

SFL411 Case Study

For the purpose of this case study I am focusing on one of my two groups for which I have been teaching literacy with. I have been teaching on one of many Family Learning, Literacy and Numeracy (FLLN) courses, which are run by Birmingham Adult Education Service.

These courses are across the West Midlands and are based in primary schools, specifically aimed at teaching parents of struggling students in the 6 to 12 age range, who have little or no qualifications themselves to best support their own child. The particular course I have been teaching on was based in an inner city primary school in central Birmingham.

There were thirteen students enrolled on this course, however this was a maximum number over the twelve-week period of the course and the actual attendance numbers averaged out at five or six per session.

The students enrolled came from a number of varying ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds, all of them were however female on this particular course. The age range was from early twenties to late forties. Based on the eight students who would attend the sessions throughout the duration of the course I initially assessed the learners to see that one was of Entry 2 ability, two were of Entry 3 ability and 5 were of Level 1 ability. In addition to this my initial assessments showed me that two or three of the class had what I would term 'poor' spoken English ability, however all could speak and understand some English.

To this end I immediately knew that a great deal of differentiation would be needed throughout the course at both bottom and top end of learning, with some students needing simpler tasks to undertake and others needing extra or more in-depth work on some topic areas to keep their attention and interest.

The classes ran for two days a week, for twelve weeks, with two hour sessions with myself and the learners (parents) between 9am and 11am followed by a one

hour session with their child joining, to this end there are no specific 'Schemes of Work' for these courses, 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 (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.

Over the twelve weeks duration of the course I gave numerous lessons in both Lexis and Grammar, which has only been possible from undertaking the literacy subject specialism course. I have been able to produce and deliver sessions covering phonemes and phonetics, drawing from my newly learnt knowledge of Lexis. I have found it invaluable with the right group of students to be able to discuss the formation of words and indeed language to add value and interest to lessons. This in itself had been something used in fulfilling the speaking and listening criteria of the Adult Literacy Core Curriculum, having had numerous discussions on where languages and words come from; which is even more interesting when teaching a very multicultural group as I have been for the purpose of this case study.

Having had students who themselves were learning English as a second language and were still at a low Entry level in this, I have been able to use my knowledge of phonemes and also phonetics to aid their learning of spoken English. Yet at the same time in the same sessions having students to whom this would be patronising I have been able to differentiate these teachings to enable the higher ability students to look more in-depth at the use of phonetics such as digraphs, trigraphs and clusters. Thus the Core Curriculum's principals were being applied to their fullest. This in itself is a very difficult skill when you have a very mixed ability group, which Family Learning tends to be, as opposed to much college Literacy teaching where due to number of students enrolled they are split into more 'streamed' groups of similar ability, so a class is more likely to consist of purely Level 1 ability students, working towards a Level 2 qualification.