

Last month our group ran a physical activity programme for 4 students with special needs. We followed the steps in the action competency process in order to plan, action and evaluate our programme. Our students had differing levels of physical ability. The main physical activities we focused on were 'net/wall activities' and 'moving to music'.

### Evaluating the steps taken

**Step 1 (Identifying the issue)** We didn't really have much input into this step as our teachers had already identified the issue for us. We were told that the students had delayed development issues and that we would be helping them with getting active. I think this step would probably work better if in the future we got to identify our own issue and decide on what group we would work with ourselves. The students we were teaching also didn't seem to have a say in their own participation and I think this is an important part of the first step that needs to be considered in the future. Their teacher told us that they wanted more opportunities to get involved in physical activity but later in the process we found out that this was actually not true for a couple of students who didn't enjoy sports or PE.

1

After implementing this whole process it made us realise that just because the students had delayed development issues they should still have a say in whether or not they had to be part of this programme. One student was already very active and even had a personal trainer and this made us question whether or not he really needed to be part of the programme...

3

**Step 4 (Understanding – gathering, analyzing and evaluating ideas)** In step Four our group brainstormed a range of ideas about what physical activities we would include in the programme. The previous steps we had taken as part of the action competency process really paid off when we got to this stage. This was because we were able to consider physical activities that actually met the needs of our group rather than just jumping in blind. For example Ben had already met with the special needs teacher as part of developing knowledge and insight for step two and he found out that most of our group members didn't like some of the activities that required catching hard balls. She explained that this was because they sometimes struggled with the coordination of catching and hard netballs etc were intimidating for them if they missed and it hit them in the face. We hadn't even considered this at first but by the time we got to this step we had a better idea about what type of activities to include because of this previous knowledge Ben had contributed. We found out that one thing that all the students had in common was their love of music and dance. This was something we weren't really that into but we had to remind ourselves that the programme wasn't for us....

1

**Step 7 (Reflecting and evaluating)** In the final step of the process we reflected on the programme and evaluated our actions. We concluded that overall our programme was very successful because we achieved the goal of getting our group to enjoy physical activity and improve their confidence with the net/wall activities. On the last session we finished early and had a big talk with our group members about all the things they like and didn't like about the programme. We learnt that they all loved the moving to music sessions and this made us realise how important the information Ben had found out was. Initially we were going to focus on lots of ball skill activities and so Step Two of the process was really helpful because it forced us to see the potential in using the 'moving to music' activities....

2

I think because we were so successful the students will probably participate in these type of activities more often and without the need of us facilitating the activities...I personally learnt a huge amount from carrying out the Action Competency Learning Process and I will definitely be able to apply this to other things I plan in the future. There were a few things we could have done better. For example, organising wet weather options and having our equipment ready earlier but overall I think we would have made a lot more mistakes if we hadn't followed this process....

### **Evaluating the process overall**

Overall I think that following the steps of the action competency learning process meant we were better able to meet the needs of our students than if we had just planned without a formal process. The main reason for this is that we did a lot more background work, gathering important information and thinking about the barriers and enablers etc before jumping straight into planning or teaching. It also forced us to think more deeply about issues like what voice had the group had in the decision and what some of the attitudes towards people with disabilities are...