

Informative essay on planning and enabling learning

[Sociology](#), [Communication](#)



Introduction

For this essay I will research the following areas: negotiating with learners, functional skills, inclusive learning and communication. I will look at how and why each of these areas are important to teaching and how I can gain a better understanding of them in order to enable my learners to learn.

Rationale Negotiating with learners When considering the area negotiating with learner's research identifies that a focus on initial assessment of learners and agreeing goals is important.

It is necessary to know why we negotiate with learners, how we do it and the barriers involved. Lesley Thom (2001) explored the reasons why learners need to feel involved in order to progress their learning. I intend to analyse the role of initial assessment and planning and negotiating learning goals. Within my own area ground rules are established so learners know what is expected of them. When learners do not follow these rules negotiation must take place. ' Rules and models destroy genius and art' (Hazlitt, cited in Wallace, 2007, p. 42).

Hazlitt suggested that enthusiasm, creativity and initiative will not easily flourish in a situation where too many externally imposed rules allow only one pre-specified way of doing things' My learners have emotional and behavioural difficulties and always need to be given other options. They need to feel they have some power of the outcome of the situation. This then enables them to become motivated. Initial assessment within my area is important as we have learners at a range of levels come to us at different

ages, often with little schooling. Initial assessment allows us to pitch work at the right level.

If we were to get this wrong it could have serious repercussions to that learner, they may feel unmotivated, insecure and they will not want to engage in the learning environment. Inclusive Learning The Open University defines inclusive learning as: recognising, accommodating and meeting the learning needs of all your students (open-university online). I interpret this to mean that each learner is individual and as individuals each learner has individual needs. It is up to the teacher to accommodate these needs. Inclusive learning means that individual learners are not merely grouped together but taught with their individual needs in mind. Learners need to be actively included and fully engaged' (Tomlinson 1996). I will look at the stages of the learning cycle and how this applies to inclusive learning. I will also look at session planning - (Bloom 1956), mastery of subjects and the promotion of higher forms of thinking rather than on an approach which simply transfers facts. I will look at teaching methods (VARK) and resources for those with learning disabilities as I feel I can relate this to my own area. Many learners I teach have an entitlement statement which shows individual needs.

This is something which is closely used along side how we differentiate. This is one thing that will depend on how I session plan, the teaching methods I will use and what resources I will use during the session. Functional Skills Functional skills are qualifications in English, Maths and ICT. Edexcel defines functional skills as ' qualifications designed to help build practical skills for

work, education and everyday life' - (edexcel). This is very important for learners because it has been observed by the government that when it comes to employment employees have not obtained the right level of literacy, numeracy and ICT.

By embedding functional skills it allows learners to have a good level of competence in each of the core subjects. Learners will then feel like they have achieved. This achievement can then continue into employment because they will be ready for the workplace. This will also benefit individual business and the economy. Within my area functional skills are used for learners who are at a lower level. By embedding functional skills we are applying everyday skills to learning. Learners are curious and have a more enthusiastic approach to learning. Communication

Communication covers a wide range of topics and there are a number of theories about how we communicate. We communicate verbally and non-verbally. Most of our communication is through our body language. On a face to face basis words account for 7% of the overall message, tone of voice accounts for 38% and body language accounts for 55% - (Mehrabien, 1971 online). In order for learners to understand what it is that is expected of them they need to fully understand what is being communicated to them. Communication must be effective between sender and receiver. There are different factors which can prevent effective communication e. . noise (Shannon and Weaver 1949). Teachers need to take into consideration any barriers there could be to communication e. g. learning difficulties, outside factors that are unknown to the teacher and a lack of NVC. I will look at the

types of verbal and non-verbal communication and motivation of learners I will look at the hierarchy of needs, (Maslow 1954). I will look at how I use verbal and NVC within my sessions and identify ways in which these can be improved. Methodology My essay will consist of research on: negotiating with learners, communication, functional skills and inclusive learning.

I will look at a variety of opinions and sources. Approach To gather information I will use the internet, relevant academic text books, and notes from the sessions I have attended. I will also use information presented by my peers in the form of presentations covering the topics I will research. Precipitous Negotiating with learners Initial assessment of learner's knowledge, learning styles and skills must take place in order to establish levels of learning. It may also be to group learners correctly and to make you aware of what will motivate your learners to identify targets.

Learners should be thoroughly involved in the assessment process. 'Assessment should not be something that is done to somebody. The learner must feel involved and feel part of the process' (Thom, 2001, P. 16). There are many different methods of initial assessment e. g. a range of tests, questionnaires, self and peer evaluation, group and paired work, presentations and question and answer sessions. In my own area I use a lot of practical demonstrations but I find this hard to use as an initial assessment. A lot of the learners I work with get quite nervous about tests so I give them quizzes instead.

The quiz still reflects their knowledge and gives me a good idea of where to start with them. Students also carry out a GOAL Online and VARK test to

establish learning styles. I think the VARK test is a very useful tool but I also think that as teachers we should be incorporating all learning styles into our lessons. Planning and Negotiating Learning Goals Learning goals are subject specific and will set out achievable targets for the learner. These targets should be SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and timely) so learners are clear.

Mager (1984) stated that ' If you don't know where you are going, it is difficult to select a suitable means for getting there'. Learners need to know what they are going to learn. There needs to be a finish line for them to work towards. Goals can be short term, long term and immediate. Short term goals are specific and I often use these on a termly basis e. g. by then end of term you will be able to identify 3 ways in which someone could receive an electric shock. When a learner has achieved this over a short period of time it will motivate them towards their end goal which encompasses the whole course e. . by the end of the 16 week course you will hold a level 3 Young First Aider qualification. For my learners I need to constantly remind them of the overall goal. It is important for learners to be involved in setting their own targets. Learners may want to negotiate their learning goals and they should be encouraged to do so. Department for Education and Skills (DfES), (2004) states ' The learner is at the heart of the process' I think this is in reference to the learning cycle where the learner is at the centre. Learning goals must be agreed with the learner.

For my learners once a target has been met there is a reward in place. Negotiating allows for reflection to take place and establishes boundaries.

Learners will become more independent. Once goals have been set they should be recorded in an Individual Learning Plan (ILP). They often have conditions such as Dyslexia and ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder). I aim to know my learners very well. Within my session plans as part of my differentiation is to know which learners will need extra support, a variety of activities, use of VARK learning styles and to have a behavioural management plan in place. When session planning it is important to take into consideration learners knowledge.

Blooms Taxonomy (1956) model shows us through 6 stages that in order to have effective learning and reach the last stage you must first have knowledge. For effective learning to have taken place learners must go through each stage. (Appendix 1). Session plans must incorporate a range of resources; these can be seen in (Appendix 2). Not all resources are inclusive. The report Exclusion to Inclusion from the Disability Rights Task Force (1999) states that ' disabled people are twice as likely as non-disabled people to be un-employed and to have no formal qualifications'.

As a teacher you need to make sure the resources you use are inclusive to all learners. When considering what resources to use I think it helps to know my own learning styles and that of my learners. Laird (1985) suggests that learning occurs when the senses of sight, hearing, touch, smell and taste are stimulated.

I also do use worksheets for lower level students and I can easily adapt these to suit high level learners but I do find my learners who have ADHD or dyslexia taken an immediate dislike to them. Worksheets can become

boring. This is more of a visual resource. I have started to use more ICT within my lessons and I try to use our interactive whiteboards when possible. This is good for presentations and it provides a focus for the group but it's not always inclusive as not all learners can use it. This is a very visual resource and it can provide auditory activities such as video clips.

By using a range of resources it promoted equality, supports diversity as we are catering to individuals and it contributes to effective learning. Learners entitlement statement is also taken into consideration as is their ILP and IEP's (Individual Education Plan) and IBP's (Individual Behavioural Plan). Integrating Functional Skills Within my area of First Aid I aim to embed as many functional skills as I can. I feel I am able to embed literacy and ICT successfully but I find it very hard to embed numeracy. I feel it is important to demonstrate my own competence in the minimum core in order to develop them in my learners.

Edexcel, (Online) states that functional skills are qualifications that equip learners with the basic practical skills required in everyday life, education and the workplace. In order for learners to go into employment successfully functional skills should be embedded. The Tomlinson Report (2004) looked at reforming the 14-19 curriculum and qualifications. Tomlinson looked at 'getting the basics right and developing the generic knowledge, skills and attributes necessary for the participation in higher education, working life and the community.

The report also incorporates 'common knowledge, skills and attributes (CKSA) - (Appendix 3). Within my own area I incorporate literacy by ensuring

my learners use grammar and punctuation correctly. My learners are given worksheets to complete and they make notes. Learners are given information and have to spell key words. To incorporate ICT learners have access to computers and laptops and they can research topics, construct PowerPoint presentations, create posters and leaflets and they sometimes have access to the interactive whiteboard. Learners will also use word to type up notes and keep a glossary of terms.

By embedding these functional skills into lessons it enables learners to apply their knowledge to everyday situations. Learners are learning skills for the workplace and higher education opportunities. Communication There are many forms of communication e. g. verbal and non verbal communication (NVC). Examples of verbal communication:

- Speaking
- Interpersonal
- Television
- Radio Examples of NVC:
- Sounds
- Facial Expression
- Appearance
- Posture

For my research I have evaluated my own communication skills and ways in which these could be improved. (See Appendix 4). When it comes to communicating effectively with learners there are often barriers that you have to overcome. The Shannon and Weaver (1949) model (shown below)

shows that in order to communicate effectively a message must be sent, encoded and then decoded by the receiver. For this to happen there must be no barriers, if there are barriers then the message may be misinterpreted. This model gives the example of noise as a potential barrier to communication. [pic] The Shannon-Weaver model also proposes that you can have physical, psychological and semantic barriers.

Geoff Petty, (2004) in his book *Teaching Today* states that you need feedback from the learner to ensure information has not been misinterpreted. Through my research I have found that all of these areas are important when planning and enabling learning and that they all link together.