

Planning and enabling learning



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Within the area that we teach which is NVQ level 2 and 3 funded training it is a given that we undertake negotiated learning with our students and to this end we have in place a number of steps we take with our prospective learners in order to identify and analyse which entry level would suit their needs best and how we can support and facilitate a successful learning journey for them. This takes the format of an initial assessment which includes: functional skills tests; a learning styles questionnaire and an individual learning plan which has some questions about their individual goals, (which I will come back to). To follow on we are very aware of the importance of inclusivity in the learning process and are continually assessing our delivery and resources to accommodate the differing needs of our learners.

Whenever possible we look at ways of integrating functional skills into our programme and are aware of how the use of good communication both verbal and para-verbal and non verbal; can effect the learning outcome of any learning cycle in a positive way. For my research into the four topics of negotiating with learners; Inclusive learning; Integrating functional skills and communication, I used both the internet and Gravells and Simpson's *Planning and Enabling in the Lifelong Learning Sector*. For the first of the four topics, negotiating learning, I came across a variety of sources of information on the internet on this subject as you will see from my research tracker. I found research papers on factors that affect negotiation in higher education to information and resources from the excellence gateway which included some excellent activities from the Ofsted good practice database. However the area that caught my imagination was goal setting; as discussed

in my 2nd Journal I had identified that we had been paying lip service to the goal questions we set in our individual Learning Plan. From my research I found a plethora of information which all confirmed and strengthened my belief that this was an area that could/would make a significant impact on our Learners??™ outcomes and could only benefit us and them if we get it right. I found a site on the internet ??? Dream Manifesto??™ though not academic, resonated with some of the feelings and thoughts that I had on goal setting.

I decided that I would base my micro teach on this subject and for this I needed to carry out further research. I then looked at inclusive learning. Before researching this topic I had assumed that inclusive learning was directed at those who had Physical or mental disabilities and was aimed at ensuring that they were able to access all areas of learning without hindrance.

I now realise that it encompasses much more than that. In this instance inclusion is used in a wider variety, it focuses on social inclusion, equal opportunities in all areas of life, from the needs of a single parent to a person who is dyslexic and has English as a second language. It means recognising your students are from diverse communities and therefore their needs are diverse and will require adaption to meet all their learning needs. This will also require an orderly, logical, and consistent approach with clear strategies, involving everyone within the company/institution; it should incorporate regular reflection and review of the strategies that also include the views of the learners, to continually adapt and refine those strategies. Next were functional skills. As a company who delivers funded training we

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carry out core skills testing at the initial assessment stage of our programme and dependant on the results we can offer advice and direction to our learners on where and how they can access help. We also incorporate functional skills into our programme in a variety of ways that are relevant to the subject we are teaching and the vocational qualification our learners are undertaking.

According to the National Curriculum we should begin by identifying our functional skills priorities; what are our learners' strengths and weaknesses in terms of functional skills and which functional skills do we want to develop This is an area I had not considered, we have incorporated functional skills into our programme more with good intent than actual design in terms of specific outcomes. To be effective functional skills must be relevant and allow learners to engage with real situations in the real world. Gravells and Simpson say that before starting you need to ensure that as a teacher your own skills are adequate.

They say ??? for example, you might encourage your learners to use the internet as a research tool, but not feel very confident using it yourself.??? I would concur with this statement and add that this would apply to any subject you are teaching. Finally my researches on communication lead me to look at different communication models such as those from Shannon and Weaver / Lasswell / RILEY & RILEY / FEEDBACK / Jakobson. I also looked at the importance of effective communication a paper written by Edward G. Wertheim, Ph.

D. who proposes that the ??? process of transmitting information from an individual (or group) to another is a very complex process with many sources of potential error???. In his paper he looked at verbal and non verbal communication, barriers to learning and non verbal communication cues then continuing on to developing communication skills. The article was directed towards a business setting but could equally apply to the learning environment.

I looked at the Johari windows model and will be utilising this as a tool in staff development and read the chapter on communication from Gravell and Simpsons??™ Planning and enabling learning in the Lifelong Learning Sector. As you will see from my research tracker I visited other sites in my search for information on communication some more successful than others. In conclusion all the topics I researched hold an equally important role in the learning process and are all inter-related. Interpreted and implemented correctly, they enhance one another such that the whole is greater than the sum of the parts. National Curriculum [http://curriculum. qca.](http://curriculum.qca.org.uk/key-stages-3-and-4/skills/functionalskills/index.aspx)

[org. uk/key-stages-3-and-4/skills/functionalskills/index. aspx](http://curriculum.qca.org.uk/key-stages-3-and-4/skills/functionalskills/index.aspx) Accessed 14 Feb 2010
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The Johari Model by Joseph Luft, first published in 1969 ??“ available online: [http://www. businessballs. com/johariwindowmodel. htm](http://www.businessballs.com/johariwindowmodel.htm) Accessed 12. 12. 09

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