

SFL411 – Personal Commentary

I plan my lessons based on, what I have ascertained from initial and ongoing assessments of my learners, are the needs of my learners. This is also done in conjunction with whatever 'Schemes of Work' are in use; if any.

On the Family Learning, Literacy and Numeracy course, there is no set scheme of work as you may find in most other literacy courses, for instance in a college of further education. Instead they are lead by the teaching of the children. Whatever the children are being taught will lead me to an area of the Adult Literacy Core Curriculum that I would focus on with my learners for the duration. For instance when the children were doing sentence writing using correct punctuation I would teach my learners punctuation (Core Curriculum Refs: Ws/E2.3, Ws/E3.3, Ws/L1.3, Rs/L1.2) From this I can show use of the Core Curriculum on both Reading and Writing of Grammar and Punctuation.

I am pleased with the planning of my lessons to date, and especially with my new knowledge of the specialist areas of Literacy as an academic subject as I feel better equipped now to satisfy the needs of my learners.

I do think I should write more detailed plans in the future, taking into consideration more possible eventualities and outcomes that I presently do. I am now aware must more of language and word development and with this awareness I feel that I can expect more questions on why certain things are done or where things come from within English, such as where a word originates or why we use it. If I do more detailed plans I can attempt to account for these questions and in a way try to pre-judge my learners queries and prepare myself with answers.

I think that also when it comes to evaluating my learners learning, I must do more on a more regular and structured basis. It has come to my attention that I don't always do post lesson evaluations with my learners so I must do this now in my

teaching, in order to make sure all learners are still 'on message' and motivated as well as most importantly or all learning is taking place.

I currently use standardised initial assessment results utilising the Basic Skills Agency's initial assessment documents, along with my own observational assessment of my learners in order to plan what the needs of the learners are. The Basic Skills Agency documents are in my opinion an 'ok' indicator of a student's ability or academic level, however I am now finding that I need to use some more diagnostic tools in order to delve much more deeply down into the Core Curriculum and the individual aspects of Literacy in order to create truly meaningful and relevant plans for the needs of my learners.

As I have now learnt more about aspects of Lexis, Grammar, Language and individual areas within these I am now more armed to create better learning programmes for my learners. Once again in conjunction with the Adult Literacy Core Curriculum and the specific targeted areas of Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening.

All of my learners on the FLLN course come to me with no prior qualifications in Literacy as a pre-requisite of the course, however this does not show what previous learning has been undertaken. To this end it is in assessment interviews over an initial period of time that I find out what if any previous knowledge a student has. I am also now using VAK's questionnaires to find out more scientifically what a learner's preferred learning style is / styles are.

Following on from initial assessments of learners I use ongoing assessments in all lessons to see that learning has taken place, I will continuously use a check and correct method with my learners often in conjunction with gapped handouts or the like to ensure that learning is taking place on a lesson by lesson basis.

Examples of some of these gapped handouts can be seen within the lesson plans sections in the planning and evaluation section of this portfolio.

I also use an Individual Learning Plan with each student (again an example from one of my students can be seen within). The student themselves records what they have 'learnt' after each weeks sessions, they are then encouraged to write how they feel the session went and what else if anything they would like to do on a given topic, whether that is more self study or indeed they would like to be taught more. In conjunction with this I am able to talk to students one to one within lessons to ascertain what specifics they feel that they would like to study.

In reflection this is something I intend on doing more of in my other teaching to ensure I am giving the best I can to my learners.

I feel that as a person I have definitely developed over the past 6 months.

My observations have been very enlightening with regards my level of subject specialist knowledge and more importantly how to use and impart this on my students, where appropriate.

I have always been someone who finds it hard to write down feelings about subjects as well as making lists of things to do, however writing evaluations on sessions taught and action plans have become a valuable part of my teaching lifestyle now.

Likewise can be said of writing reflective diaries, I can honestly say that I will more than likely not keep a specific weekly reflective diary, however I am now noting down any specific critical incidents that happen within my weekly teaching life and reflecting on these with respect to how I can apply my subject specialist knowledge to them and thus how they can influence and affect my teaching for the best for the benefit of my learners to ensure that learning takes place.