

The Dynamics and Limits of Adult Learning: Drivers and Barriers

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I propose to explore the dynamics and limits of Adult Learning within the scope of the conference agenda.

Touching on my personal experience, I will offer some comments on the wider value of the theme for FE college communities across the country.

I propose to conclude by sharing the Stockton Riverside College approach to adult learning.

An adult learner's journey as:

- **A school leaver**
- **An industrial worker**
- **A trade union representative**
- **An industrial relations co-ordinator**
- **An industrial quality inspector**
- **A community representative**
- **A publishing and retail business manager**
- **A writer and journalist**
- **An FE lecturer**
- **An FE manager**
- **A non-executive member of an NHS PCT**
- **An FE Principal**

Drivers:

- **Ambition, needs and demands**
- **Adult learning system**
- **Policy, strategy and funding (?)**
- **Lobbying, campaigns and professional influence**

Barriers:

- **Fragmented information, advice and guidance**
- **Lack of cross-system networking**
- **Absence of, or weaker, APLE provision**
- **Fragmentation of funding provision, higher fees**
- **Centralisation of strategies and priorities**
- **Marginalisation of inclusion, equality and diversity issues**

Stockton Riverside College approach:

- **Networked learning provision (from Playgroup to PhD)**
- **Contact, Access, Transition and Progression**
- **Responsive, but funding eligible curriculum**
- **Network:**
 - Schools, Parents, Community, Local Authority Adult Learning, Trade Unions, Employers, Agencies, Universities ...
- **Challenges:**
 - Centralisation
 - Resources
 - Multi-agency demands
 - Limits to professional autonomy

Solution:

- **Let FE colleges, ACL and others drive “Every Citizen Matters” focused adult learning in view of local needs and demands within the wider social, economic and cultural context**