

Lifelong learning: the future is intergenerational

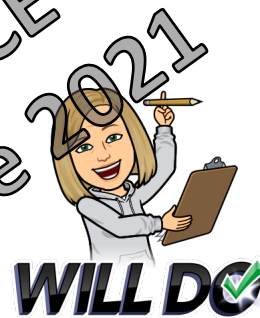
3 June, 2021
Sandra Flynn



Presentation outline

- Introduction
 - Background and context to my research
 - Research problem and purpose
- Insights
 - Data collected from young adults aged 18-25 years
- Next steps
 - Data collection from older adults aged 55 years and over

ICRI – HASS
CONFERENCE
2nd - 4th June 2021

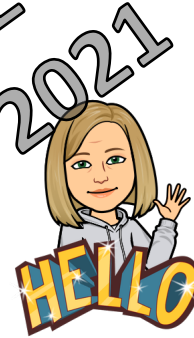


All images courtesy of Bitmoji

Who is Sandra?



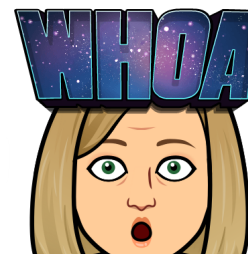
- ▣ A third year PhD student on the e-research and technology enhanced learning structured programme at Lancaster University.
- ▣ Eternal student and lifelong learner.
- ▣ An experienced project and programme manager.
- ▣ A long-standing part-time teacher of project management and MSc research supervisor at the University of Limerick, Ireland.



Research interest area?



Majority of over-65s have never used the internet



Source: <https://www.ageaction.ie/news/2018/03/28/majority-over-65s-have-never-used-internet>

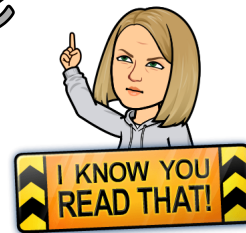
So, what's my research problem?

During the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, the importance was highlighted for information and communications technologies (ICTs) for the over-65-year-olds in general, in order to stay in contact with family and friends while confined to their homes.

Table: Never accessed the Internet

| Year | 65-74 years | 55-64 years |
|------|-------------|-------------|
| 2018 | 55% | 25% |
| 2019 | 33% | 17% |
| 2020 | 13% | 9% |

Source: Eurostat



So, what was my research about?

I was interested in understanding more about the digital communications skills of these older adults during the period...
...through the eyes of their younger family members.

I surveyed 442 young people between the ages of 18 and 25 years at two universities in Ireland where 56% supported one or more older family members with digital communications during the Spring 2020 lockdown period between March and June.

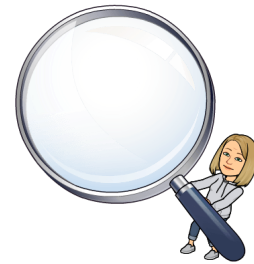


Research questions

Overarching: To what extent and how, did young people contribute to the development of digital communication skills in senior cohort family members during the several weeks of the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown in Ireland?

RQ1 - How successful and in what way, did young people consider their efforts to support their senior cohort family members with digital communications?

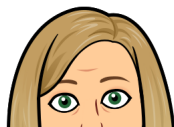
RQ2 - What did young people themselves learn from this intergenerational exchange experience?



What did I find?

- Theme 1 – “Age is only a number and family is everything”
- Theme 2 – “Mum has simply got left behind”
- Theme 3 – “The joy on their faces”
- Theme 4 – “Supporting older people is rewarding for both parties”

**WHAT
HAPPENED?**



Moving along, what's my PhD research about?



- ▣ My PhD research examines the contribution of intergenerational relationships to informal and non-formal lifelong learning practices of older adults in Ireland.
- ▣ The overarching research aim considers how and the extent to which intergenerational relationships can support the development of digital literacy skills amongst older adults.
- ▣ It offers a proposition that younger adults can support older adults to develop and maintain digital literacy skills and thus contribute to quality of life in later years.

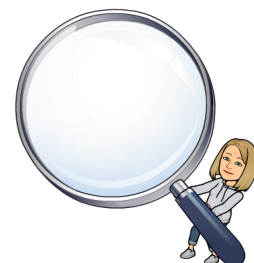
PhD research questions



RQ1 - What has been the contribution of Irish government digital policy to the achievement of the sustainable development goal, SDG4, of promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all?

RQ2 - How do informal and non-formal learning exchanges through use of digital technologies across the generations contribute to adult lifelong learning at all ages?

RQ3 - What are the perceived impacts to personal quality of later life by being connected in a digital world?



What do I expect to find?



References

- Age Action. Briefing Paper 6 - Supporting Digital Literacy among Older People. (2020)
https://www.ageaction.ie/sites/default/files/supporting_older_peoples_digital_literacy_briefing_paper_6_january_2020_update_of_paper_5_first_published_march_2018.pdf
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