

# Language programme boosts literacy 'in hours'

August 17 2015, by Jonathan Garbett

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Young people with serious literacy difficulties can significantly boost their reading and writing skills in a matter of hours thanks to an innovative language project launched by an Aston graduate.

[Rapid English](#), founded by University alumnus David Hoare, brings literacy to people in 'hard to reach' places, such as those from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds or offenders in the justice system whose problems stem from poor communication.

The project provides training and specially developed computer software courses to over 60 frontlines services in the UK in areas ranging from education through to community and charity organisations and Young Offenders institutions. The Rapid English training programme identifies communication problems young people in these services are experiencing which impact upon their personal confidence, exam success, interview readiness and performance at work.

Simple and effective solutions to their literacy difficulties are then provided by the programme. These include improving handwriting proficiency by changing pen or pencil grip, furthering reading development by bolstering word recognition and introducing phonetic learning, instilling confidence when speaking and listening in formal settings and helping people express themselves clearly in writing by showing them how to form correct sentences and paragraphs.

Evidence suggests Rapid English's clients need only five to ten hours of

support over several sessions before becoming operational in all aspects of the language – dramatically improving their levels of social engagement and entry into employment.

Politics and International Relations graduate, David, who founded Rapid English with his father, said: "There are many people in the UK who have such low literacy that even the most remedial college courses are unfortunately beyond their reach. However, we have found that we can give [young people](#) who have crashed out of education, or who are struggling within it, almost immediate access to the world around them.

"We do this by using real-world language data to identify and prioritise the material that is actually useful and relevant to learners. I really do believe that society has only scratched the surface of how language is used. Nobody approaches the process of teaching and learning in such a precise, data-driven manner as us."

Formed in 2010, Rapid English initially concentrated on teaching English to foreign business people, making them fully operational in the language in less than 40 hours. The focus of their attention gradually changed to helping native speakers who have fallen behind with basic literacy, achieving success and acknowledgement.

Provided by Aston University

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