it is archived by the British Library. Get in touch with me with your suggestions.

### Book reviews

Beverly and Etienne Wenger have specialised in the role of e-communities in education and business for three decades. In fact, although Wenger invented the concept of e-communities, he told me that MirandaNet Fellowship was a more authentic kind of e-community of practice because we were based in education. He had not been able to achieve this level of sharing of ideas in his consultancies with business. Not only different companies but sometimes divisions of the same company will not share knowledge for commercial reasons which limits what can be learnt from each other.

However, what interested me most was the publication model in this latest book, *Communities of practice within and across organizations: a guidebook. Learning to make a difference*. In the first place, you can buy it in print form, but you can also download the book for free as a flip book or a .pdf. The authors point out that the text is immensely detailed but encourage readers to only read what is relevant to them. In addition, they embrace wholeheartedly the ways in which the contemporary student or teacher is going to want to use the book. They explain that the reader is free to copy and redistribute the material in any medium or form in terms of sharing, adapting, remixing, transforming and building upon the material, although we are asked to give appropriate credit and indicate what changes were made. The terms seem extremely generous in the way they acknowledge and accept modern practices. But I know from talking to them that their strength is in the guidance they provide for people creating communities. Just reading a book is only a start compared with the idiosyncrasies they have to negotiate in each e-community start-up they advise on. The consultancy is invaluable.

The second book, *Teaching and learning with technologies in the primary*

*school*, edited by Professors Marilyn Leask and Sarah Younie, offers the advice of teachers and university lecturers who are convinced that technology has an important role in primary schools. In the foreword to this book, Dr Deborah Outhwaite makes the point that technology and education go hand in hand. Some people are more interested in technology than others, but what we are all now aware of is that this is something that cannot be ignored in our teaching in primary education. The way in which children learn has altered immeasurably over the last few decades, and this trend was exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic. The book sets out to cover how teachers have worked with technology in recent years.

So these are the topics that our colleagues are most interested in at the current time - and their expertise is clear. But I return to Steve Hall's big question: what have we learnt in the last 50 years? Do send us your solutions for the next edition. I hope you are having a relaxing summer break despite the rain,

Regards:

Editor Dr Christina Preston, retired Professor of Education Innovation, DMU  
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*Dr Christina Preston, a member of Naace for 28 years, joins the Naace Board of Management from an academic background, offering the association a great deal of insight into research about education technology and also effective professional development programmes for teachers. As a retired professor of education innovation she brings an international slant to Naace having worked with teachers and researchers around the world,*

## Articles

### Doing Education Differently;

#### Re-assessing a vision for the future of education after 50 years of teaching and learning (and still counting!)

Steven Hall



Three years ago as we started to wrestle with the Covid pandemic and the impact of lockdown on education, and on schools in particular, I raised the question of what education might look like post-pandemic.

Concerned that the unintentional opportunity that presented itself at the time of quick responses and readjustments just to keep education going, would be missed as we came out of the pandemic, I asked the question at the time, what should we keep that has changed and what should we leave behind?

Three years on, it feels like the politicians and society in general have been keen to return to the status quo and the previous ruts that education had dug for itself and yet but so many people in education have either continued to push and cry out for change, or they have voted with their feet and left the profession, battle-weary and needing some respite from the continuous wrestle with a system that is fundamentally broken.

The noise and call for change have been deafening at times during the past three years but how far has the movement broken new ground towards a better system? I feel that I have been part of that sense of a will for change but remain frustrated that it isn't happening quickly or powerfully enough.

Maybe I am conscious of personally running out of time to make a difference. I will have completed 50 years of teaching and learning within the UK education system by the summer of 2023 and yet I still want to change the system of education in which we seem to have trapped ourselves in the Western world but I can't do it on my own! And neither can anyone else, for a number of reasons which I would like to put to you:-

1. Lack of momentum due to a need for funding to seed change but the danger of commercial interest taking control of any movement for change (education is suffering from over-commercialisation and marketisation – it is not a business for making money or for profiting in a commercial or financial sense, personally or as a company)
2. A false assumption that we regularly make when we look for a direction of travel regarding change in education is that we always start from the wrong place ie changing the school system – education is not just about school, it is far bigger than that (what else was there in terms of education and learning before schools existed and what else is there still?)
3. We don't look back far enough at what has happened in the past and in other cultures or societies in terms of education because the assumption is that the answer is always in something new or more likely, something that

is dressed up as looking and sounding new and therefore has a commercial value that someone (but not everyone) will benefit from (hype, influencers, band-wagging, gaslighting, etc)

4. We have completely forgotten about the role of community in education because of over-centralisation and interference from politicians and government (communities and educationalists need to be able to influence and run education and not central government)

### **What do you think?**

Steve and I would be delighted if members of Naace got in touch with us to tell us their take on 50 years of learning. We will publish the conversations and articles in the next edition.

We will set up a WhatsApp conversation if you send your mobile to [christina.preston@naace.ac.uk](mailto:christina.preston@naace.ac.uk)

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*Steve Hall*



*Steve Hall is a Senior Lecturer in Education at Staffordshire University and a Senior Fellow of the Higher Education Academy, having previously taught in schools across the 4-18 spectrum with 18 years of experience as a headteacher. He is a Trustee of Education Futures Collaboration, helping to create MESHGuides which provide research-based evidence to inform teachers' professional practice in 196 countries around the world. A*

*practitioner at heart, he is an innovator and advocate of personalising learning and learner empowerment promoting a 'Doing Education Differently' philosophy through his writing and his broadcasting with VoicEd Radio.*

*Latest book chapter: Chapter 21 - Education in Emergencies (Leask, M., Younie, S. and Hall, S.) from the book 'Education System and Design; Foundations, Policy Options and Consequences' (2021), Routledge, Oxford. ISBN: 978-0-367-20377-1*

## 'Engaging' students with education: promoting inclusivity through technology.

*Emma Whewell and Alison Power*

### Introduction

The ENGAGE programme works with students aged between 10-16 in alternative provision to increase confidence and boost self-esteem. ENGAGE was established in 2015 and supports students' social, emotional, mental health and complex needs. ENGAGE uses practical-based activities to empower students to see the positives in everyday life, to offer bespoke support and build a network of professionals around the young person.

This project aimed to build on the work of the ENGAGE team by digitising their existing 'student passport' via Padlet (an interactive online platform) to provide a range of ways by which the young people can record and demonstrate their individual journey. Padlet has the potential to allow multimodal representation of their learning (CAST, 2018) in reflecting on their journey and future actions as they re-integrate into school and maintain a link with NSF that can offer them support during this transition period and beyond.

### Background

Alternative provision is employed when school-based education is considered to be unsuitable for a young person; it has the potential to offer more individualised care that is therapeutic in nature, including small group teaching, and high staff ratios. The aim is to reduce the long-lasting impact of exclusion from school including, criminal activities, low educational attainment, unemployment and physical and mental ill health (Owen et al., 2021). There are disproportionate numbers of children in alternative provision with one or more special educational needs or disabilities; young people who are at risk of or have been permanently excluded from school; school refusal, school phobia and those with poor attendance and record of truancy (DFE, 2022). This

presents a student body with diverse and complex educational and pastoral needs. Research that discusses the young people's voice in relation to their experiences of alternative provision cite the importance of enabling them to address feelings of low self-worth, build an understanding of the world (Owen et al., 2021), to effectively reintegrate into education and develop emotional literacy skills.

The project aimed to consult with the NSF staff about how the young people like to record their reflections and the look and feel of the Student e-Passport. The Student e-Passport was piloted with one 'Hub' group of 20 young people from the ENGAGE programme to work with the young people and NSF staff to evaluate its effectiveness and scalability. The NSF student passport has traditionally been used as an evaluation tool to measure the success of the delivery outputs of the programme. The passport has developed over the past 4 academic years and provides key statistical data to enhance the progressions of the young people.



*Figure 1: NSF Student Passport*

The challenge of the NSF student passport process is that the young people do not like putting their feelings and emotions on paper. The background behind making elements of the programme digital is to offer multimodal means of representation, access and engagement (CAST, 2018). The NSF staff were asked to use the Phase 1 Padlet on an iPad with the young people in their one to one sessions to explore ways in which it could be used to document their learning



journey.



Figure 2: Phase 1 padlet

## Methods

This study was a pilot study to evaluate the usability, effectiveness, and scalability of a digitised Student e-Passport. This study employed a participatory action research (PAR) approach that sees the NSF staff integral to the design, usage and evaluation of the Student e-Passport. PAR is recognised in the field of health and education as a method that aims ‘to understand and improve the world by changing it’ (Vivona and Wolfgram, 2021) it focuses upon achieving social justice and addressing social problems. The fundamental premise of PAR is self-reflection, inquiry, community, and empowerment. The process of co-creation was completed using feedback from a focus group conducted with the NSF staff to elicit the ways in which content, delivery, access, and engagement can be improved. The sampling technique was critical case sampling where the research uses a closely defined group as the data needed can only be provided by the staff at the Northampton Saints Foundation working directly with the young people. The focus group transcript was analysed using the Braun and Clarke (2016) six step structure of thematic analysis completed independently by both researchers and a coding strategy agreed.

## Results, Discussion and Recommendations

The results represent both researchers’ interpretation of responses to the focus group questions based on analysis of the transcripts. The overarching themes were- Technology, Student Engagement and Communication and Support.

### Technology

The NSF staff agreed that digitising the Student e-Passport was positive in terms of increasing the young people’s engagement. That said, they did identify issues, for example, none of the NSF staff had used Padlet before and there were initial issues with learning about the technology and how to achieve the same results as the hard copy. They found it frustrating that they did not have administration rights over the Padlets, as the pilot study used the primary researchers’ Padlet account, this led to a feeling of reduced felt autonomy as the NSF staff could not edit or add to the Padlets without working with the research team.

### Illustrative quotations from the focus group:

It was a bit difficult to start with because we had to kind of learn and get used to like how we use it, what gets set-up, and what we can do on it and find ways around that technical difficulties, such as drawing on images that have been uploaded , so we’ve had to work stuff around that, but overall it’s been received a lot better and the kids have been more interested in it than the paper passports.

I think like the actual iPad itself and the pens, like I enjoyed using them, the kids obviously enjoy using them. So I think it was a win in that sense, but it wasn’t difficult to use they all know about technology. So yeah, I think it was positive.

The pens did help because they like drawing and they liked, obviously, writing their own comments with the pens and stuff like that, so the pens did help basically

## Student Engagement

It seemed that having the Student Passport in a digital format motivated the children to engage more, despite initial nervousness around using technology. The Student e-Passport was more interactive which was in itself a motivator to engage, for example recording a student doing a backflip on a trampoline and posting it to the Padlet encouraged three more children to ask to be recorded so their achievements could be shared more widely. The young people also liked to draw images and add photographs and gifs.

Illustrative quotations from the focus group:

...a breath of fresh air for the kids as well as like, because when it used to come to doing the passport it like got to that stage where the kids would be moaning and not wanting to do it. But now because there's technology involved, they're just genuinely more open minded to partake.

...it would be better if they had things on it already that they, were complete like steps rather than create whatever they want themselves, cause when you give them that chance they be like, 'oh, I don't wanna do it'. But as if you had stuff on it already for them to complete, they will go 'Ohh yeah, actually that looks interesting. I'll do it.'

Drawing. It's mainly drawing images of, like their hobbies, some have drawn images of their family or added photos, mainly like using the gifs quite a lot and pictures off Google and just yeah, using all them tools.

## Communication and support

Members of staff felt well supported during the pilot, knowing that they would receive prompt responses to any queries or issues. Main issues involved administration rights over the Padlets, meaning staff members could not add or remove children's accounts or edit certain aspects of the Padlet.

Illustrative quotations from the focus group:

...the communication's been quite good and quite quick, like between us,

like when we've asked over the changes you've actually been quite nice and respondent...its been quite easy and open conversation. It's been nice.

...because the iPad is attached obviously to the phone instead... wherever I leave work, even though I turned off notifications and stuff, I still get notifications on the phone about like all your iPad is left behind.

## Recommendations

The NSF staff suggested there could be more structure to the Padlet, such as templates and activities that the young people could complete. The NSF staff identified that having free reign was a little overwhelming and did not offer a focus for their one to one sessions, suggesting a template would also be useful for new staff members, who could review Padlets and get an immediate overview of the young people's likes and dislikes. The NSF staff wanted a staff group area on the Master Padlet where they could ask key questions and share information. The NSF staff are required to collect data on wellbeing and feelings every six weeks to analyse the young people's progress. Collecting data was seen as a concern with the pilot structure as they were unsure how this could be collected easily using Padlet.

Illustrative quotations from the focus group:

Like a very brief basic story template of what their name is, how old they are? Like what their favourite thing to do is? their favourite colour, favourite food.

It would just help if they would have something so like more of the educational side... like it would just make them like think about what they're doing and what sort of emotions they had...

...if they had like a daily diary where they just went like 'Oh she just made me really angry. I'm gonna go write about it ... and here's the link on how to control anger.

...on the activity was on a scale of 1 to 10, can you circle it and then on your happiness? Oh, here's a wheel. Can you colour in which number you feel like

you're happiness is at...

## Conclusions

The pilot project has been deemed an overall success, the NSF staff report increased engagement in their one to one sessions, the technology is user friendly and appealing to the age group. The Padlet platform offers multiple ways for the young people to engage with the resources and to demonstrate their learning. The share facility offered by Padlet allows the Padlet to be downloaded as a PDF and shared with schools and parents/carers as they transition back into full time education and as a physical reminder of their achievements during their time as the NSF.

Recommendations from this project are multifactorial: the PAR process of co-creation supported staff and student agency in the development and delivery of content, empowering all stakeholders to be creators, not consumers of their own learning. Secondly, as a methodological approach in an alternative education setting, PAR has increased participants' sense of ownership and investment in their learning and development.

Following phase 1 we have secured funding for phase two which sees the development of the student e-Passport in two age phases. This will be a structured individual Padlet for each young person, drawing resources from a master Padlet for each age group. The Master padlet will hold resources for staff and students to draw from as required. The master Padlet will involve designing activities and resources to offer the structure needed by the NSF staff and young people to explore a range of topics and challenges in their one to one sessions. Phase 2 sees a wider roll out of the project, to include 16+ students, with resources being co-designed with NSF staff members for students. We will design training videos and provide staff training across the franchise to support staff in understanding how to use the padlets, access the activities and help the young people to build their individual Student e-Passports.

Figure: Examples from phase two Padlet



Master Padlet



Master Padlet



Master Padlet

Universal design for learning (CAST, 2018) will be used as a theoretical concept by which we will design the Phase 2 Padlets under the following headings; Current Me (this heading will include relationship building activities and activities designed to encourage the young people to reflect on their current needs and experiences), Future Me (this section will include resources designed to support the young people in exploring their options to return into education, training or work), finally, Finding Me (this section will be designed to offer a range of approaches to managing challenges such as self regulation, mental health, self harm, drug use, relationships etc). All resources will be credible and aligned to the age group of the children, the curriculum and NSF values. The intention is to analyse the young people's digital artefacts, to conduct a focus group with NSF staff and to move beyond usability and scalability to explore modes of engagement, digital capital and career capital in the young people. Thank you to the Northampton Saints Foundation staff and students for their support with this pilot project.

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### Alison Power



Alison is an Associate Professor in Learning and Teaching and a Senior Fellow of Advance HE. She qualified as a Registered Midwife in 2002 and is Faculty Lead for Interprofessional Education and Collaborative Practice at the University of Northampton, co-ordinating a 'collaborative curriculum' for 16 health, education and social care programmes. She is a Board Member of the Centre for the Advancement of Interprofessional Education (CAIPE), a UK-based charity which promotes and develops IPE research, learning and practice nationally and globally. She co-leads its Faculty Development Priority Group and represents CAIPE on several Interprofessional.Global working groups.

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### Emma Whellel



Emma is an experienced qualitative researcher in education and child wellbeing. She is an Associate Professor in Teaching and Learning with national and international expertise in project work. Her background is in initial teacher training, physical education, health and wellbeing, identity development and self-efficacy, digital pedagogies and supporting teacher development. She is a member of the All-Party Parliamentary Group for a Fit and Healthy Childhood, a writer for the Children's Alliance and a member of the primary Physical Education Network group.

## The Key to Keeping Attention: How Gamification Has Transformed Learning

Lily Meyers



image credit: Graham Holt, <https://flic.kr/p/AZ4ynD>, CC BY NC

As a teacher, you want your students to be engaged in the material that you are teaching them. If they are not engaged, then they will not retain any of it and will not be able to apply it later on. This means that they will have wasted time and energy, and you have failed as a teacher.

Gamification has revolutionised the way learning is done in educational institutions, businesses, and organisations around the world. But what does it actually mean? The term 'gamification' essentially refers to the use of game mechanics to enhance the engagement of learners. It involves using points, badges, rewards, leader boards and other elements common in gaming to add a factor of competition and achievement to traditional educational activities. But it's much more than just adding some extra fun into classroom activities – it can also help to increase motivation, develop problem-solving abilities, boost

creativity, and promote collaboration amongst students.

By using this method, you can create an interactive experience that encourages your students to learn more about what you are teaching them. They will feel like they are playing a game rather than simply sitting there listening or watching something happen around them without any interaction from themselves whatsoever. This type of interaction helps with memory retention because it requires active participation from both sides (teacher/student).

### Trial and Error

One of the major benefits of gamification is that it encourages trial-and-error learning. Students are given puzzles or quizzes to solve instead of being taught a concept or lesson directly. This enables them to think critically and solve problems while still learning the material. It also encourages them to take risks without fear of failure because they are rewarded for their efforts whether they're successful or not. It's a fantastic opportunity for students to gain confidence with each task they complete. In a class where everything is gamified, students will feel more comfortable trying new things—especially if those new things are related to learning content. When they make mistakes, they'll learn from them. And when they succeed at something new, they'll be excited about taking on even more challenges!

This can also help students set goals for themselves and track their progress toward those goals. There are many ways to do this: Some teachers use a simple spreadsheet with checkboxes; others use sophisticated web-based tools that allow students to track their progress while they're still in class; still others have created their own custom tools. What's important is that gamification gives teachers more control over how much information they reveal at any given time so that they can teach at a pace that matches each student's ability level.



Another advantage is that it allows educators to tailor lessons specifically to individual student interests and levels. For example, some games feature variable difficulty levels which allow teachers to assign work suited for each student's abilities. Similarly, games can be designed around topics or themes that appeal to different demographics based on age, gender, or cultural backgrounds. It can help those with special educational difficulties develop important life skills such as problem-solving and self-regulation. This can also open new ways of assessing progress and understanding where further intervention may be necessary. Teachers can incorporate various elements from games into their lessons to make them more engaging for students. This can be done by creating online tests, which allow teachers to tailor their tests based on how well students have already done on previous tests or assignments. It also allows teachers to give feedback on each assignment individually so that they can provide guidance where it's needed most without wasting time giving feedback on things that don't need improvement.

By also seeing visual representations of their successes and progresses, students can feel more at ease with their skill sets which can help boost their motivation to get higher and higher on the leaderboard. Students may also be more open about their confidence in certain subjects, which can ultimately help them understand and receive constructive criticism which can be a tough part of teaching to navigate successfully.

### Collaboration

Collaborative working has been a buzzword for some time now, but what does it mean? At its core, collaborative working is about connecting teams across the world with each other in order to achieve goals and develop better products.

One great way to incorporate collaborative work into your lessons is through games and interactive techniques. This should help students feel more connected and involved with the class, and more at ease to share thoughts, brainstorm and even ask for help when usually reluctant. For example, teachers can form groups of students who may not usually work together and who have similar skill targets, in order for a collaborative boost in motivation for the task set. Teachers who want to use gamification as part of their collaboration strategy should begin by identifying a goal that they want to achieve through collaboration, such as creating a new lesson plan or a class website. Once they've established this goal, they can break it down into smaller pieces and assign an objective score to each piece based on how long it takes someone else to complete it.

Allowing students to interact with each other during gamified activities helps foster strong communication and collaboration skills while also increasing engagement in learning tasks. Working together in groups can help create positive relationships among peers that can extend beyond the classroom setting, as well as encourage a healthy level of competitiveness that might benefit their future career hunts.

## Workplace



The use of games has been proven effective in many different scenarios when it comes to learning and development, so why not apply those same principles in the workplace? The first step in

learning how to use gamification at work is to identify what kind of company you're working for. For example, if you're a start-up that's trying to build an innovative product and attract customers, then you should consider using gamification because it will help get your name out there and make your business stand out from competitors.

Employers may find that gamifying their environment leads to increased engagement levels amongst their workforce, higher employee retention rates, and even improved customer service levels as well since employees will be more likely to take ownership of a task if they know there's something in it for them at the end. The most common way is to provide rewards for completing tasks or meeting goals. This can be as simple as giving everyone a chance to win a prize for the best idea, or it could be something more complex like allowing workers to gain points toward promotions based on their work performance.

In addition to rewards, gamification can also be used as a management tool by allowing managers to track how well their employees are performing and then give them feedback on areas where they need improvement. This type of

management style can help companies keep their employees motivated and engaged with their jobs. Employees can also compete against their peers to gain rewards or recognition for their achievements. This system allows for friendly competition between employees as well as the opportunity to be recognised for showing initiative and meeting objectives. Additionally, it helps employers foster a sense of team spirit among work teams by providing individualised incentives.

Gamification has been an incredibly successful and innovative approach to teaching. Studies have found that incorporating elements of gameplay into the educational process helps to not only motivate students and make learning more interesting but also significantly improve overall learning outcomes. This type of educational design is often seen as being a more equitable way of teaching, as it helps to level the playing field for all students regardless of their learning styles or backgrounds. As research continues to confirm the effectiveness of gamified education, this approach will continue to be an important part of modern teaching strategies and beyond.

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## The Impact of Education Technology on Freelance Language Teachers: Navigating the Challenges of Designing Self-Paced Online Courses

Yasemin Oezcelik



### Reflections from Practice

Many language teachers are freelancers like me, and we often have to teach ourselves how to develop online courses that work. However, the role of freelance language teachers in course design is widely overlooked, urging me to explain the situation from my point of view as a freelance teacher of German.

Since the rise of so-called massive open online courses (MOOCs) over the last decades as a result of rapid advances in digital technologies, there has been a growing trend towards online language learning (Wong, 2021, pp.

116–117). Platforms such as Coursera, iCourse, and edX offer a wide range of language MOOCs, which can be accessed irrespective of time and location and are mostly provided by universities (Luo and Ye, 2021, pp. 177–179). However, not only the steady development of digital technologies has been an enabler of this paradigm shift, but also the COVID-19 pandemic that forced educational institutions worldwide to switch from face-to-face engagement to online learning (Dantus, 2022; Jacques, Ouahabi and Lequeu, 2020; Tili et al., 2022). Given these changes, it seems that the focus has been so far primarily on MOOCs and their providers, leaving freelance language teachers as course designers out of the picture.

But due to the nature of their profession, freelancers, like me, tend to work on their own account and, presumably, do not receive institutional support in course design from educational stakeholders such as administrators or peers. It is worth mentioning in this context that there is no clear definition of freelancers on a global level (Kitching and Smallbone, 2012). Nevertheless, the lack of support is problematic, since freelance teachers require technology skills and/or financial resources to design online language courses for their own practice.

### Designing a Self-Paced Online Course to Learn German

I thought I would share my own journey of learning how to design self-paced online German courses to promote learner autonomy and generate a passive income stream, which I find particularly helpful given the unsteadiness of freelance work and, thus, fluctuating earnings. I am a native German speaker, so my own proficiency in the language is a given. Having gained valuable teaching skills throughout the years, I initially assumed that I was equipped with the relevant expertise that is required to create self-paced online courses and to act as a mentor rather than a teacher in the traditional sense of providing face-to-face instructions. However, I did not consider all aspects essential to creating self-paced online language courses, primarily the components



of the so-called Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK) Framework (Greenwood, 2023) alongside the cost and time factors. The TPACK Framework, which comes from Australia, is based on contextual knowledge and demonstrates the interdependence of technology, pedagogy, and content crucial to teachers' overall expertise (Greenwood, 2023). Since it allows for a more reflective approach to teaching, the TPACK Framework appears to be of use to my practice by identifying deficits in any of these three areas, which can be readjusted to one another (Greenwood, 2023).

Regarding technological knowledge, I have noticed that my current technological expertise is not sufficient. Like so many school-based teachers as well as freelance and supply teachers, I have had no formal technological training. In addition, the technology is growing in complexity. Not only does the course design require me to create a wide range of digital content, including interactive features such as animations and videos, but also to embed the course in my own website or any other learning management system (Nielson and González-Lloret, 2010, pp. 51–52). Although a variety of free open-source software is available, for instance, WordPress, which is often self-explanatory in usage and explained in online tutorials, basic programming skills are necessary. Moreover, the performance of both my courses and website, if used to give access to the courses, must be ensured long-term, taking the user-friendliness of different end devices and safe data storage into account. Another factor to consider is how to provide learners with support if they encounter technical problems that may imperil the course completion (Gimaletdinova and Khalitova, 2016). As a next step, it is essential to learn the required skills and potentially seek professional support, for example, from a programmer.

As for the pedagogical knowledge, I have learnt from my practice that it is crucial to be aware of students' different learning needs, goals, and expectations to maintain their motivation and ensure a purpose-driven learning experience (Shirk, 2020). This is especially relevant since the lack of direct interaction with

me, as the teacher, and other learners in a self-paced online course, unlike in a face-to-face setting, may impede identifying and addressing motivational issues once they appear. Additionally, learners must be provided with continuous and timely feedback (Nielson and González-Lloret, 2010), and their language level should be assessed regularly so that they can improve it gradually. Therefore, I am considering including self-assessments to allow learners to evaluate their current language level autonomously and offering coaching sessions to discuss potential problems and answer questions. Monthly free meetings via video conferencing software, such as Zoom, or a community forum on a social media platform like Facebook (Kocdar, Karadeniz and Goksel, 2018), where learners



Coming to the content knowledge, the curriculum design has shown to be particularly difficult, although I am confident that I have a solid understanding of the German language. Nevertheless, it requires detailed planning to determine what topics each language level should cover and, simultaneously, how to allow for a personalised learning experience. To solve this problem, the Common

European Framework of Reference for Languages (Monnalisa, 2017) provides guidelines for every language level, which can be combined with the concept of task-based instruction (TBI) to give clear instructions and make the curriculum comprehensive for learners (Lee, 2016). This seems to be particularly useful for a complex language like German. Consequently, it is possible to create learning materials that promote learner autonomy in self-paced online courses but that also ensure an interactive and collaborative learning experience with a special focus on speaking practice (Lee, 2016).

Although the interdependence of technological, pedagogical, and content knowledge can be considered the main challenge in terms of designing self-paced online German courses, there are further issues. First, the cost factor is problematic, as financial resources are required for the website design and hosting, the outsourcing if professional help is sought, the course marketing, and the use of digital design tools such as Canva. While a wide range of free open-source tools is available, they are often restricted in their usage. Second, time management is a problem, as creating an online course or improving my technological skills during my work hours means no income, highlighting the challenges encountered as a freelance teacher. Lastly, the course quality is subject to difficulties, since learners may request a certificate as proof of their learning, which I am not able to provide, unlike educational institutions (Gimaletdinova and Khalitova, 2016, p. 88). Additionally, it is possible that learners will ask for a refund if they are not satisfied with the course. Up to now, these issues remain unsolved and, therefore, require further consideration.

#### Implications for Freelance Online Language Teachers

As it seems, freelance teachers have not received much attention yet; hence, their contribution to language learning through technology-enhanced online courses remains largely unvalued. This is unfortunate, since more and more freelance teachers choose the virtual world as their workplace, aiming to provide their students with a unique learning experience.

Regarding the success factors for designing self-paced online courses that meet both freelance teachers' and learners' needs, instructor-learner interaction, peer collaboration, speaking practice, and feedback are often mentioned (e.g., Kim et al., 2021; Lee, 2016; Shirk, 2020). Although self-paced online courses are generally understood to be fully autonomous, the significance of interaction and collaboration is indisputable, especially since languages can only be improved through real communication with other speakers (Nielson and González-Lloret, 2010, p. 49). Shirk (2020) offers a possible explanation for this: learners must be enabled to self-regulate and actively engage with their learning to maintain their motivation. It therefore seems that an adequate level of interaction cannot be ruled out in self-paced online language courses to meet learners' needs. However, it remains unclear how teachers' needs are met by targeting these success factors.

Although the realisation of these success factors seems feasible, and one may consider online language teachers fortunate enough to be able to work from anywhere they want, there are, in fact, multiple barriers to the course development process. Course design strategies are primarily evaluated against students' needs and learning experiences (e.g., Lee, 2016; Nielson and González-Lloret, 2010; Shirk, 2020), which is undoubtedly a valuable approach, but it does not acknowledge the challenges faced by course instructors. For example, Shirk (2020) argues that the implementation of assessments is subject to difficulties in a self-paced learning environment; yet, this barrier is examined in light of tailoring assessments to each learner's needs. Consequently, these findings cannot be easily applied to freelance language teachers' specific work conditions that affect their access to technological and financial resources and their time management. This observed disproportion may be due to an unconscious assumption that online courses are usually designed by educational institutions rather than individuals. Nevertheless, the barriers encountered by freelance language teachers are presumably multiplied, given the lack of

educational support and unsteady work conditions.

For freelance online language teachers, the implications of these findings point towards considering the aforementioned success factors to develop efficient course design strategies: encouraging interaction and collaboration among their learners, ensuring speaking practice, and providing constant feedback.

However, what is really needed to overcome these barriers is a course of action for governments worldwide to establish a clear definition of freelancers in the national context to be able to provide them with technological and financial resources crucial to their practice. Ensuring the implementation of national policies that can cater to the needs of freelance language teachers will value their contribution to online language learning and acknowledge the unique challenges they face, finally bringing the overlooked into the foreground.

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### Yasemin Oezcelik



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## News

### Mirandanet update



At the end of August 2023, members of the e-community of practice, The MirandaNet Fellowship, are transferring to TPEA. The MirandaNet website that houses members' publications and case studies is being archived by the British Library in perpetuity. In particular interest to Naace members may be the fact that in 2010 when Becta was closed by the new Tory government, MirandaNet reassembled over 300 Becta research reports, project reports, and advice documents that were published by Becta.

These were undertaken by the professional community and they still have value both for current practice and to provide a starting point for future research and professional development programmes as well as an important archive of past work in educational technology.

If Naace members know of any Becta documents that are not listed, or entries that require corrections (e.g., many are undated) please write to [christina.preston@naace.co.uk](mailto:christina.preston@naace.co.uk) before the end of August. <https://mirandanet.ac.uk/becta-reassembled/>

## Reflections of the TPEA Conference 2023

*Gavin Hawkins, Naace Chair*



For the second consecutive year, I was delighted to attend the TPEA conference on behalf of Naace, where I had the opportunity to listen to presentations that were enlightening, thought-provoking, innovative, and emotional. The event brought together a diverse group of professionals, researchers, and experts from various fields, creating an atmosphere of intellectual stimulation and exchange of ideas. Reflecting on the time I was able to spend at the conference, several key points stand out:

### **Cutting-Edge Research and Innovation**

The conference showcased the latest advancements and innovations in technology, policy, and education. From the development of digital literacy in Wales to augmented reality for primary education and my own contribution exploring the challenges facing school leaders.

The sessions I chose to attend were particularly relevant to Naace and to our aim to support embedding educational technology in schools. I was inspired by the work of Emma Whewell / Helen Caldwell - Bringing Learning Alive: empowering the use of immersive technologies to blend physical and digital spaces, and Sharon Tonner-Saunders - Developing student teachers' digital literacy skills through intercultural learning.

### Networking and Collaboration

As always, one of the most valuable aspects of the conference was the opportunity to network and connect with fellow attendees. Engaging in discussions with professionals from diverse backgrounds fostered the exchange of perspectives and experiences. Collaborative partnerships were formed, and the potential for future collaborations was evident, emphasizing the importance of events like TPEA in building a global network of innovators.

### Lifelong Learning and Legacy

The TPEA Conference emphasized the significance of continuous learning in the ever-evolving landscape of technology and policy. Attendees were reminded of the need to stay curious and adaptable to remain relevant in their respective fields. And this was particularly pertinent during the final session of Day One when the conference reflected on the contribution made by Christina Preston and colleagues over the last 30 years, through the MirandaNet Fellowship.

As someone who was unaware of the founding of MirandaNet, I was genuinely moved by the story told by Christina of the tragic loss of her 16-year-old daughter Corinna and the desire to create a professional organisation in her memory. The name MirandaNet was chosen from the quote by Miranda in Shakespeare's, The Tempest "Oh brave new world that hath such people in it" (Christina suggests that "it" could be transposed for "IT"). As an A-Level English Literature student who studied The Tempest back in the early 80's, I'm reminded that Miranda spoke those words in awe as she marvels at the possibilities before her – I'd suggest this is still as relevant now as it was in 1992 when

MirandaNet was formed.

Listening to contributors from the MirandaNet community was a truly inspirational experience as many of the projects, principles and pedagogy have become embedded in approaches to educational technology today. And whilst MirandaNet may be winding down as an active organisation, it's legacy in the form of content, resources, and collaboration will live on via the MirandaNet website. Indeed the website will still be available for study as it is being archived by the British Library at the end of August 2023.

### Join the TPEA/Naace conference 2024

In conclusion, the TPEA Conference 2023 provided a platform for rich discussions, meaningful connections, and the exploration of cutting-edge ideas. As I reflect on the event, I'm reminded of the powerful role that collaboration and continuous learning play in shaping the trajectory of technological advancements and policy implementations. I look forward to TPEA 2024, where hopefully we can meet again to be reminded that, "Oh brave new world that hath such people in IT".

*Download the conference takeaway so you can catch up with the events: [Link](#)*

*Download a copy of the MirandaNet Legacy: [Link](#)*

## Book reviews

### **Communities of practice within and across organisations: a guidebook.: Learning to make a difference**

*Etienne and Beverly Wenger-Trayner, Phil Reid and Claude Brudel-Lein*



These authors are very aware of the way in which we search for information in the digital age. They offer us a free flip book and .pdf, but remind us that there is no need to read from front to back but use the comprehensive index to read what matters to you. They point out that running an e-community of practice is an active role in which books can only partially assist. Their aim is not to make something that remains fundamentally common sense seem more complicated than it needs to be.

What they then offer aside from the comprehensive lists of approaches, insights, heuristics, principles, tips, frameworks and useful terms is a chance to look over the shoulder of people who have worked in this area for a long time. The first is Rachel who despite her best efforts to explain the mission of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) political actors in the camp constantly mobilised the population against foreign organisations and accused humanitarian workers of being colonial agents. As a result, security of the humanitarian staff deteriorated steadily during her stay resulting in a series of threats against the staff by armed militias. The ICRC responded by imposing strict security measures that kept its staff including Rachel away from the camp population. They were confined to increasingly remote tasks with limited opportunities to mix with the population she used to be so connected with Rachel who felt increasingly isolated and depressed by the situation through a

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more experienced colleague from West Africa Rachel heard about an informal group of frontline humanitarian workers who face similar challenges across Africa and beyond. They met from time to time to share their negotiation experience and how to operate in intense and complex environments. Despite some initial hesitations she joined a peer group organised. Joining this community enabled her to learn some good practises with populations in conflict settings and provided an opportunity for her to socialise with other workers facing similar challenges.

The second case study is about Ajanta who joined JP Morgan Chase in software engineering programme in Mumbai she was excited to get hands on experience in a collaborative software engineering role encompassing the end to end cycle of product delivery and in ownership a lifelong learner with deep interest in machine learning and data science. She's also interested in finding a place to explore these topics with others when she and her fellow graduates new hires were introduced to the Ignite Initiative community of practice in Mumbai. They were delighted at the prospect of joining. Ajanta said that she attended as many community meetups as she could, not just of machine learning and data science, but also several others in Mumbai such as big data. She was so inspired by the fact that constant engagement was happening throughout the year. There was so much to learn in practice that she never found the community repetitive. In her view "These communities of practice were particularly helpful to me in ingesting to the working environments here at JP Morgan Chase

As someone who has developed the MirandaNet Fellowship since 1992 I would wholeheartedly recommend this book. It is full of amazing detail and powerful examples of learning.

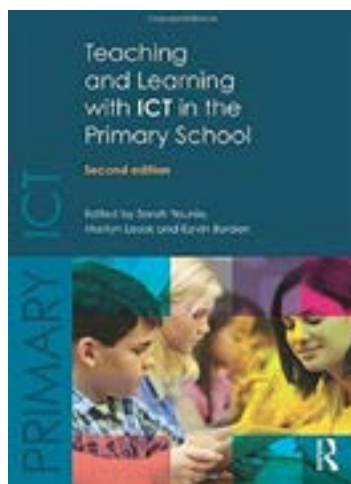
*Christina Preston*

A printed book can be purchased, but a free download in .pdf form or a flip book can be downloaded for free here:

<https://wenger-trayner.com/cop-guidebook/>

## Teaching and learning with technologies in the primary school

Professors Marilyn Leask and Sarah Younie (Editors)



Dr Deborah Outhwaite, who is Director of the Developing Teachers Schools Academies (DTSA) says that those who have engaged only superficially with how technology has an impact on learning in the digital age will perhaps be surprised by the content of the chapters of this book. 'Whatever your particular area of interest, this textbook enables our steps forward in teaching and learning with technologies in the primary school to be both acknowledged and better understood - enjoy!'

Specific chapters on resilience; pedagogy; SEND; assessment; Early Years; Art; dialogue;

storytelling and film cover areas important to the well-being of children in a digital world. Those engaged in the curriculum areas of English, maths, science, STEM, MFL, and computing have a great deal to learn here.

The chapters on augmented reality; and interactive technologies and outdoor learning; and videoconferencing are illuminating in a Primary context. The chapters on neuro-positive strategies; global citizenship; school policies in online safety; and family learning, all enable us to think more widely of the impact of technology.

The concluding chapters on sustainable uses of technology, and how we can support CPD are invaluable for those of us engaged in developing the teaching profession moving forward. *Taylor Francis - imprint Routledge*

<https://www.taylorfrancis.com/books/edit/10.4324/9781315768823/teaching-learning-ict-primary-school-marilyn-leask-kevin-burden-sarah-younie>

