

Observing Interactions between carers and clients

In this assignment, I will not be revealing real names of any clients and carers who I worked with or the name of the placement where I went to; this is to maintain their confidentiality and dignity

Introduction

My assignment is split into two tasks which is designed to allow me to draw upon a variety of **communication skills** that I have studied and role-played in class and then apply these skills efficiently whilst on work experience. In my first task I will be **interacting** with both clients and carers in either a health and social care or early years setting. I am required to observe and critically evaluate the one-to-one communication skills of carers and also my one-to-one **communication skills** during the two weeks of my work experience placement. I will need to record my daily observations of good (appropriate) and poor (inappropriate) **communication** in a reflective diary (which will be handed in for assignment).

Task 1

I am required to provide a detailed and descriptive conversational log of separate interactions between carers and clients that I have observed during my work experience placement. I will need to focus on my observations on both **verbal** and **non-verbal** aspects of communication: these may include some of the following:

- **Listening skills**
- **Tone of voice**
- **Facial expressions**
- **Proximity**
- **Questioning**
- **Eye contact**
- **Body posture**
- **Appearance**
- **Touch**
- **Prompting**
- **Conveying warmth**

I will need to describe, in detail how carers used their **communication skills** effectively to **respect** and **value** their clients. I will need to support my explanations with practical examples of dialogue of how clients were addressed; given choices; allowed to express themselves; responded to as individuals and respected.

Description of the care setting

For my two weeks on work experience I went to a primary school, for the first week I was put in the Reception and then in the second week I worked in the nursery. Altogether there were seven properly trained teachers and one trainee in the Reception and then there were nine properly trained teachers in the Nursery and three trainees. My role in that care setting was a classroom assistant.

Classroom assistants are people who support fully qualified teachers, taking on non-teaching tasks such as photocopying, but also with duties such as listening to children read.

While I was on work experience, I fulfilled my role by:



- Supervising and washing up after artwork.
 - Discussing children's artwork with them.
 - Encouraging children to try out other materials, colours etc.
 - Creating wall displays
 - Outside and inside play duty
- Reading, Writing and Numeracy sessions
 - Sensory and early learning sessions
 - Collecting equipment, putting equipment away.

Observation (1)

Mrs. Padley strength's, weaknesses and ways she can improve on her communication skills

During my first week on work placement, I decided to observe 'Mrs. Padley'.

While observing Mrs. Padley, I realized that I had not noticed any **good communication skills** within her. I saw that she dragged children across the classroom forcing them to do the activity that she wanted them to do, not letting them choose what they would like to do. This is a form of very **bad communication** as it shows that the carer does not **respect** her client, I realized that all the children in reception were Asian except one who was white who I will call Nathan. I noticed that the only time she used **good communication skills** was with Nathan; she would pick him up and place him on her lap if he was upset, she would hold his hand and take

him to different activities on different tables and ask him what he would like to do, she treated Nathan differently from the rest of the class.

There are not many strengths that the carer had as most of the time she acted very inappropriately

The 3 different communication skills that I saw Mrs. Padley use with Nathan effectively was that She maintained **good eye-contact**, this was shown when Nathan was telling Mrs. service about a family holiday he had went to, making **eye contact** gave the impression to her client that she was focusing all her thoughts on what her client was saying, it also **stimulated trust**, and conveyed a sense of **interest** and **warmth**. She kept her **tone of voice** calm, this showed her client that she was interested in what he was saying, and wasn't getting frustrated about it, for example she didn't give the impression to her client that Nathan was wasting her time.

Mrs. Padley's weaknesses were that her **tone of voice** towards the other children was not good, she shouted at them to show that she was strong and powerful, she wanted all the attention, she towered the children when she had something to say wearing her big heels made her even taller. She Got angry when the children said 'THE END' after she finished reading a book to the them,

Below is a conversation that I heard at that time:



Mrs. Padley: (*towards the end of the book*)
.....and so they lived happily ever after.

Rest of the class: *Theeeee Ennnd.*

Mrs. Padley: *for god's sake! Here we go again (to another teacher). I do not know where they've got it from, honestly, I do wish they stop saying it; it's getting on my nerves.*

After listening to this conversation, I realized that Mrs. Padley didn't **respect** the children.

Another situation that I came across while at the placement was that one of the children in Mrs.

Padley's class stole a class fellow's pencil that she had bought in, without asking who the culprit was she went across to a child who I will name zack and yanked his arm and said '***I know that you have got it so hand it over before I decide to tell your mummy***'

Apparently we found out that it wasn't him who stole the pencil as the child who did steal it stood up and admitted that he had done it, He was grabbed from his arm and was told to face the wall and wasn't allowed to join in with any activities until dinner time. The girl who bought in the pencil was also shouted at and was told not to bring anything else in again otherwise it would be taken off her.

After listening and looking at this scene I was very surprised at Mrs. Padley as the way she behaved with the children, Mrs. Padley didn't know how to treat children and how to use good communication with them appropriately. , I also noticed that Mrs. Padley had a very blaming kind of posture; this was shown when she pointed a finger at a child or squinted her eyes to show anger

Mrs. Padley could improve on her communication skills by treating the rest of the class the same as she does with Nathan. She should get down to the children's level when she's talking to them, she should try not to shout as often and only shout when it's necessary. She should try to show **warmth** and **empathy** when she's listening to other children and should give the impression to the children that she's interested in what they're saying even if she finds the conversation boring. She should direct the conversation back to the main point, and give the children more attention, support, and recognition, so that they begin to feel more comfortable with her and feel that they have someone who they can **trust** and talk to without being scared. She should calm her temper down, and go to training classes where she should learn how to use good communication skills effectively with children

Observation (2)

My second Carer who I was observing was called '**Saiqa**', this observation took place when the children were doing their activities.

Mrs Saiqa's strength's, weaknesses and ways she can improve on her communication skills

I saw that Saiqa had many communication strengths within her. Saiqa treated all the children equally; she had a very calm **tone of voice**. She never raised her voice even when a situation came across where she had. I saw that she was never judgemental when she spoke, she always used 'I' messages, for example there was a time when I heard her speaking to a child who was misbehaving she said to him '**I get angry when...**' rather than saying '**you make me angry when....**' This shows that the carer has **respect** for her clients.



Saiqa used **active listening** skills when her client had something to say, **Active listening** opens communication by hearing between the lines and paying attention to the feeling messages when the other person reacts emotionally. Her **active listening** skills were shown when she looked at the person who was talking and she tried to repeat some of the things that the client had said (i.e. **paraphrasing**). For example she kept in mind what the client had said and, to make sure that she heard it correctly, she tried to repeat the point so her client could correct her, if necessary. **Paraphrasing**, consequently, allowed her to check for accuracy of understanding but more importantly, it communicated to the client that she was **listening** and was trying to understand their needs and concerns.

I also noticed that she had an **open body posture**; she did not slouch or turn away from her clients, when her clients had something to say she smiled and nodded to illustrate that she was **listening** to them. This is very important because it showed her clients that she **respects** them and that she is authentically interested in what they

have to say in relative to their needs. Saiqa translated everything she said in Punjabi to those children who didn't understand her in English; this is another use of communication skill that she used effectively as it showed her clients that she respected their needs.

I also thought that Saiqa Was really good at making **eye contact** with the person she was talking to, making **eye contact** with the clients showed that she was focusing all her thoughts on what her client had to say, it also **stimulated trust**, and conveyed a sense of **interest** and **warmth**. For example

- She faced the client who was talking and maintained **eye contact**.
- She was thoughtful yet relaxed,
- She kept an open mind.
- She **listened** to the words and tried to picture what the client was saying
- She did not look out the window, look down or gaze around the room looking as though she was bored.

I didn't see any weaknesses within Saiqa the only weakness that I saw was that she used **non-verbal** communication towards her clients, this was shown when she folded her arms when **listening** to her clients, this might have given the impression to her clients that she was being **defensive** and didn't want to communicate with them, even though her clients might have not understood what she was doing as they were only 5yr olds, and maybe she might have not realised what she was doing as it might be a habit to her, but it clearly gave me the impression that she was being **defensive**.



Saiqa can improve on her communication skills by making sure that she does not fold her arms when listening or speaking to someone. Other than that, she should stick to her good communication skills and make sure that she does not lose any of them in the future.

Observation (3)

My third carer who I decided to observe is called 'Saira', this observation took place when the children were doing their activities.

Saira's strength's, weaknesses and ways she can improve on her communication skills

Saira is a trainee at the school; she is being trained as a classroom assistant. The communication strengths that I saw within her was that she always got down to the children's level making good **eye-contact** when she had something to say to her clients, **eye contact** helps regulate the flow of communication and signals **interest** in others. Saira did not have a good **body posture** as she sometimes slouched and turned away from her clients who she was communicating with, she did smile but only

sometimes and hardly ever nodded to illustrate that she was listening to them. Listening to someone effectively is very important because it shows the clients that you **respect** them and that you are authentically interested in what they have to say in relative to their needs.

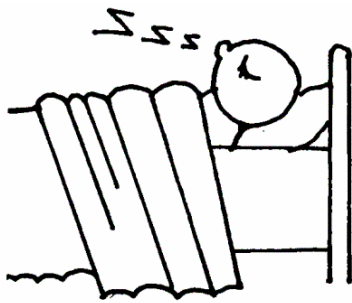
I noticed that Saira was a very quiet girl who hardly ever spoke, I noticed that she sometimes totally ignored the children if another member of the staff was there, this was one of her weaknesses, the reason for this might be that she is probably very shy and doesn't have the confidence to say something in front of another member of the staff. Ignoring her clients gave the impression to her clients that they were not being respected and that maybe their carer was not interested in what they were saying. For example, a child came to me and she wanted to talk to me about what she had got on her birthday, seen, as I was busy I told her to go and tell Saira about her story, she started moaning, Below is a conversation that took place between us:

Child: *nooohooo I don't want to tell Miss Saira,*

Me: *Why not*

Child: *Because she doesn't listen when I tell her something*

This conversation shows that Saira's client didn't feel comfortable in talking to her as her client had felt and noticed that she was being ignored. This also shows that the child's **self-esteem** might have decreased as she might have thought that she couldn't communicate well that's why she was being ignored etc. having a high **self-esteem** about yourself helps a person to feel happy and confident.



Saira could improve on her communication skills by first of all building up her confidence; she could do this by getting to know her staff really well so she doesn't feel awkward and shy to talk with them. Try and engage herself within the class and get to know the children well, In my opinion I think she was tired all the time as she yawned most of the time, she can improve on this by going to bed earlier so she gets enough sleep, and should try and have some breakfast in the morning before going to work to get her brain going, A situation came across where I was having a conversation with Saira and she told me that she doesn't have breakfast in the morning, this is the reason why she doesn't be fully occupied and ready to work.

My other three carers that I observed took place in the Nursery.

Observation (4)

My fourth carer who I observed is called '**Mrs Ellis**', this observation took place in the mid area. (Painting area)

Mrs Ellis's strength's, weaknesses and ways she can improve on her communication skills



The 3 communication skills that I saw Mrs Ellis use effectively was that she made use of good **eye contact**, this was shown when she was **praising** a child about his work, her client then started talking about where he got his idea's from etc, while listening to the conversation I noticed that he was expressing his feelings to his carer as he felt confident and secure talking to her, making good **eye contact** made Mrs Ellis's client realise that he was being **respected** and that his carer was engaged and interested in what he was saying. Mrs Ellis's second effective communication skill that she used was her tone of voice. She always kept her **tone of voice** calm; she did raise it, but only a little bit to show her client that he/she had done something that they shouldn't have. Another communication skill that she used effectively was her **facial expressions**, I noticed that she didn't give an aggressive look to her clients; she always smiled which gave the impression to her clients that she conveyed a sense of **interest, warmth and respect**.

I didn't notice any weaknesses within her so I can't comment on her improvements.

Observation (5)

My fifth person I decided to observe was '**sheriffa**', this observation took place in the reading corner, just before dinnertime.

Sheriffa's strength's, weaknesses and ways she can improve on her communication skills

Sheriffa is another trainee working at the school, who is training to become a fully qualified nursery nurse. I noticed that sheriffa had a very friendly and bubbly personality, she was always communicating with her clients either **verbally**, using **hand gestures** or **facial expressions**. Below is a conversation I heard where she used her **hand gesture** and **facial expressions**.

Sheriffa: *Tina what letter do you think dddog begins with?*

Child: *errm (finger on her head giving the impression to her carer that she's thinking), is it Duh?*

Sheriffa: *well done!!(She gives her a thumb's up gesture showing Tina that she's done well and then smiles at her)*

Child: (Smiles back)

This conversation shows that Tina appreciated sheriffa's **hand gesture** and **facial expression** making her **self-esteem** to increase as she got a question right even though sheriffa didn't use **verbal** skills to **praise** her; Tina still understood what sheriffa was communicating with her.

As one of Sheriffa's weakness, I noticed that she had **body posture** problem, as she couldn't sit still in one place when reading a book to the children, this was shown when she kept folding her legs and then unfolding them, this might be due to the fact that the environment that she was sitting in wasn't comfortable for her. This is one of the physical examples that inhibit communication.

Sheriffa can improve on her communication skills; she can do this by, buying herself a cushion or comfortable chair for her own use so that when she's reading a book to her clients etc, This can improve on her **body posture** by making her feel more comfortable and relaxed.

Observation (6)

My last carer who I decide to observe is called 'Claire'

Claire's strength's, weaknesses and ways she can improve on her communication skills

Claire is a fully qualified teacher; this observation took place when it was the children's P.E time.

I saw that some children needed help to undo their buttons on their uniform, Claire used her good communication skills by telling the children to try and undo the buttons themselves, if they couldn't do it then they could go to her, she said this in a very calm and relaxed manner without even slightly raising her voice, she also said it by making use of good eye contact, use of good **eye contact** helps regulate the flow of communication and signals **interest and respect** in others. For example she didn't look around or gaze at something when communicating with her clients. Claire's body posture was good as she didn't slouch or turn away from her clients who she was communicating with, she smiled and nodded to illustrate that she was listening to them. This is very important because it shows the clients that she respects them and that she is genuinely interested in what they have to say in relative to their needs. Claire showed very good active listening skills as she looked at her client who was talking to her and nodded her head to show that she was listening to them and also tracked the speaker with her eyes.

One weakness that I saw within Claire was that she sometimes sat there with a sort of sad/worried expression on her face as well as chewing her thumb at the same time; this gave the impression to me that she had lots of maybe family or work related problems that were stuck in her head, by showing her worried look to her clients made

her clients feel sad aswell, this was shown when a conversation took place between Majid and Claire.

Claire: *(Worried look on her face).*

Majid: *(comes along with a sad expression on his face) Miss why are you saaaaaad?*

Claire: *Majid what makes you say that?*

Majid: *well your face looks a bit like this (does an expression of her face).*

This conversation shows that because Claire was sad it made one of her client's sad to.

Claire can improve on her communication skills by not coming into work all tensed and worried, she should try and leave her worries at home if meditation helps she should do some just before she comes to work which will help her concentrate and keep her clients feeling happy.