

Barpak teacher training experience 14-18th June 2018

Introduction

Whilst spending time in Gorkha as a volunteer with GDS the plan was for me to be involved as an Occupational therapist in developing a new project in the local jail in Gorkha. However, during my initial welcoming meeting Laxman was discussing his plans to travel to Barpak to facilitate a three-day teacher training course. I was lucky enough to be given the opportunity to attend this course with Laxman and I eagerly agreed to go with him. The course was based in a local school in Barpak however many teachers also attended from other local schools, with 28 teachers taking part, 6 of whom were male which illustrates the dominance of females within the profession. This female to male ratio in the profession is similar to the UK.



Taking a class for children

Before starting the training with the teachers, I was given the opportunity to take a class of about 40 students, teaching them basic English skills such as identifying body parts, vocabulary memory games utilising flashcards and being able to construct simple sentences in English. I was supported with this by one of the school's English teachers who was happy to translate and provide additional



support to the children. I focused on teaching through the medium of songs and games for this class to capture the children's interest and make the lesson more interactive and relatable to play which is a suitable occupation for their life stage and incorporates many different learning styles.

Within the 28 teachers that attended the training there was a wide range of abilities when it came to English and the ability to teach their children English skills in the classroom.

Day one

Introductions between the teachers and teaching methods in motivating children in the classroom to learn English through the theme of songs and rhymes. The teachers then chose positive adjectives to describe themselves, collecting these positive adjectives to use to motivate and reinforce children in the classroom. Teachers were then taught and practiced alphabet songs and several different games and activities involving a play parachute which incorporated listening to instructions, learning colours, directions and numerous verbs in English such as "run, skip, hop and jump". This parachute was donated to the school and funding will be put in place from volunteer Katie's fundraising for three more parachutes for the teachers attending from other more rural schools.

Flash cards were also used to play different vocabulary and memory games. Teachers were also given examples and practised both commanding words to use during assembly to promote discipline and softer encouraging words for the classroom. The final task of the day consisted of Laxman providing 6 different shapes on the board and illustrating that using only these 6 shapes it was possible to create any letter or word, both in Nepalese and English. This technique was to encourage younger children to learn to write in a more simplified approach.

Day two

began with introducing the names of various parts of the body in English, followed by demonstrating and practising the game “Simon says” with the teachers, teaching about using correct nouns and pronouns and also “5 W questions” such as “Why, What, When, Where....”. Laxman then told the teachers the “story of Simon” and afterwards gave them several questions (utilising the W words) to write down the answers in English. Different activities such a learning tongue twister, songs to encourage counting and subtraction and to learn days of the week.

Final day

involved teaching the teachers numerous encouraging songs for their students and learning the game “Hokey Kokey” for an outdoor activity to play with the children. After this the game “Chinese whispers” was played to illustrate the importance of listening skills. The teachers were also shown the “Four H’s” for learning which were the Head, Heart, Hands and Heels and how the combination of all these tools support us to learn. A recap and reflection were complete d of the three-day course and the headmaster gave a speech and thank you to all the teachers and the trainers at the end.

Summary

This course proved to be invaluable to the teachers who attended and the course was easily adaptable for individuals with various abilities and knowledge of the English language. All teachers positively engaged and contributed to the training sessions and were very thankful to both Laxman and Katie for their supportive teaching throughout the three days. As stated, Katie will be donating some of the money she is currently raising to go towards more parachutes for the other rural schools of the teachers in the training. I am very grateful for the opportunity I was given to be involved in this project, it provided me with skills to enhance teaching and taught me a lot about the Nepalese people and culture.



Katie Vaneker