

Identify and assess learners needs



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Identify and Assess Learners' Needs Assignment 109

1. Describe a group, or a selection of individuals, their background, barriers to their learning and their learning needs and styles. The NVQ Early Years Care & Education programme, level 2 and 3 is spread over 2 years, although candidates may be able to finish in less time depending on their personal commitments. The entry requirement for level 2 is that they are working (either employed or voluntary) in an Early Years setting. Level 3 candidates must prove that they have supervisory responsibilities in the workplace.

They do not have to be the supervisor; they may be a room manager or a deputy. Childminders automatically undertake the level 3 because they have sole responsibility for the children in their care. Both levels attend together on the first night for the Induction then split up to attend alternate weeks. This group are going to trial the VLE and some may use Quickstep as I am part of the NLN Project. The classes are structured to teach the candidates how to present their evidence to build a portfolio to prove their competence. A lot of the time is spent translating the NVQ standards into a language they can understand. The challenge with childcare is that children are unpredictable; candidates can become frustrated when planning does not go according to plan. In my Year 1 group of students, I have eighteen candidates with mixed ability.

They have an age range of between 20 and 51 years old. They are all female and working in either pre-school, nursery or are childminders. Eleven are level 2 and work under the guidance of a supervisor or manager, and seven are level 3 and are in a supervisory role. A large percentage of learners are

attending the course because it is a requirement of their employment.

Although they are generally keen, some feel they have been out of the education system for too long and are nervous about returning, others don't

feel they have the academic qualities needed to complete the course or the time to devote to it. These were typical barriers to learning as reported in the Barriers to Learning NALS Research doc, p62 www.dfes.gov.uk/research/data (Accessed 2004, Oct 6) that found (of new learners): 36% Preferred to spend time doing other things.

24% Lack time due to family. 28% Lack time due to work. 24% Nervous about going back to the classroom. My level 2 group has eleven candidates, nine working in pre-schools, one childminder and two from Reception/Transition class in a private school. My youngest candidate in this group is 19, my oldest is 45 years old. In the level 2 group PM has severe dyslexia, and (JW) has an unidentifiable special need. The group worked

flagged up her problem as she came to me at the end saying she felt thick and stupid because she couldn't put on paper what was in her head. She had sat next to the other candidate with dyslexia and felt reassured that someone else was struggling with this.

I reassured her that I could do something about it if she wanted me to, and explained the initial assessment procedure to her. She was happy that I should contact Learning Support. MM, although qualifies to undertake a level 3 qualification, opted to take level 2 as this suited her long term plans. JP and RP work at the same pre-school and are good support for one another.

They are slightly older than the others in the group and are Activists. The remainder of the group just have a lack of confidence and they feel they do not have a lot of time to spare when juggling work and family life. Of my level 3 candidates, I observed that SC was very tired. She had been at work in the college nursery since 8am and had come straight to the class at 7pm.

She was fine while we did the work on the computer but visibly flagged during the written work. KB (childminder) had arrived late and flustered, as she has to organise childcare cover before coming to college. SS was terrified of the computer. EG was a late enroller, I need to keep my eye on her, as she didn't seem too keen to take notes. 2. Outline the methods used to obtain the information. Students make the initial approach to enrol, either by coming along to an Open Evening, phoning Customer Services or phoning me directly. They are sent an Application pack (see appendix A) consisting of an Enrolment Form, Application Form, Candidate Profile and Course Information Leaflet about the course.

The Enrolment Form and the Candidate Profile Form (see appendix C.) both have a box with options to tick to identify any support they need. When completed, these are returned to me and I then make an appointment to interview each one of them.

The purpose of this is to make sure they are on the appropriate course and level to match their job role and responsibilities. I am able to give them information on other courses available, not necessarily at Eastleigh College, that may suit their learning style better as a vocational course that is done in

their own time is not always the best way to achieve. Issues around any special needs they may have are discussed.

For most of the candidates I will send a Reference Form (see appendix B.) to the employer to confirm their job role, and to ensure the employer is aware of what areas of work the candidate must be involved with in order to complete the qualification. During the interview I explain what the qualification involves, give an insight to the quantity of written work they can expect and the amount of time they will need to commit to the course outside of the college. Research also suggests that ??? practical barriers such as lack of time due to work commitments may be more easily overcome than lack of motivation to learn??™. Barriers to Learning NALS Research doc, p10 [www. dfes.](http://www.dfes.gov.uk/research/data)

[gov. uk/research/data](http://gov.uk/research/data) (Accessed 2004, Oct 6)As my candidates attend college less than the 210 guided learning hours needed to qualify for mandatory Initial Assessment; I have to rely on my Application Forms and interviews to identify their needs. 3. Analyse how the information gathered is used to develop the groups learning.

Level 2: Having assessed my learners??™ needs, I followed this up for PM and JW, who both undertook the College Initial Assessment and Literacy Assessment in the Learning Resource Centre (LRC), liaising with Learning Support has done this. Once Learning Support had their results, they were offered one to one support outside the classroom on a weekly basis, neither was allocated a note taker but this could have been an option. JW has now decided she no longer needs this support, because she feels she is getting

enough support and appropriate information from the lesson. I do back this up with regular 1: 1 tutorials. When doing brainstorming or large group feedback, I use blank OHT??™ s on the OHP to write on, so that I can photocopy them and give them out as handouts. This means that JW and PM don??™ t need to take notes, and because both these learners are visual learners, this method works. I have found that PM is very vocal in a positive way, and is confident and happy to discuss her experiences with the group so is a very useful resource during discussion times.

For RP and JP I provide small group activities where they have to actually produce something in the class. This gives them the opportunity to discuss the problems they are having with others in the group, and I am there to guide if necessary. Level 3: To make sure that SC got the same information as the rest of the class, I made sure to have regular handouts that she could read at a time when she was feeling less tired. As KB is generally a bit late, I fit individual reviews at the start of the class so that she does not miss any information.

My students have all had to register with Quickstep, which is NVQ on-line although they don??™ t now have to use it. Since then, and because I am part of the NLN project team, my groups are being introduced to the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE). This could have been a problem with my students who do not want to use the computer, but I have been able to introduce small amounts of PC work into the lesson to ease them into it.

They have all been able to see the benefits of using it despite the VLE not up and running when they??™ ve needed it! In the classroom, I have watched all

the candidates to see how they take part in large group discussions, small group discussions, paired tasks and individual tutorials. From this I am able to plan and adjust my future sessions to meet the changing needs of all the candidates so that nobody feels excluded. Every candidate comes to the course with a variety of knowledge, skills and experiences. This is an important resource.

It might mean that I need to prescribe where the candidates sit for different sessions, so that confident and non-confident sit together occasionally to share their experiences and gain confidence. Appendices A. Application Pack B. Reference Form C. Candidate Profiles

Bibliography: 1. Internet: National Adult Learning Survey (NALS) 2001 - www.dfes.gov.uk/research/data (Accessed 2004, Oct 6)

Barriers to Learning NALS Research doc, p10 www.dfes.gov.uk/research/data (Accessed 2004, Oct 6)