

Introduction

Before we started teaching our 5 special needs students our teacher taught us all about the Action Competency Learning Process. We learnt that it is an effective way to organise our planning and consider the needs of our students. It requires us to work through a number of steps before we actually start teaching our special needs students. The group we were assigned had varying delayed developmental issues and after lots of talking with each other and research we decided to run a physical activity programme that we thought would be fun and strenuous at the same time, that is why we went with a non-traditional workout programme.

Evaluating the steps taken**Step One (Identify the issue)**

We judged our success in carrying out this step to be good because we identified the issue of special needs students lacking physical activity opportunities early on and we made sure that all of our group members had the same goal of making sure that we could provide fun physical activity opportunities for the special needs students.

Step Two (Developing knowledge and insight)

..I think that this was a really important step in our planning process because it helped us appreciate who we were going to be working with. Our teacher got us to consider our views about special needs students and how these might affect our teaching. No-one in our group had any experience with working with these type of students so we did a brainstorm to sort out what we knew for sure and what we needed to find out more about. Aroha had a really good idea to email their teacher and ask for any tips on how to deal with the students. The teacher gave us lots of information about their personalities and this helped us try and understand who we were going to work with. For example we found out that Jack is really competitive and responds well to setting personal challenges but Sarah dislikes any form of competition and it doesn't help to encourage her. One of the most important things their teacher told us was that we should try and interact with the students as normally as possible and focus on what they could do not what they couldn't.

3

This was really good to know because we were all a bit nervous about teaching special needs students and thought we would have to organise something completely different to what we would do for other teenagers the same age....

4

Step Five (Planning)

We were probably so successful with our planning because we had followed all the previous steps in the process so well. By the time we got to the planning phase we already had heaps of ideas of what to do and we even knew some of the things that might not work that well with the students.

That is why we decided to go with the non- traditional fitness workout programme. It meant we could change the activities and circuits every week and we could also fit the work out to the individual student. The previous steps in the model had forced us to consider that not everyone is the same or has the same goals so by offering lots of different modifications we managed to get around this. For example both Jack and Nesi were really competitive so we often paired them against each other but we knew Sarah and Angela weren't very confident so we taught them how to set their own personal individual goals.

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The planning phase was good for this because it got us to think about the barriers and enablers for each student before rushing straight into organising a programme for them...This really helped with how our group participated. For example, the enablers of simple instructions that we repeated, demonstrating the skill and us joining really helped in making the session successful and fun. Saran and Angela felt a lot more comfortable having us doing the circuit with them. They could also see what to do as we repeated the activity until they were successful...

2

Step Seven – (Reflecting and Evaluating)

As a group we stayed behind after most of the workout sessions and filled out reflection logs. This helped us work out any issues we needed to solve for next time and we also used it as an opportunity to finalise our planning for the next session... For example, our organising group in the debrief for each student in our session we talked about what they did well/ not so well and planned the next session accordingly. Jack and Nesi really loved the competition. We planned different competitive activities that they liked and set individual goals to improve. The main issue was that they got off task quickly. We had to plan lots of different fun activities to keep them active the whole time. This involved trying to beat us in the circuit activities.

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..Reflecting on our teaching helped us to improve overall. For example at the start of the programme I was really nervous and I think I gave the students too many detailed instructions. By the end of the programme I learnt how to keep in short and sharp and I also used questioning to check they got what I was saying....