

Reflect on the work you do everyday and compare and contrast your practice before and after this course.

I badgered the therapists to let me on this course because I have a dozen children with speech and language difficulties in the class I teach.

Part of me was apprehensive at the thought of discovering that the only way to develop these children was through 12 individual and specific curriculum's, but at the same time I was at a loss as to how to approach their learning. The most important thing I take from this course is empathy with a SAL impaired child due to increased knowledge about barriers to understanding and the neurological and developmental issues involved. This has actually increased my confidence in believing I can make a difference to the children's communication skills with relatively subtle difference in my approach and through planned activities. Previously, I had thought that only a specialist could have chipped away at the layers of misconceptions.

I have also learned about how to modify my language in order to be more readily understood and what I can reasonably expect children at various developmental stages to be able to understand. In the past, I am aware of using sentences that were too long containing too many pieces of information or trying to teach more than one concept simultaneously (light, heavy). The study of information carrying words was invaluable and it is building blocks such as these that have been particularly useful in my daily practice and not just with the children identified as having speech and language difficulties.

This course has made me aware of how supremely powerful language is to both involve and exclude people and has shown me how fine alteration to syntax and vocabulary can make what I want to teach accessible to more children.

I suppose that is what I have really learned- that to teach children with SAL difficulties you have to change your approach, but these changes actually benefit all the children in your care by removing many barriers to understanding and allowing the pupils to concentrate on content. This is inclusion for all.

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