BELONGING:
FE, LIFELONG LEARNING, POST-16 LEVEL 3 EDUCATION - ONLINE CONFERENCE

Thursday 25 June 2026 9.50am – 4.00pm

Free to members via ZOOM

Keynote Speaker:

Peter Lacey

Whose mathematics is it?

Whose mathematics is it? I was on a Zoom call with my French granddaughter who was struggling with her homework – long division, no surprise! She insisted I helped her how to use the method she had been taught. Task completed, she had done someone else's mathematics – not hers. That got me thinking about ownership.

I want to spend some time today sharing some thoughts about how I see the nature of mathematics and its learning interrelate.

Typically, a curriculum or examination specification is expressed in words as linear strings. Do these expressions reflect the structure of mathematics, or how it is learnt? How specific should they be? These expressions can trick us into interpreting sequences which may not resonate with the way learners sequence their understanding.

Using the ideas of specificity, sequence and structure, I would like to trigger some thinking about how we can make mathematics really belong to those who are learning it.

After 16 years teaching, Peter worked as a mathematics adviser in three different LAs. Between times, he worked at Newcastle and Sunderland Universities co-ordinating the Government-funded Raising Achievement in Mathematics Project. He was a lead professional officer for mathematics at the National Curriculum Council, and a member of the professional officer team at the School Curriculum and Assessment Authority, where he shared a responsibility for revising the National Curriculum, setting end of key stage tests and core skills specifications.

After 10 years as a LA deputy director of education, Peter set up the education consultancy, Ecarda, which is now in its 21st year. Peter has served 3 times as a member of ATM General Council, twice as its Chair. He has been a member of IMA, MA, and NAMA. He is now an AMiE trustee. Looking at mathematics through the lens of the learner has been Peter's viewpoint throughout his career.

Oracy in the A Level classroom

Mary Harris

"Talking, listening and communicating in maths are central to how pupils think, make sense of ideas and develop a deep understanding of the subject" (NCETM Oracy Framework).

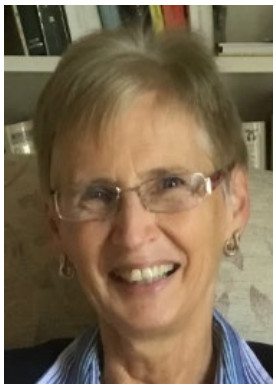
With an outline to the meaning of oracy, Mary will provide a brief overview of its development in education since the term was first coined by Andrew Wilkinson in 1965, and explore practical strategies which A Level teachers can use to plan activities that promote oracy in the classroom, supporting students in developing mathematical reasoning and deepening their understanding of the subject.

Mary has extensive experience teaching and leading A Level Mathematics in secondary schools and currently serves as a Post-16 Lead for a Maths Hub, where she has led CPD for A Level Maths teachers for the past six years. She has also recently been appointed to lead the Members' Interest Community for AMiE.

Belonging, believing and becoming in FE mathematics: productive pathways to GCSE

Jennie Golding

GCSE Mathematics resit learners have very often been labelled mathematical 'failures' for some years before they reach FE. There is a swathe of evidence suggesting that they are unlikely to progress to a confident grade 4+ within one, or even two, years of further study in FE.



The DfE's plans for a 'stepping stone qualification' towards GCSE Mathematics have in some places been tagged 'dumbing down'. This session unpacks for discussion specific ways in which such a qualification could, instead, be developed to promote precisely the belonging (in mathematics), believing (mathematics is for them) and becoming (confident users of mathematics) that many resit learners need. We shall discuss the characteristics of the qualification, and the in- and beyond-classroom approaches, as well as the wider support structures, required. Taken together, those would also serve to provide a more robust foundation for GCSE study should the learner wish to progress to that.

Jennie was for many years a teacher of learners aged 3-18 and a senior leader in schools, including teaching a range of post-16 students from Entry level to university entrance papers. She has taught

only briefly in General FE, but for ~30 years has worked in maths ed policy and professional development alongside teaching. She is now Professor of mathematics policy and practice at UCL, and chairs the 11-16 expert group of the Royal Society ACME. She has recently been working with FE experts to develop responses to the DfE 'stepping stone' qualification consultation.

Care in adult maths education (Lessons from Multiply)

Peter Whitehead

An oft-quoted National Numeracy statistic is that half the working-age population has the maths attainment of a primary school pupil. The Government's Multiply initiative, that ran from 2022-2025, created a new maths teaching workforce that worked out in the community, helping large numbers of adults who had needed help with maths all their lives but felt that college was not somewhere for them.

What new lessons did we learn from Multiply? About the damage inherited from school experiences, about the impact of deficit models, about the importance of care in adult education? What implications do these have for enrolment and initial assessment processes, and the funding rules that impact them? How can we improve the levels of commitment and attendance in adult courses that have been on the decline since COVID?

Peter is the Head of Maths at Barking & Dagenham College. He has been a leader of maths in general FE colleges, adult education settings and alternative provision. His is passionate about maths education as a social justice issue, and has particular interests in maths difficulties, education technology and the use of data analytics and AI to help teachers make timely and targeted intervention decisions.

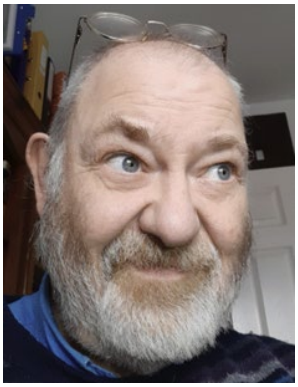
Rich Starting Points for A Level Mathematics (Risps)

Jonny Griffiths

I was a Gatsby Fellow for 2005-6, and my project was called "Risps (rich starting points) for A level Maths". The idea was to write new tasks that would encourage open and investigatory activity in classrooms that generally saw more didactic teaching. The forty original tasks proved to be popular. Now retired, I've returned to the Risp tasks and given them a major revision, resulting in the 2026 Risps

eBook. This session will take you through the eBook and its associated files, and possibly some of my other free A Level Maths resources too.

Jonny Griffiths taught mathematics at Paston Sixth Form College in Norfolk for over twenty years. He also taught at Frome College in Somerset, St Dominic's Sixth Form College in Harrow-on-the-Hill, St Philip Howard 11-16 comprehensive school in Tower Hamlets, Islington Sixth Form Centre, and Great Walstead School in West Sussex.



He's studied mathematics, computing and education at Cambridge University, Imperial College, the Open University and the University of East Anglia. Possible claims to fame include being a member of Harvey and the Wallbangers, a popular band in the 1980s, and playing the character Stringfellow on the television programme for children Playdays.

He's also worked for Underground Mathematics, MEI, Integral, Dorling Kindersley, York, HarperCollins and Hodder on creating mathematics resources. He was the originator and first author of the A Level Maths competition Ritangle in 2016, which has run every year since. He was for some years a Holgate Lecturer supported by the London Mathematical Society. He's written many articles for the Times Educational Supplement and many other journals on the topics of maths and maths education. A full list of his published work can be found at www.jonny-griffiths.net

Core Maths and FE - the what, the why and the how

Elizabeth Hopker-Blunt

Core Maths Level 3 qualifications equip learners with maths and critical analysis skills providing connection and confidence for the future, other studies and work.

Core Maths can be taught by teachers with different subject specialisms, and there is a grant available to centres who introduce it. Yet only around 50% of GFE colleges offer Core Maths in England - we believe every organisation in the sector should offer the course.

This session showcases the benefits of Core Maths to students in Further Education. We explore support available to teachers and centres that introduce and sustain the course to show you, as a member of the post-16 sector, how every learner could have the chance to access Core Maths.

Elizabeth Hopker-Blunt is a Maths Education Support Lead at MEI, with specialisms in Further Education, Functional Skills, GCSE resit and Core Maths. Prior to joining MEI in 2022, Liz taught and led on Functional Skills, GCSE, Level 3 Core Maths and A level Maths for 16-19 and adult provisions. Liz's enthusiasm lies in ensuring all students have access and support to reach their potential and enjoy maths at every level, no matter their background. She has a passion for supporting students from ESOL/EAL backgrounds, as well as bringing maths to life for each and every individual.

Belonging in the resit mathematics classroom: Supporting neurodiversity without othering

Tom McCormick

This session explores how fostering a sense of belonging can support learners presenting neurodivergent traits in post-16 mathematics classrooms. Drawing on classroom experience and current practitioner research, we will look at ways of supporting learners without unintentionally isolating or "othering" them. The session will focus on realistic strategies that are manageable within the realities of FE resit mathematics, including approaches linked to cognitive load, adaptive teaching, learner confidence, and classroom engagement.

Attendees will leave with practical ideas to take away and apply in their own classrooms, alongside a clearer understanding of how belonging, inclusion, and support can work together to improve engagement for all learners.

Tom is a Lecturer in Mathematics in an FE college, with over ten years' experience teaching GCSE resit and Functional Skills mathematics across Further Education. He has held roles including Programme Lead and Curriculum Lead and regularly delivers CPD on inclusive and adaptive teaching in mathematics. Tom is currently undertaking an MPhil in Education Research through the Education and Training Foundation and the University of Sunderland, focusing on engagement, belonging, and neurodiversity within resit mathematics classrooms.

Mathematics revolution

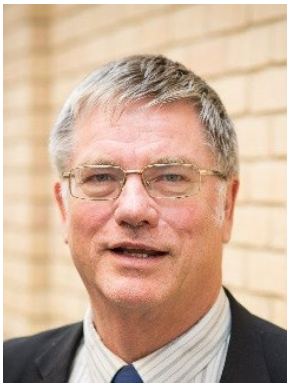
Julia Smith

Not so much a revolution but a turnaround - turning attitudes and performance around from resistance in success focusing specifically upon movement to Grade 4 from whatever starting point.
The session will touch upon Motivation and Engagement...building foundations - fluency, fundamentals and methods - making the maths relevant in post-16 work and moving from Exam Panic to Exam Power.

Julia Smith is a Maths Author and National Teacher Trainer having previously taught in Secondary and led a successful maths team at a large FE College for over a decade. Her most recent release is Maths Revolution published by Bloomsbury on which the session is based. Julia has also contributed to 'If I could tell you one thing' and 'This worked for me!'. She has written for Cambridge and Oxford University Press as well as Collins and BBC Bitesize.

Engaging older adults with mathematics

David Martin



What might learning mathematics look like for the older adult learner? David will be sharing from his many years of experience as the u3a National Subject Advisor for Mathematics and Statistics. The session will be a blend of presentation and engagement in sample activities.

David has been a mathematics researcher; mathematics education consultant; FE teacher, teacher trainer and external examiner. As the National Subject Adviser for Mathematics and Statistics for the u3a he works nationally to engage and reengage the retired with mathematics.

How do you teach maths to a diverse group of learners?

Maggie Caner

Maggie leads the Maths department at Hospital and Outreach Education, an AP academy for young people admitted to the CAMHS units, General hospitals and our learning bases. Maggie oversees Maths taught to young people in KS3 and KS4 who are too unwell to attend their mainstream school. She delivers functional skills, KS3, GCSE and A-level to post 16 as well as students in year 10 and 11 at a SEMH and CAMHs setting and all phases of Maths at the general hospitals.

Attendees will learn how Maths is taught in a SEMH and CAMHs unit in Northampton and how it is delivered to classes as a whole and to individuals, with a range of abilities, year groups and exam boards.

Each student has their own learning style and learning gaps too. Due to their individual medical/mental health needs, the teaching style needs to be adapted in order for each student to create an inclusive learning environment, so they can reach their full potential.

Over the years, I developed an in-house Maths curriculum at my specialist setting to cover the content in a way which allows for speed, gap filling and adaptive practice. Lessons are planned with a focus on oracy and all lessons begin with a starter based on retrieval skills (the mini whiteboard is great here) and the development stage often uses worksheets or online learning appropriate to FS Skills, GCSEs, both Foundation, Higher and for A-level too. As well as academic learning, the focus is on helping young people to engage and participate in Maths. HLTAs are deployed to further embed the knowledge gained.

As well as teaching Maths, Maggie has a keen interest in pedagogy and leads the pedagogical coaching sessions to all staff at her setting. Maggie is deaf and has her own strategies for ensuring that she can hear while in her professional role.