

Reflection on teaching style for learners with additional requirements



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

During the course of this assessment I have attempted to maintain a consistent writing style with specific focus on what is required by the activities in terms of critical reflection, evaluation and analysis, with reference to associated course literature. The lesson was designed for a specific group of learners at NC level five to whom I have delivered and supported during their learning, for the purpose of this report I endeavoured to focus on two mature learners, who were observed to be learners with specific learning characteristics.

Inclusion is defined by Connor (2013) as ' the practice of someone being accepted for whom they are and changes are made accordingly'. Fife College Equality and Diversity policy (2016) does not make specific reference to Inclusion however statements within the policy such as ' Applying policies, procedures and processes fairly and with due regard to every individual, and, advice, support and guidance will be available to all students to ensure that they are able to fulfil their potential and contribute fully to their studies and the life of the college. Fife College (2016)' can be considered in this perspective to be inclusive when measured against inclusion as defined by Connor (2013). I acknowledge that no two learners are the same and plan my teaching styles accordingly with number of deliveries which will apply to a range of learning styles.

The NC level 5 programme requires a minimum entry qualification of three standard grades to include Maths, English and a Science related subject, the equivalent new National Standards, or in the case of mature students a period of relevant industry experience. All twelve learners are male and have attended an assessment interview prior to being offered a place. To begin <https://assignbuster.com/reflection-on-teaching-style-for-learners-with-additional-requirements/>

with these learners are fairly motivated, some are mature learners with family to support and identify this opportunity as a means of improving their employability and a means to maintain an acceptable standard of living. For others this is their next level learning experience and the responsibilities it creates.

The outcomes of the course being delivered are very regulatory in what is required of the learner. Education Scotland (Unknown) states:

‘ Curriculum for Excellence is designed to achieve a transformation in education in Scotland by providing a coherent, more flexible and enriched curriculum’.

Within my current cohort of case study learners, I had identified early on that in one particular case of recruitment we had enrolled one of our mature learners (Learner 1) in the incorrect level of programme as required by our admissions policy, I now find myself with a learner who was not yet ready for the level of learning required and is having a less than positive experience of the learning process, we soon identified that a troublesome previous educational and vocational experiences were what triggered his reluctance and averseness to the theory aspect of the learning process. Through negotiation with the student and guidance advisors we have identified a synergetic plan which has been implemented to support the learner and allow him to continue and appreciate what the programme had to offer. His learning characteristic of always asking questions, relevant or not, was a step towards developing his confidence, therefore his skills and knowledge.

One other individual (Learner 2) a mature student had expressed a need for learning support due to having dyslexia and dyspraxia and once again suitable strategy has been implemented to support him through theory sessions as he sees them as very challenging. I thrive on promoting the development of learners who are not afraid to request additional help with learning, I use what are determined as weaknesses to attempt to transform them into strengths. In the past we have had students with similar 'weaknesses' or low esteem, low confidence, but as with this student, show patience, some understanding, and creative skills; the latter can be developed into a very acceptable standard of practical skills in our field of study, using and developing these skills effectively, raises confidence and shows the learner that they have abilities that we can develop further if they allow us to extract it from them, in addition to this Fife College Learning & Teaching Strategy (2017) outlines strategic themes; in theme four Learning Environment, it lists one of the points as (item 4. 3) the learning environment encourages staff as well as students to learn through collaboration, e. g. sharing practice, cross disciplinary approaches. The confidence the learner gained from his enhanced practical skills developed a better attitude to the theory aspect of the course. This method ties in with the thoughts of Armitage et al (2012) (247) states '...evaluation involves generating data through a process of inquiry and then, on the basis of this, making judgements about the strengths and weaknesses'. Following peer discussion with the other course lecturers it was noted that the level of attention and retention of information in class had been improved therefore increasing the probability of attainment for both these students.

' People usually think of human diversity in terms of hot button group differences' The Co-Intelligence Institute (2003-2008). This minimises less valued human diversity factors such as behaviour and attitude. I challenged the group on one such example, a lack of compliance in isolating electrical equipment at the end of each session, this resulted in a group discussion, whereby the learners agreed to have one person each session check equipment was off prior to leaving the workshop. This resulted in a change of attitude and behaviour and the bonus of reducing daily power consumption.

In order for me to develop my teaching methods for this level, I used the learning style resource VARK developed by Fleming (1987) which identifies visual, aural/auditory, read/write, kinaesthetic sensory modalities that are used for learning VARK (2016). In this class delivery a section of Health and Safety in Engineering had to be introduced, I was aware that part of the lesson incorporated Health and Safety issues and from previous experience knew it was not a subject that interests all and was eager to offer the opportunity to influence the delivery. I ensured my learning resources were inclusive and appealed to a range of sensory modalities. The class opened with group discussion reflecting on what had been covered in the workshop in the previous session; this presented an opportunity to those with who favoured aural and auditory learning. The lesson's delivery of power point presentation, discussion, written tutorials covered read / write / aural / auditory, then learners could read and then write answers specific to questions on the tutorial, another version delivery of the tutorial is question and answer, for the learner with dyslexia or similar conditions, the session ended with short videos specific to the topic, kinaesthetic method. The

conclusion of this part of lesson was a short discussion covering the relevant points of the lesson followed by a brief description of the topic to be covered in the next session. I carried out a brief survey of all groups and discussed the result of this with them and with colleagues; I was surprised that although they identified Health and Safety was not the most exciting subject, the group were enjoying the variety of deliveries and recognised that the variety made the class more inclusive and engaging.

There is a natural tendency for a particular mode of learning to occur with level five groups. The example of situated learning, as described by Lave and Wenger (1991) is one which I detect my learners naturally support within a community of practice as described by Wenger (1998). I observed learners adjust from being an individual learner, to form a community, and progressively start to learn from each other's skills, knowledge, and experiences within this community. This is most obvious when learners who approach me for answers to problems and I ask them to first consider their own solution, without doubt, they will eventually use community members for support and obtain advice from those who have either completed that part of a task or are thought to be more experienced. Through my observations I agree with the following statement:

A person's intentions to learn are engaged and the meaning of learning is configured through the process of becoming a full participant in a sociocultural practice. This social process, includes, indeed it subsumes, the learning of knowledgeable skills. (Lave and Wenger 1991)

In my opinion there are many benefits in situated learning within a community of practice, learners are better engaged with their learning. Vigilance is also required to ensure the community is sharing best practice and knowledge, there is a risk poor practices becomes permanent if not diligently regulated.

Maslow (1943) recognised five human levels of need, I consider the areas requiring focus to fulfil these learner's confidence are the top levels of need, esteem and self-actualisation; but also incorporating self-esteem, achievement, morality, creativity, and the ability to problem solve. The teaching methods I used helped nurture many of those needs with one particular learner who was lacking in confidence, it resulted in him being more engaged as a result of the small group discussions we undertook. I regularly confer with my learners about how I have delivered the lesson, offering them the opportunity to propose alternative methods. They quite often accept the limitations of the environment, but they are largely satisfied with the diversity of methods used to deliver and prefer my diversity to other learning experiences. This level of learners favour the workshop environment as it is one which all are familiar with, and why most of them initially applied for the particular level of education. This particular workshop area has a large work bench which allows a U shaped seating arrangement, Atherton (2013) says '...the students can make eye-contact with each other' I believe this better caters for whole group discussion returning to this environment re-ignited behaviours present in their community of practice Wenger (1998), they became more engaged in the group and with me, I was able to deliver the subject in much the same way as would have been in the classroom in

terms of delivery modes but with the more relaxed environment of the workshop. This particular lesson was discussing the different types of marking out processes, the benefits and limitations of each method.

Following a toolbox talk and demonstration of the equipment and methods to be applied, I issued a working drawing and fabrication materials, instructed them to collect the relevant equipment from the tool store and carry out the task as required, reminding them of the accuracy and tolerance limits that were applied to the work-piece. On successful completion of the practical task, I flipped the class and through a bit of persuasion within the group they agreed to prepare and deliver small group talks to their peers using tools and equipment as an aid comparing the different results from each method. They were provided with enough time to prepare with the opportunity of working in groups planning the presentation. As this was impromptu I was fearful as to the outcome, however it was a chance to give reluctant or timid learners an opportunity to accomplish a sense of achievement, raise self-esteem, and personal potential, as in Maslow's self-actualisation needs (1943). The outcome was positive with the three groups presenting very different styles, with the reluctant students coming to the fore and leading the task.

Reflecting on my experience of guidance and support functions there is a three phase approach to this, involving a network of teams with specific roles to deliver to accomplish the overall objective. The first phase within the guidance and support process as identified previously, is critical, not solely for any would-be student but critical to the ability to deliver a successful outcome for the learner. Fife College Admissions Policy (2018/19) states;

<https://assignbuster.com/reflection-on-teaching-style-for-learners-with-additional-requirements/>

It is important that the admissions procedure results in the placing of students on the right course for their needs. This is critical for a good student experience and likelihood of success.

I feel that a positive support network can make all the difference attainment. This has mutual benefits to the learner and the learner experience and links well with the organisation performance indicators, which is a key measure of success in any programme. Currently the PI data for the fabrication and welding programmes at Fife College are above that of the national average. Across five programme levels within fabrication and welding successful completion was 81% with a sector average within the same programme groups being 69% (2016/17). This performance can be attributed to the result of a culmination of factors including effective curriculum alignment, providing positive engagement, effective and efficient guidance and support function, and a robust recruitment processes.

During the summative assessment process with my learners, a gap in their knowledge and understanding was identified, they were unsure how to conduct themselves under assessment conditions particularly when the assessment was question and answer style. It soon became obvious that my learners had insufficient understanding of summative assessment protocol. Based on this I devised formative assessment resources to wholly reflect the conditions that the learners would encounter during summative assessment. Previous validation of learning was performed through question and answer sessions, tutorials and group discussion which didn't subject them to the conditions and behaviours expected for summative assessment. By adopting this format, I believe I have shown and supported my learners to a different <https://assignbuster.com/reflection-on-teaching-style-for-learners-with-additional-requirements/>

type of learning and they have acquired a number of supplementary benefits in that they no longer feel as apprehensive when the time for summative assessment arises, they now know what is to expect and what expected of them. During formative assessment the layout and style of question paper reflects what will be encountered in summative assessment, resulting in less distraction as a result of unfamiliarity. The learner can now focus on what is required in terms of response to the questions.

Bellon et al (1991) state Academic feedback is more strongly and consistently related to achievement than any other teaching behaviour...this relationship is consistent regardless of grade, socioeconomic status, race, or school setting.

My understanding of this statement strikes a chord, as in my experience the first thing that my students ask on completion of an assessment is 'have I passed?' This intimated that some learners view external recognition as having greater importance than fundamental learning. I attempt to deliver feedback that is further reaching than the now, I believe this encourages learners to regard this in the setting of their wider goals rather than something that is a means to achievement at that time.

Feedback on how they have performed is an important aspect of assessment of my learners. My feedback style can vary depending on what it is required, verbal or written can be within a few days, sometimes immediately for practical assessments. I believe feedback is dependent on the situation and learner. I decide how to deliver feedback based upon certain criteria,

including the individual learners needs, group needs, the context of the programme and learner experience.

References

- Armitage A, Evershed J, Hayes D, Hudson A, Kent J, Lawes S, Poma S, Renwick M (2012) Teaching and Training in Life Long Learning Berkshire Open University Press
- Atherton JS (2013) Learning and Teaching; Physical Layout <http://www.learningandteaching.info/teaching/layout.htm> Accessed 07. 02. 16
- Bellon, J. J., Bellon, E. C., & Blank, M. A. (1991) Teaching from a Research Knowledge Base: a Development and Renewal Process. Facsimile edition. Prentice Hall, New Jersey, USA.
- The Co-Intelligence Institute (2003-2008) Human Diversity <http://www.co-intelligence.org/i-diversity.html> Accessed 24. 01. 16
- Education Scotland (Unknown) The four capacities <http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/learningandteaching/thecurriculum/whatiscurriculumforexcellence/thepurposeofthecurriculum/index.asp> Accessed 24. 01. 16
- Education Scotland (Unknown) What is Curriculum for Excellence <http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/learningandteaching/thecurriculum/whatiscurriculumforexcellence/index.asp> Accessed 24. 01. 16
- Fife College (2014) Fife College Equality and Diversity Policy <https://staff.fife.ac.uk/support/hrt/Policies%20and%20Procedures/Forms/AllItems.asp> Accessed 25. 01. 16

- Fife College (2015 16) Learning Teaching and Programme Review (LTPR) <https://staff.fife.ac.uk/support/quality/default.aspx> Accessed 14. 02. 2016
- Fife College Learning and Teaching Strategy 2017 <https://staff.fife.ac.uk/com/pp/Documents/Strategies/Learning%20and%20Teaching%20Strategy.pdf> Accessed 05. 12. 2018
- Fife College (2014 15) Learning Teaching and Programme Review (LTPR) <https://staff.fife.ac.uk/support/quality/default.aspx> Accessed 13. 02. 2016
- Lave, J. and Wenger, E. (1991) Situated Learning. Legitimate peripheral participation, Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press
- McLeod, S. A. (2014). Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs www.simplypsychology.org/maslow.html Accessed 06. 02. 16
- Smith, Mark K. (2001, 2006) ' Evaluation' in the encyclopaedia of informal education, www.infed.org/biblio/b-eval.htm. Accessed 28. 02. 16
- VARK (2016) a guide to learning styles <http://vark-learn.com/> Accessed 24. 01. 16
- Wenger E (1998) Communities of practice Learning, meaning, and identity Cambridge: Cambridge University Press