

Reflective Journal (Teaching Assistant L3)

Apprentice name	'Apprentice T'	Reflective Journal	1
Standard	Teaching Assistant		
Location	Turrington Green Primary School, New Town.		

Please reflect upon your duties being guided by the marking criteria. You should explain the following points for each situation you reflect upon:

- What the situation was
- How you dealt with it
- What you learned
- How you will use what you have learned in future situations. Would you do the same or are there things you would do differently?

I was asked by the reception class teacher to do some development work with a small group in her class on phonics. The class have been working on blending the sounds 'op' 'ap' 'ild' and 'ind' but 4 of the pupils were struggling and falling behind. I asked if I could create something new to do this – and the teacher said that was a good idea. I did some research, found some example worksheets and used them to create a resource to use in the class the following day. I didn't get the chance to show the teacher the resource I had made, but she said not to worry; that I should try them out and see how well they worked.

I tried to make the resources look fun and engaging - I put a decorative page border on them and made sure there were pictures on them too, as I think these are important. This is because children of this age are more likely to engage with colourful resources.

In the class when I used them, the pupils were a bit reluctant to come to my table as they don't really know me very well yet; I've only been in the class for 2 weeks. Once the teacher had rearranged the group so the pupils were with me, I thanked them for moving and said we had some fun work to do. I had 1 girl and 3 boys in my group.

The girl was the most engaged; she started completing the handout straight away and asked questions when she struggled. The boys were very different; they didn't get focussed like the girl had and I had to get quite firm with them – saying that they would be delayed in going to story time – or not going to it at all - until they had finished the work I had planned. This made them focus on the task, but also have an even more negative attitude towards me and I had to work really hard to engage them in the task. The first page was a gap-fill; the task was to choose a word from a choice to complete the sentences. The girl completed this sheet on her own then moved onto the second sheet. I had created 3 sheets and expected to get the first 2 completed in the given time; the third sheet was an extension activity. For the first sheet, I facilitated some discussion about what the words could be to go into the sentences, and we had some fun putting the wrong word in – the chatter between the 3 boys related to the wrong words helped them to engage with it. However, there was a problem with this, as the noise started to distract the girl and she started getting annoyed. I therefore moved her slightly away from the boys so that she could concentrate, but this then meant that I couldn't effectively support the girl and the separate boys at the same time. When the girl finished the second sheet, I praised her and gave her the extension sheet to complete – these were 'oi' and 'oy' and although we have covered these before, it was good to remind her of them for consolidation.

The boys then needed to be re-focussed on the task, and I gave them the second sheet. This sheet was more visual and had a range of tasks on it – and the boys started talking about the pictures on it – and one of them started to add to the images. They really struggled with the 'igh' words and I think it was too hard for them (the teacher also talked to me about this as it was probably too advanced for them just yet). I got them focussed back on the task and eventually – after a lot of intervention / re-focussing from me - they completed it. This handout was a little bit fuzzy and unclear – I think I stretched the image too much when I re-sized it for the worksheet, and the boys complained about it. I must remember to check this in future resources as it looked ok on the computer but not so good on the paper.

The teacher then came over to see how we were doing – she praised all the children and told them that when I said they were finished, they could go and join in the story time activity on the big mat. The boys were pleased and started to get up from their chairs; I had to stop them as they hadn't finished the second work sheet yet. They were quite

annoyed at this and started complaining again. I tried to get them re-focussed again, and eventually, they completed the second work sheet. The girl had finished the third sheet so I gave her some praise and told her she could join story time. The boys complained at this saying that it wasn't fair that she was allowed to move but they weren't. I then explained that she had completed all her work and an extra sheet, and because of her hard work and positive attitude, could move onto the next activity. It took another 15 minutes for the boys to complete the second work sheet, and they continued to be distracted and off-task for the majority of the time. As story time had started in the same room, it was really difficult to get the pupils to finish the work.

What did I learn from the experience? Would I do anything differently?

- building my authority – I need to develop the pupils' respect for me and my authority. I need to have a discussion with the classroom teacher to explore how to best do this.
- it was good to have the extension activity prepared in advance – the girl responded really well to this, and she took pride in getting to and completing the extra work.
- need to check the quality of printed documents – they don't always look the same as they do on screen.
- building my working relationships with the pupils – it was too easy to be authoritarian and this seems to have negatively impacted them. I need to make sure the activities they do with me are engaging from the start; having them work together in a fun but structured way helped them to engage with me and the tasks in hand.
- use real life examples - when the pupils can see the relevance and use in a real life setting, they appeared to engage with the tasks far better.
- it would have been good to show the class teacher the resource and talk to them about my plans before the class – I will ask for guidance sooner next time and see what the expert thinks.
- motivating pupils – how to get them engaged without threats of punishment?
- how to effectively differentiate and keep the small groups I work with together, rather than having to split them up. If all the pupils had worked at about the same pace, the girl could have acted as a peer supporter and I think I could have engaged the boys more if I'd kept them together. I will see how this works in future small group work activities.

I talked to the class teacher about everything and she agreed, but that I shouldn't be too hard on myself as everyone completed the work I'd set and it was a good starting point for future group work.

We talked about the resource I'd produced – in future, she will give me the topic etc with more notice so that I can show her what I have planned in case any changes need to be made. I must remember to get her 'ok' for the standard and level of the work I produce - so that it fits in at the appropriate level and stage of skills development.

Apprentice name	Apprentice T	Date	29 th January 2020
Apprentice signature	Apprentice T		

I confirm that the above Reflective Journal is a true account of the apprentice's performance in this situation:

Employer name	Tina Rowntree	Date	29 th January 2020
Employer signature	T. Rowntree		