Verbal and non-verbal communication essay sample

Communication is a basic human right and is the mean's, through which we control our existence, make friends, build relationships, become independent, make choices and is the way we learn (Gray et al 2005). Therefore, communication is extremely important in all aspects of life, but especially within the teaching and learning environment. Reece and Walker (2003) cited that ' Communication is essentially about one person who sends a message which is received by a second person; however some form of channel, or means of communication is needed'.

The manner in which a teacher portrays him or herself to students and how students perceive that teacher, is critical in developing a healthy atmosphere of learning (Huddleston et al, 2003). We as teachers all want to communicate in a style, which our student's will feel beneficial, but how do we identify the ' good' and ' bad' aspects of our role as communicators?

The aim of this assignment, is to discuss and evaluate the way in which I the writer, communicates with my student's and in doing so, will be discussing and reflecting within my own practice, outlining verbal and non-verbal communication, the characteristics of an effective learning environment, how to encourage autonomy and independent learning, positive reinforcement methods in behaviour, barriers to communicating and the integration of theoretical models.

The style of communication, body language and the language used in our teaching is a significant and powerful factor in setting a positive and purposeful climate in the classroom. Therefore, effective learning requires that the communication is a two way process, but this is no easy matter in

practise as a number of barriers present themselves which prevent or inhibit effective communication (Petty 2001). An effective learning environment

In the best of all possible worlds, an effective classroom environment should be visually stimulating, motivate students to learn more, empower and support learner's to take some responsibility for their own learning, encourage self-learning and autonomy, enable all learners' to have an equal opportunity to make progress, support differentiation to meet the needs of individual learners, is workable and realistic and is one in which the learning activities intended are manageable and realistic and within your current professional capabilities (www. eachernet. gov. uk).

There can be many different barriers to adult learning, largely relating to the individual's own circumstances, background and personality. It has already been asserted that barriers can be located within the learner, within the centre of learning, within the education system and within the broader social, economic and political context. However, these barriers manifest themselves in different ways and only become obvious when learning breakdown occurs, when learners ' drop out' of the system or when the excluded become visible.

Therefore, the key to preventing barriers from occurring is the effective monitoring and meeting of the different needs and below are factors that can adversely affect communication, within a learning environment. Room Layout Attitudes Room Environment Feelings Resources Literacy/Numeracy needs Emotions Language Barriers Personal Issues Climate Learning Style

Other learners Teaching Methods Social Divide When communicating to students it is important to use vocabulary appropriate to the group. We need to communicate to our students in order to teach them and for them to learn from us.

Therefore, learning can be made much easier for the student by using relevant language, comparisons, actions, acronyms and speaking to them with the correct rhythm, tone, pitch and volume (Gray et al, 2005) It has often been recognised that communication in the classroom takes place on a non-verbal level. This is where the teacher and student convey their messages via their body language. We as teachers use body language in our every day practice, without even realising it. However, little do we recognize the consequences that the way portray ourselves, has on our students; whether positive or negative!

The old saying ' a picture tells a thousand words' is very true, as the way we look, stand, touch & dress can have a profound effect upon a learner's interpretation of what is being said, than any spoken word alone. The spoken word is just made up of empty letters and meanings, unless it is conveyed with feeling, meaning ; tone, since the interpretation can be quite different to each individual learner. During my teaching sessions I have sometimes been misinterpreted and my language misconstrued, because of the way that something was said, which was not the intended meaning.

In face-to-face communication, we use different tones and intonations of the voice, we use different humour to lighten a moment, therefore, tone and

emotions are important to convey the intended essence of the meaning that it is intended, as quite often communication can break down very easily and the learner's concentration levels can waiver very easily. There are non-verbal barriers to communication too. A teacher needs to have the right physical appearance. For myself, as a cognitive co-learner, I prefer a more informal dress style that does not portray the image of a typical classroom teacher, but still maintaining a professional image.

During the contact with my learner's there is a culmination of non-verbal characteristics that is evident with my learner's. For instance, I often smile to encourage, show pleasure, praise, show enthusiasm and interest. However, on occasions to portray disbelief, disappointment or disapproval, I frown, raise my eyebrows and change ego states from an adult to a parent. My voice also has a different meaning with what I am conveying. For instance when my pitch & tone of voice is raised, this indicates that I am angry and annoyed, however it may also mean that I am excited and exuberant.

A teacher who mumbles to the board, who swallows words, who speaks in a monotone manner, who says unexplained technical and specialist terms, who does not repeat points and speaks too quickly, is a very ineffective and negative way of delivering teaching sessions Room Layout I feel the physical environment is very important during the process of learning and in which the way we communicate with our student's. The room lay out is often taken into consideration, therefore a spacious training room that provides a welcoming and stimulating tmosphere to my learner's is one that I always take pride in.

The layout and decor of surroundings is often well thought-out, as this can have a major impact, on whether or not learning is taking place effectively. My particular group of learner's are all pregnant and working towards an accredited qualification, therefore comfortable chairs, varied working areas and a non-classroom environment is vital for acquiring a relaxed atmosphere, which undoubtedly has proved vital to achieve optimal learning.

Many of my learner's have had negative experiences at school, or have been dis-engaged from education. Therefore, the layout of the tables is very important so that when I am delivering a tutor-led session, everyone is sat facing the board and can see what is being written down, as many of my learner's have spelling difficulties. However, if the learner's are working either in small groups, or in pairs, then they usually sit facing each other, which aims to give me, the teacher, freedom to walk around the room and ct as a facilitator, rather than a typical ' classroom teacher' which puts across a message to the learner's that we are all learning together.

Within the training room there is a learner achievement board, which displays on-going milestone achievements, scheme of work, weekly timetable and scheduled reviews. This has proved to be an effective way of communicating with my learner's, as it enables them to feel that their needs are being addressed and also gives the learner more ownership of their programme and responsibility for their own learning.

Personal issues, attitudes, feelings Effective learning is directly related to and dependent on the social and emotional well being of the learner.

Therefore, it is important to Recognise that particular conditions may arise within the social, economic and political environment in which the learner lives, which impact negatively on the learner's social and emotional well-being, thus placing the learner at risk of learning breakdown.

This is very much the ase within my particular learning environment, as the programme is focussed towards those, who have an array of social, emotional and educational learning needs. Negative and harmful attitudes towards difference in our society remain a critical barrier to learning and development. Discriminatory attitudes resulting from prejudice against people on the basis of race, class, gender, culture, disability, religion, ability, sexual preference and other characteristics manifest themselves as barriers to learning when such attitudes are directed towards learners in the education system.

For the most part, negative attitudes toward different learners manifest themselves in the labelling of learners. This is a very prominent issue with my learner's as they are often labelled for being a burden on society, as they are pregnant teenagers and people think that they are placed in a particular learning environment merely because they belong to a category of learners, for which a particular kind of educational placement exists.

Sometimes teacher's, through inadequate training, use teaching styles which may not meet the needs of some of the learners. A teacher may teach at a pace, which only accommodates learners who learn very quickly. Alternatively, the pace and style of teaching may limit the initiative and

involvement of learners with high levels of ability. However, the underpinning knowledge that I have gained from doing my 7407 course has enabled me to consider all learner's abilities and therefore, when I plan my lessons, there will be attention to all of my learner's needs.

In recent weeks, the implementation and application of the lesson plans that I have devised, have been an effective tool in dictating the content, delivery and pace of what is hope to be achieved, as I have considered the differentiation of the group and adapted it accordingly to their individual needs, not merely what I want to deliver and the teaching methods that suit me best. It is also important to recognise that learning breakdown can perpetuate further breakdown, often manifesting itself in disruptive and self-destructive behaviour by the learner, which also negatively affects other learners (Wallace, 2001).

Most learners' respond favourably to a positive approach, however some learner's have underlying Special Educational Needs (SEN) in relation to behaviour, and may have been identified and assessed as having particular emotional and behavioural difficulties (EBD). In this instance SMART targets would be an effective way of monitoring a learner who has an SEN, as they are in bite-size form and are individual to their specific needs.