

REFERENCES AND BIBLIOGRAPHY

GROUP INTERACTION

Abram maslow (1908) – deficiency needs for respecting and valuing individuals.

Tuckman (1965) m- four stages of group reformation

The actual interaction – this took place 18/12/10.30am

Seating pattern – dominating the group interaction

Seating pattern – effective group communication

Neil moonie (1996) – advanced health and social care

ONE TO ONE INTERACTION

Martin Seligman (1975) – helplessness in communication (2)

Actual interaction – taken place on 4/02/03 at 2.30pm (1)

Neil moonie – advanced health and social care

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COMMUNICATION SKILLS WITHIN GROUP INTERACTION

INTRODUCTION

Communication is one of the most imperative things of being a human being. If we were not able to communicate, we would not be able to interact with others; therefore we would most likely be unsuccessful in leading our lives to their full potential. There are two types of communication, which are verbal and non verbal. So we can use our voice along with non verbal communication like your eyes, gestures and voice tone to name a few. Everything that we do can give off a positive or negative vibe about yourself, which could potentially enhance or worsen communication.

LOOKING AT EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

The job of a health and social care worker is to enhance the quality of people's lives. They must allow the clients to be in control and independent. This is why it is imperative that care workers are aware of what demands the clients have on them, and the appropriate communication skills they need to use to improve their life. Abraham Maslow theory which said 'the goal of ones life was person growth' would show that everyone should aim to develop their own ability and potential. However, before this stage can take place there are such things which need to be taken into account, the main thing would be 'deficiency needs'. These have been put into a pyramid which is shown below:

It is important for any health and social worker to possess certain vital skills. They need to understand how important it is to communicate and interact with others, along with knowing and understanding their own individual needs. Basically Maslow (1) theory is explaining how an individual person should strive to develop their individual ability and potential. Before the individual can develop their own potential the levels in the pyramid will need to be met. This deficiency needs play a role in fulfilling individual needs, and it is therefore it is imperative that social and health workers are fully aware of these deficiency needs.

Communication that takes place in an early years setting has to that of a high standard to enhance the potential of the clients, especially when working with children because they tend to pick up on things much easier. Therefore teachers need to be trained, so they are fully aware of all their communication skills they use, this even means from the way they dress to the manner in which they speak to the children. Everything has to be adapted to the client's level, like the manner in which they talk. Usually they would talk with some degree of difficult language; however they simply cannot talk to the children how they would a fellow member of staff. They constantly need to change from one role to another, and they need to make sure that this does not become mixed up.

COMMUNICATION WITHIN A GROUP SITUATION

Communication skills within a group interaction are just as imperative as communication on a one to one basis. A set of people in today's language is considered as a 'group'.

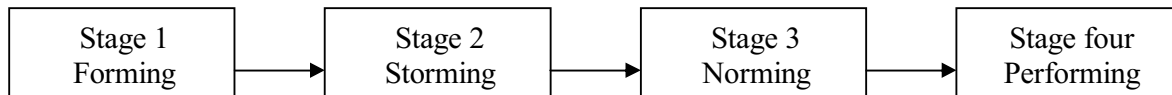
A member of a group may possess the sense of belonging and this gives the members of a particular group and 'group feeling'. This group feeling is sometimes known and described as a group identity. This occurs in a caring, or working situation where people belong together and would identify themselves as belonging in a group. There are two types of groups, primary and secondary, which have been identified by social scientists. It is thought that a primary group of people are those of people who know each other and feel that they belong together while as the secondary group is people who only have something in common. A primary group in care tend to share the subsequent features;

- **They are people who know each other**

- **There is a ‘feeling of belonging’ shared amongst the group**
- **People have a common purpose or reason for coming together**
- **People share a set of beliefs or norms.**

Some groups require a lot of team leadership or effort before they are able to work well together; however there are groups, which naturally come together, and this enables them to work well.

There have been many theorists, which have studied the way people start to work together. People need to get to know each other and learn about them before a group can have a sense of belonging. It is also thought that every group goes through a period in which the group struggles before they unite and work effectively together. One of the well-known theorists in which to explain the stages was that of Tuckman (1965). Tuckman suggests that most groups go through a process involving four stages before they can become effective. (1)



- **Forming-** this is the first stage of group formation. The introductory stage is most likely to happen when group members first get together. There may be some people who are unsure of the reasons why they are attending the meeting and the purpose of the group may not be clear and at times prejudice and stereotyping may occur and be expressed within this stage.

- **Storming** – within the group a ‘power struggle’ may occur, this is where individuals will contest against each other for the role of leader of the group. Arguments may occur over how the group should work, who should perform certain tasks. Some groups can fail within stage two or individuals within this group may decide to leave as they do not feel comfortable within the group. Within a working group, this can occur and staff will sometimes refuse to communicate with certain members of the group, this is known as group storming.

- **Norming** – common beliefs or norms can be developed within the group at this stage. People are now beginning to trust each other more and have now developed clear roles for each other. Norms are the shared expectations of the group on one another. These norms enable the group to be able to work together.
- **Performing** – the group can now start to perform well because the group shares the same values and norms. People may feel that they are comfortable and belong to the group, and the group morale may be high, which contributes positively to the group.

GROUP SEATING PLANS:

Sometimes it is noticeable on the way in which the group sits or stands to whether it is in its 'performing stage' or it is working as a successful interaction as a group. If you are working within a group discussion it is imperative that all the participants of that interaction are made aware of one another and they can see and hear all the other participants. This is why the circle is one of the favourable seating patterns because all the participants' faces can be seen in this structure and the body language is clearer. This can help to promote the interaction and skills used within the communication.

Being seated within a circle may sometimes suggest to the participants that everyone is equal to each other. However there are many other seating patterns which can be structured in a way to suit specific interactions. For example a carer or teacher may like to sit within the circle half way, or in the front of a half circle. This will give out the message that all of the participants are equal however the carer or teacher will be taking the lead role of the interaction.

MY GROUP INTERACTION:

Where my interaction took place:

For my group communication, I have decided to revisit my school which I had previously looked at whilst doing communication skills within an early year setting. My school that I will be revisiting is Buxton County Primary school. I would like to do my group communication

with class 2 because I feel that it is an appropriate task to do with them, although I think that reception class is a bit too young. My interaction took place with 6 pupils, within class time. I decided to make Thank you cards with them, because it was just after Christmas and I feel that this task is suitable.

Purpose of my interaction:

The purpose of my group interaction with the group was to promote interaction between the pupils and also with the members of the group. I am also looking to show an observer some of the communication skills I have learnt, and also to show that they are valuable and in a group situation, successful.

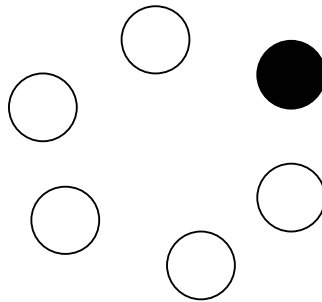
The group were working together to produce Thank you cards for their family, and sharing their ideas to help others. I wanted the children to be able to help each other to make the cards and choosing the individual materials, which were needed to make their cards. I also would like to make this a fun activity for the children, in which they will get some learning experience out of too. I am also hoping that the pupils will be willing to ask me questions about the activity and that I will be able to give sufficient answers.

Mrs Paterson (the classroom teacher) decided to choose five pupils in which I was going to work on my selected activity with. Mrs Paterson said that she chose children which she knew had previously worked together, and have been successful in interacting with each other. I think that this would be quite helpful for me because there was a smaller likelihood of misbehaving in the interaction.

Setting and layout:

My interaction took place within the year 2 classroom at Buxton Primary School. I decided to do it within class time, so there were no irregularities to the children's timetable. The classroom was brightly coloured, with lots of pictures, posters, art work, cards and writing the children had done themselves.

I completed the interaction over in the arts side of the classroom, where there was all the appropriate materials available to the children. It was in an environment which the children were familiar with and I thought that this would be an essential thing to make sure I didn't change. I wanted the children to relax and feel comfortable within the environment, and not to feel over powered by any abnormal situation or myself. In order for the children not to feel overpowered the interaction took place within and familiar and commodious room. I decided to layout my group in a circular fashion as show below:



The layout of the group is shown above, myself being the black circle. I decided to layout my group in this particular was because we were all making thank you cards 'together' and I wanted to create a feeling that all the pupils were on an even par as each other. I too, made the decision to sit within the group circle because I felt that I would be able to guide the pupils in their activity. I also felt that this layout would be appropriate because the children would be able to communicate with one another, and I thought that this would be effective way of doing my activity. I also thought that each of the pupils would fell like they belonged to the group, and were a member. This way, each group member would feel at ease to express any thoughts and feelings and personal ideas which would increase their own personal confidence.

The interaction itself:

Before I began to ask the children to start making their Thank you cards, I had to go through the introductory stage, also known as the forming stage explained in Tuckmans theory. First of all I introduced myself, explaining who I was, and what my purpose was with them. I went round asking the pupils to tell me their names and made them repeat my name back to me

therefore I knew exactly who I was. I also then described a few things about themselves to open up and to make the children feel less reserved. I then talked about what the activity was going to consist of. I found that most of the pupils were very enticed into my activity I had chosen and I could see them already choosing what coloured card they wanted to use!

I did not give roles to each of the children because it was going to be an activity where they would simply use their own ideas and make their own personal card. However I was the leader within the group therefore I could guide the interaction.

One of the first things that I noticed before we even started the interaction was the behaviour of child two. They appeared to be very domineering and seemed to try to dictate the starting of the activity. At first I was very confused about what I should do to regain my leadership within the group therefore I chose to in my own to restart the conversation and tell the children that they could only start when they were sitting quiet. This therefore gave the impression to the children that the activity would only start under my command rather than this of the pupil two. I felt that this communication was very effective because child two did not try to dictate the group after I made it clear that I was the leader of the group. When child two starting to dictate I actually did notice that they used ‘leader dominating’ group patters. This is where a participant will deliver one way communication patterns. It could suggest that the group will not be ready to continue independently. This is why I felt it a necessity to intervene before this pattern continued. Below you can see in the diagram of how the participant delivered one way communication:

We first of all started by choosing the specific coloured card that we wanted to use to make the cards. From the beginning of the interaction I noticed that there was a particular child, who appeared to be contesting with me for the leadership role. This could also be identified as a ‘power struggle’; however there were no arguments over the leadership because he followed the majority of the group in following my instructions. Because one of my main intentions of

the interaction was to make the participants feel like they were all equal and a sense of belonging in the group was created, I decided to include turn taking. Turn taking is an important part of successful group interactions. I wanted to make sure that all of the children were listening to each other and got their own say. So before we started actually making the thank you cards I asked each of the children in turn what they wanted to include on their cards. Each of the children spoke, and we all gave our opinions on their own ideas. I think this was effective because the children felt reassured in what they were going to make.

Throughout the interaction I saw that the communication between the group was that of very effective. There was constant communication not only between the participants, but also between them and myself. I was very pleased with the way in which this went. I tried to keep a record of who was talking to who throughout the interaction to enable me afterwards to see if the pattern was effective, however I found this incredibly hard to keep up with this whilst interacting myself. Below shows a diagram which shows how effective communication is within a group, and I feel that this is how the communication flowed within my interaction. The arrows which meet half way to the middle indicate communication to the group as a whole and those which reached the other individuals will indicate communication which is delivered to that participant directly. You can see this shown below:

I noticed that all of the children allowed each other to speak most of the time. There were very little interruptions and most of the children were able to contribute to the interaction. I think that this shows that the children all had some sense of respect and valued the other children opinions as a whole. Mrs Paterson also explained how she chose the children for the group who had a lot in common, and it might indicate that they share the same beliefs and values therefore were able to interact well.

Potential barriers within both group and one to one interactions:

Sometimes problems between groups can occur when the participants do not share the same values as each other. These values can be based around caring, and some people will always try to dominate and dictate the group. There is always the case where members of the group might pair off with each other, mostly with someone who has the same values and beliefs. They will then proceed by trying to fight for control of the group. There are cases in which the conversation and discussion can break down when irrelevant and deliberate distractions are aimed to disrupt the interaction. This may result in some of the members feeling isolated or withdrawn. In order for a group to be successful it is imperative that there is a sense of ‘belonging’ amongst all group members.

Groups will tend to work better and run more smoothly when the members share the same beliefs and values as each other. On the other hand those who share different beliefs may find it slightly more difficult to fit into the group resulting in problems. Although valuing diversity does tend to involve learning about differences in other people. Below are some barriers in which may effect a group discussion:

- **Not knowing the beliefs and values of other.**
- **Not understanding the purpose of the meeting**
- **Feeling different from other members in the group.**
- **Lack of confident of communication skills**
- **Sense of feeling threatened by others in the group.**
- **Feeling powerless and believing that others control the group.**

To stop participants from feeling withdrawn threatened or vulnerable it is essential that carers take the leader role within the group. This will enable you to start the communication and interaction going, and will able to focus in to specific aspects of the group. This can improve the effectiveness of the group. Whilst conducting my interaction I had to be very aware that I did try to avoid all these potential barriers and I do feel that I did.

My aim of the interaction was to promote interactions between not only the pupils and myself, but also between the pupils. I also wanted the children to be able to ask me questions, and feel that my guidance I gave them was reassuring, along with being about to share their ideas together whilst I remained in control but creating a fun and exciting activity! Looking back at what my aim and purpose as of my interaction I feel that I was successful in achieving this because, at the end of the day all the children had fun, and the interaction was full of laughter and joking. I truly believe that all of the children felt very comfortable around me and were able to ask me questions without feeling intimidated. Along with this the children seemed to be able to interact with each other very well which I think was enhanced by some of the methods I used to try and include them all together. All in all I think it was generally a successful interaction and I certainly had a lot of fun, however I am now aware of what communication skills I lacked in, and what I could have done to improve them to enhance the effectiveness of my interaction.

One of the many things that I was concerned about before starting my interaction, was the fact that I didn't want any of the children to feel left out in any way, shape or form. I knew that there was going to be some of the group members who were more confident, and more able to speak their ideas, opinions etc, however I did not want them to dominate the interaction. I believe that others may feel like they are less confident about talking amongst a group, and perhaps intimidated by the ones who do speak all of the time. This is why I need to make sure that I try to bring in the other group members to the discussion and activity in order for my to demonstrate my effective communication skills that I have learnt whilst achieving my purpose of my interaction too.

This did occur within my interaction, and there was at times points where I had to bring the quieter ones into the discussion, by asking them question, and seeing if they need any help what so ever, generally just interacting with them. I too had to make sure that the confident ones knew that when someone else was speaking, they should listen and wait for their own turns. I believe that I handled this well because looking back now, the children did not act badly to this, however they quietened down to a degree that they were genuinely listening to others as well as expression their won views, opinions too.

I was especially concerned about making sure that I could talk to the children with ease just like they were my friends. I didn't want to appear to be a stranger to them, because I know if I did appear to be like this then they would not trust me what so ever. I did make sure that I did an introduction of myself, and took a few minutes to talk to the members, ask them questions and generally easing the tension. I think that the children responded very well indeed to this because they had no problem in be able to communicate with me and ask me questions. Therefore I can confidently say, that I broke down the barrier of appearing to be a stranger. I realised this in the interaction when one child asked me for some help with sticking on some card to paper. She didn't appear to be nervous, or quiet whilst asking me, and she was extremely friendly to me and we got on very well. I can vouch that this was the atmosphere between all of the children and myself and that this barrier was no longer a problem.

Physical barriers may include:

- **Blindness** – there needs to be a lot of understanding whilst interacting with a blind person. Usual body language like nodding your head rather than saying yes, or using facial expressions to show your feelings are not able to be used in this situation. This could break down the effectiveness of an interaction, therefore special consideration and thought needs to be taken, and reinforcement when saying yes, of no needs to be expressed. Touch can be an effective method to use when talking to a blind or visually impaired person, to attract attention etc.
- **Deafness** – the degree of deafness will need to be established before this barrier can be prevented. Use of sign language can be used, or clearly spoken words can be said too. It is a good idea to make sure that you do not cover your mouth, remain in eye contact with the person you are talking to, and to speak slowly and clearly, without shouting.
- **Speech defects or stammers** – it is important to make sure when you are talking to someone with a stammer or speech defect, not to interrupt, but you rephrase or repeat sentences to clarify. Otherwise they can be left feeling devalued.

There were no children within my group who suffered from deafness, or blindness, therefore this is something that I did not have to content with, within the interaction, however I did have someone who had a slight speech stammer. On incident which occurred in the interaction was that of when a child who has a slight stammer, was trying to talking abo ut their own Christmas, and was having difficulty in saying what they wanted, another pupil within the group was being very impatient and kept interrupting. I told the child who was interrupting that it was not their turn to speak, and that they would have to wait till their classmate finished. I could see that pupil getting worked up because they couldn't say what they wanted, so I made a gesture by standing up and sitting next to her and making sure she knew I was listening. I then decided to help her by repeated what she has last said when she got stuck, so she remembered what she wanted to say. In the end she managed with my help to say what she wanted, and I made sure that I continued the conversation with her and the rest of the group, so she felt that what she had said was of relevance and she became more at ease when speaking after this. I was very pleased with the way I dealt with this situation by offering support, praising and comforting, considering I have not ever dealt with someone like this before. My observer also stated in their assessment that I used ' offering support' to help a client with a stammer to express what she wanted to say, and that I did it in a calm, friendly and compassionate manner which was very effective. This makes me feel that I did the best thing I could have done in this situation. However it also makes me aware that there has to be a great sense of delicacy taken when dealing with someone who is affected by a stammer, blindness or deafness, and that I would need a lot of training and experience to be able to deal with something like this in confidence.

Environmental barriers:

- **Lack of privacy** – if a conversation is held where there is no privacy; the communication will not be as effective, as in a room where there is complete privacy. It is also important that the flow of conversation is not disrupted by any interruptions; therefore a private room is an effective way of preventing this.
- **Noisy environment** – a noisy environment is very disruptive, so it is essential that you are in a room where there are no distractions and the interaction will run smoothly.

- **Poor lighting** – a room with which is badly lit, or too bright can be a barrier for good communication, so it is essential to make sure there is adequate light to see each others faces when interacting, however also to make sure that it is not bright and causes distress to the eyes.
- **Room temperature** – a room which is not at the right temperature can affect the efficiency of communication. For example, a room, which is too hot, may make people feel sleepy, so a window might need to be opened. On the other hand a cold room will make someone feel uncomfortable and the heating might need to be turned up.
- **The layout of the room/interaction-** many things within a room can be barriers to effective communication. For example a desk can be intimidating along with closed in chair space, this should be adjusted because personal space is important when interacting. *To stop there from being barriers within the room, I made sure whilst I was setting up for my interaction that all of the pupils were going to be able to see my face, and hear my clearly so I removed any objects which would have caused a barrier between us, and this proved to be successful because I did make sure all pupils could hear and see me whilst the group interaction was taken place, as when I asked them they all said they could. Again I made sure that the layout of the group was the most effective way it could be which I have already stated.*

There are also many other barriers, which do not come under, physical or environmental: for example -

- **Dress**
- **Tiredness**
- **Culture and different races**
- **Interruptions**
- **Language**

All of the above will create a barrier in communication, and need to be carefully assessed in order to prevent them from becoming a problem whilst communicating.

Looking at my effectiveness of the interaction

One of the first things that I did was to exaggerate the point to the children, that if they needed any help or clarification that they only needed to ask me. This was a good method, because the children found it very easy to ask me about any of their problems which occurred during the interaction and task. I tried to enhance the group, but continuing to try to encourage the group to create the sense of belonging. There were other specific aspects that I used to maintain the sociability:

The very first thing that I found a problem was how nervous I was. I am a confident person when I'm around people that I know, however this is not the case when I'm talking to people that I do not know. I found that at times I was very nervous, my voice started to shake and I had to keep pausing to relax in order to continue. This would be something that I would need to work on in the future because it is imperative to communicate with children without being nervous or scared etc. One of the main things that I have concluded from doing this group interaction is that children can make you feel very intimidated, just like you can too. I found it extremely scary because whilst I was talking I suddenly realised that the children were taking everything I said into account, and that anything I said out of tone would get picked up on. So the pressure came on for me to make sure that I didn't speak out of tone, but that I did my best to talk slowly, and loudly so they comprehend me. Whilst in the interaction I knew that I was going to have to relax my voice and especially my body language in order for me to achieve the purpose of my interaction. This was quite hard for me to do with the added pressure of someone assessing me to. However I feel that I generally managed to relax, and improve the way I spoke to them because the atmosphere became a lot less tense and more friendly and relaxed. So I concentrated on communicating with the children and the activity and I soon became to feel at ease with them.

I made sure that I laughed and joked with the children, therefore the outgoingness and friendliness of the group was maintained, and created a secure feeling, where their best communication would come out. When the interaction became somewhat dull, I decided to ask the children about their own Christmas, as we were making Christmas thank you cards and I didn't want to stray from the

task in hand. I think that they took well to this change in conversation, as they were all very willing to tell me and the rest of the group something about their Christmas. Again I used the turn taking method to make sure that everyone had their own say. *This proved to be effective, and helped me to achieve the 'promoting interactions' between the pupils, and also with myself. I believe that this helped my group interaction to be successful, because as I stated in my 'purpose of my interaction' I wanted to promote the interaction between the pupils and members of the group. I think I was more than successful in this because although at times there were moments when there were no interactions, the majority of the time the pupils and were interacting together, and this was enhanced after I brought up topics such as about their own Christmas' because they would then start to ask each other questions etc. I was very pleased with they way I introduced this topic of each pupils Christmases because it helped to make the interaction go smoother, along with added laughter and enjoyment! My observer too, also felt that I was successful in promoting relationships between the pupils.*

Whenever a child spoke to me, or asked me a question I would always try to give them my whole 100% attention, and actually be interested in their ideas and feelings. I thought that this might be a good way in showing them that their ideas were and would be valued. For example, one of the children asked about what colour they should colour in their picture, so to show I was interested I asked them what their favourite colour was instead of saying ' any colour you want'. I think that this type of method was effective to children of this age, because they can be indecisive and by me helping them to choose the colour made that child and the rest of the group feel like I would help them with anything that they couldn't decide or didn't understand. I believe that I was quite good when showing I was interested, and the children felt like I was listening *By using methods like this it enabled me to show to the pupils that I valued them as individuals and helped to promote a relationship between us because they often asked more questions, showing that they saw me as someone who would help them. I felt that at times they looked up to me because I was of an older age. Because I listened to the children and helped them, they often ended up telling others who needed help what I told them. This successfully helped me achieve another purpose of my interaction. I wanted the children to be able to help each other with their own Christmas cards with ideas, and guidance. So when I heard one pupil say to another 'what colours should I use?' and the reply was 'what is your favourite colour?', I knew that they children has responded to the way I helped them in choosing their colours, and in fact helped them to, to promote their own relationships.*

Within the interaction, I noticed that at times the group would stray either by conversation or actions from the actually task in hand. I thought that in this incident it could be due to lack of excitement. I came up with the idea of a small competition. I didn't want any of the children to feel unequal, but I thought that if I was to introduce the idea that the best Thank you card would receive a box of chocolates, then the performance may be enhanced. This was, I felt one of the most effective skills that I used, because it got the children back onto track with the purpose of the task, and the children were then putting in more effort into the task as they had an incentive. This could have also made the task more enjoyable. *After my interaction took place, the observer said to me that she was very impressed with the way in which I introduced this enticer box of chocolates! She said that it is very hard for children to stay 100% concentrated in an activity, so it is methods such as the one that I used, which will enable the pupils to become enticed again in the activity. This method also promoted the amount of work and effort they put into the cards. I noticed that there was an increased amount of 'cutting' and intense 'sticking' after I mentioned the chocolates!!*

when talking to the children, I tried to show and use lots of eye contact. I sat down with the children within the group, so our eye contact was level promoting the communication between us. It also showed that I was listening to what they were saying. I also think that it helped them also to listen to me more easily than if I was standing up or sitting, I may have appeared to be somewhat intimidating. I could see that the children were all looking at me, and were assertive towards me when I spoke; I think some of this was down to my skill of using appropriate eye contact. *My observer stated that I had very good eye contact with the pupils, and kept them interested by always making good friendly eye contact with them. They also said that this was an effective method of getting everyone to take part in the interacting because I looked at everyone in the way they were all equal.*

I tried to avoid being seen as domineering or belligerent throughout the interaction, because I think that children of this age have the tendency to rebel against this type of figure. So instead I tried to build a relationship where the children respected me, and felt comfortable when I gave them instructions without feeling overpowered by me. I think that this successfully worked because when the task strayed, I got the group back into the swing of things without being aggressive. *My observer stated that I managed to deter the group from being distracted and getting back on the actually activity, by being friendly and kind. She said that they responded to me because they didn't see may as a domineering figure and they were obviously enjoying the activity because the*

majority of them remained enticed throughout the whole activity. I think this was down to the fact that I tried to make sure that all of the time I appeared to be interested in everyone's work, and always gave lots of praised and joked with them.

Maintaining trust with the children throughout the interaction was something which I considered whilst the task was happening. I wanted the children to feel like if they asked me something, they could trust me to give instructions, therefore I need to give them reliable advice on materials, and methods when making the cards. So before the task I decided to make my own cards to find out which the best ways were to attached (glue or tape etc) so when I was asked, I could tell them the best method. If I was to advice them with something that actually didn't work, then the trust would be broken down and therefore the communication between me and group would then be effected in a negative way. I think I managed to maintain the trust with the group, as they had no problem in asking me for help and then following. *I personally believed that I built up trust with the pupils because they listened to my instructions and followed them as if I was completely right in what I was telling them, although at times im sure I did not give them the best method of sticking! However my observer said that I need to make more effort to trust them, however it may be difficult to have built up trust within the interaction because of the ethic or it and also because there was not enough time. One thing that I feel I could have done to improve the trust that the pupils had in me was maybe to have gone in to the school before or after my interaction and joined in with more activities, just to see if the trust could be established after more than one visit.*

Whilst I was interacting with the group, I looked out for the children's body language. I wanted to make them feel like I was a part of the group, and not some complete stranger. I thought it would be best I became on their level so I tried to imitate their body language, and be relaxed. I really wanted to get into the activity rather than taking a back seat and just instructing them. I felt that they way I adopted some of their body language increased my part of the group, helping the children to feel like I was a stranger. *I think I was able to achieve this goal, because when I joined in, I decided to sit with crossed legs, just like the children did. I used good body language such as always using eye contact, and smiling lots so I appeared to be very friendly. Although my legs were crossed, I made sure that I didn't cross my arms. I think that if I had of done this, it could have suggested to the pupils that I was unapproachable and perhaps obstruct the interaction and relationship because they would have felt like they couldn't talk to me or ask me questions. My body language was said to be satisfactory at all times, however could have made*

more of a conscious effort to move about the room a bit more, rather than just sitting in front of the group. I think that I defiantly could have improved my body language by moving about the group and actually looking more closely at their work rather than just observing from the front. This would have definitely helped to have promoted our relationship because they would have believed that I was really interested in their work, and that I really wanted to see what they had made.

It was imperative for me to use language, which the children would be able to understand and articulate well, in order for them to understand what was expected in them and the task. I didn't use any words which they would not be able to understand. However I found this very hard because I am not used to speaking on this level, and did at times find myself talking in an inappropriate style for my specific audience, which was often shown on the children faces!. Therefore I had to take a step back and continue using appropriate language. *My language was said to be OK, but needed to be brought down to a level in which the children could 100% comprehend. If I was going to do my interaction again I would want to have some training or be given some advice on what language to use with children this age. This poor language has made me aware that it can cause barriers with interactions, because the children I fo und often began to switch off and not listen at all because they didn't understand. After the interaction I spoke to the observer and they said that it is very hard to come down to the children's level of understanding and that this would be something I wo uld need to practice, but it would come. She however, did say that I was beginning to use a language which they could completely understand. I know that I am aware of what makes good communication for younger ages, basic simple instructions; however it is a lot harder to remember whilst in an interaction.*

- Because I was interacting with a group of five, sometimes I found myself interrupting because the task was not moving on effectively. I felt that I appeared to be rude, and maybe at times gave the impression that some children's opinions were not as valued as others. *This could in the long run have serious consequences to the children feeling that they are not valued, therefore they become angry and frustrated. This would be something I need to learn and be trained for.*

- One of the things that I felt very passionately about was making sure that none of the children would feel left out in anyway. So therefore I make an extra effort to try and include those children who were not taken such a main part in the interaction. I asked them questions, and tried to get them to interact with other members of the group. I think that at times I was successful in this: however I think this is something that I could possibly improve on if I was to do this interaction again. *I think that I was partly successful in the way that I managed to make all the children take part in the interacting, however I need more practice. I do feel that I was successful though in promoting the relationships between myself and between the group because it was apparent when they asked for help and guidance, and the way that they nearly always listened to each other and also what I had to say to them. I was very pleased with the way that we all managed to interact with each other considering I have not ever done an interaction like this before.*

- I wasn't too sure on what to wear when I performed my interaction. From previous research into communication I am aware that this can affect the quality of communication. For example dark and gloomy clothes sometimes can indicate you being in bad mood and could prevent clients approaching you. However if you were to wear bright and colourful clothes then it would give the impression that you are happy and friendly and easier to approach. I decided to go for clothes in the middle of bright and dark, however I am still unsure whether this had an effect on the communication shown.

At the end of my interaction I gave a member of the group my questionnaire to fill in about the interaction (appendix 1). I wanted to make sure that I gained some feedback from interaction to see whether I was effective in achieving my purpose. I structured that questionnaire very simply, and clear so the child would have no problem in being able to fill it in. the child who I asked to complete my questionnaire filled it all in, and they ticked YES for every box. This would indicate to me that my interaction was a success on the basis of that it was fun, exciting, and there was nothing too bad that affected them in the interaction. This would show that I was successful in achieving my purpose, which to me is a great accomplishment.

I got some feedback from this pupil on the questionnaire which was very interesting and useful, however I wanted to make sure that I had an assessment sheet filled in about me to look more specifically at my skills that I demonstrated, what was good about them, what was bad and also

to see if I achieved my purpose. Therefore I gave Mrs Paterson, an observation sheet about me to fill in (appendix 2) you can see from the sheet that Mrs Paterson rated me highly on most of the skills. However there were a few points which she had to make.

PERSONAL IMPROVEMENTS AND ACTION PLAN

One of my main problems that occurred during this interaction was that I found it very hard to observe the type of communication, group layout which was going on as well as performing my own personal communication skills within the group. I think that if I was going to do the interaction again I would probably video record it therefore I could go back and see what I did wrong but also what type of communication skills and patterns occurred. *This would be a very effective way in which I could evaluate myself critically in order to create a more efficient action plan.*

I expressed before about how I felt very nervous and intimidated by the interaction. I think that this could be improved by practice, and just making sure that I remain as calm as I possibly can. Being aware of my body language too is essential too.

I also feel that to improve the quality of the interaction I would need to find out ways in which I could include other group members, which were lacking in joining in. I am not entirely sure on a method which I could choose to help me learn this other than teacher training, and obviously this is not possible. However what would be possible is to talk to some teachers, to find out information about how to make clients feel valued and belonged within the group more than what I know already.

I gave the observation sheet to Mrs Paterson to write about my interaction. Mrs Paterson did rate me slightly lower on a couple of issues. These were really useful to me in aiding me to create a realistic action plan. For example she quoted:

- *Tone of voice – at times she found it difficult to calm her voice down, due to nervousness.*

- *Appropriate responsiveness and calmness - again Leanne found it hard at times to remain calm, however it did improve towards the end.*

I completely agree with the comments that Mrs Paterson made about my poor communication. I knew that I was finding it hard to calm down and make my voice and body language relaxed during the interaction. I did feel that I made an improvement towards the end whilst I got into the activity more. This is definitely something I need to work on and improve for further interactions such as this.

I am going to make a conscious effort to improve on the poor things about my interaction, because it is vital that I can be effective whilst communicating. Im going to make sure that when I'm in an interaction such as this I am going to try and calm myself down before I enter the group interaction.

There were so many things that I have become aware of further whilst doing this interaction. And again I feel that it is essential for me to be trained, or get more experience in interacting within a group. For me to improve my interaction I would need to study my assessment sheet to look at where I went wrong, and how I could improve it to make sure that a next interaction is I'm proved and that I have learnt from my poor communication.

CONCLUSION

This experience has been a very large learning experience for me. Before this I had learnt about all the different types of effective communication, however I never actually knew how incredibly difficult it is to put them into practice. There is so much for and health and care social worker to remember when interacting with their clients. I think that it takes a very talented person to be good at their job within this area. I enjoyed my interaction with the group so much, and I have already decided to go back in the future, to try my group interaction to perhaps try out my action plan. What made this experienced even more enjoyable is the fact that the children relished the activity as much as what I did. When I went to go after my interaction I was actually disappointed on how quickly the time had gone. The children who I was working with seemed to have formed a bond with me and were also upset to see me go too. I think that I was very successful in achieving my purpose of the interaction, and this was reflected through not only the effective communication

skills I demonstrated but also that of the amount of enjoyment we all experienced. This has certainly given me a lot to contemplate on, I have learn a lot about myself, as well as how imperative effective communication is in this type of setting.

Another thing, which I think has been a vital learning point, is the fact that health and social care workers give so much to their clients. Teachers need to make sure that they are demonstrating communication skills the whole time, but also to leave their own personal or emotional problems at home, because it can effective the relationships between them and the clients. This must be extremely hard to do. I would imagine that this job is very satisfying.