United Kingdom

Good Practice: UK GP3

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"ESOL Programme"

Main features of the GP programme:

Type of programme	Type of organisation	Field of practice for organisation	Programme scope	Programme duration	Programme occurrence/ frequency	Type of funding for GP
Basic skills and remedy	Adult Education College	Adult Education	National	Runs termly, in 12-week blocks (most commonly it takes 3 terms)	2-hour classes, twice a week.	Government

1. What – Focus (theme, orientation)

The programme presents an example of ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) provision in an Adult Education College in England. ESOL courses traditionally aim to provide English-language skills for non-native speakers, specifically targeting those newly arrived in the UK, such as refugees and migrants. The ESOL qualification is accepted as evidence of English-language proficiently for settlement and naturalisation. ESOL qualifications support learners whose first language is not English. Learners are taught communication skills such as reading, writing, speaking and listening. ESOL provision at the college is a long-established development that has been delivered and facilitated through the collaborative work and commitment of the ESOL department staff.

2. For whom – Target group(s)

The programme supports learners whose first language is not English aiming specifically targeting those newly arrived in the UK, such as refugees and migrants.. Learners are taught communication skills such as reading, writing, speaking and listening. ESOL learners often share common characteristics as a group, specifically in terms of lacking communication and language skills, which may undermine their life chances and social participation. Because of this, the group may share some common disadvantages, such as a risk of unemployment and social exclusion. The learners in GP3 have been described as adults experiencing or being at risk of experiencing multiple vulnerabilities, which may hinder their social and economic participation.

3. Requirements and access

This course requires assessment and interview, so, depending on their learning needs and capabilities, the prospective learners could be assigned to appropriate types and levels of the programme. Recruitment to the programme takes place through a variety of approaches, from leafleting to local libraries and GP surgeries, at the Job Centre and at information stalls and open evening events in the college, through the internet / social media, as well as through recommendation / word of mouth from a range of local organisations and networks.

4. Elements of good practice

The provision of English as a second language, for migrants, refugees and asylum seekers, has been oriented towards equipping the learners with skills that would help them to integrate into UK social and economic life. A key element of the GP3 programme is that the course aims to provide learners not only with English language skills but also with knowledge about life in the UK and local traditions. APC-related competencies are promoted throughout the programme: the development of APC competencies has been strongly embedded into the GP3 provision; however, more implicitly rather than explicitly.
- Politico-legal competencies

Introducing aspects of British values provides a context for raising civic and political

awareness for learners. However, given that the learners originally come from different countries and cultures, they need to be introduced to various civic and citizenship concepts gradually, taking into account their own cultural differences and personal experiences. One approach that characterises elements of good practice is that of recognising the learners' own cultural heritage and backgrounds. This sort of contextualisation makes the discussion about British values more relevant to the learners' personal contexts, thus facilitating their awareness and understanding.

- Socio-cultural competences.

Encouraging learners to practice such competences both within and outside the class is considered to be an important strategy. Not only learning and practicing new vocabulary in the class but also practising it in out-of-class settings contributes to the development of socio-cultural competences. The meaningful development of socio-cultural competences has been related to the issue of matching the exercising of these competencies with learners' needs, motivations and day-to-day activities, as well as with contextualising such competencies in their familiar contexts and settings.

- Socio-economic competences

Facilitating employability skills provides another aspect of a good practice environment. For the learners, active practising of their employability skills offers the chance to contextualise such skills first in their class (simulated context) and then in real-life settings and situations (e.g. attending a job interview). Developing language skills in order to enter the job market is considered to be one of the primary objectives from the point of view of both the students and the tutors. The employability dimension is incorporated into classroom activities and tasks.

Both gender and diversity are being addressed through the programme. The recognition of the learners' diverse backgrounds permeates the ESOL provision, and is demonstrated through the implementation of student-centred approaches, aiming to take into account personal learning and developmental needs. The issue of gender is recognised and addressed through approaches and strategies, ensuring that the learners have equal learning and career opportunities regardless of gender. The introduction of a creche (childcare facilities for the students) is one example of encouraging women to engage in learning.

5. Perceived challenges

The learners have been generally quite enthusiastic about the programme and the college in general, and no specific challenges have been reported by the learners and educators in terms of programme improvements and evaluation. Both the support services in the college and tutors' individual support have been recognised by the students. However, some suggestions for improvement have been associated with the following:

- providing more opportunities for social networking and social communication within the colleges. There are some events (e.g. the Christmas party) that provide a stimulating environment for communication and networking. However (as noted by the learners) such events do not happen very often, and the students would generally like to have more opportunities for

> socialising within the college.
> - from the perspective of the tutors, there is some potential room for improvement in terms of collaboration between AE practitioners both within the college and with external providers and institutions.

6. Testimonials

I think education can help us. We learn about England, something about the local customs and how things are done here. Active [citizenship]… this I think means that you need to be active in doing something? Doesn't it? Like voluntary job?

You know when we come here, I don't know what's going to happen in new country. So it's always good to start going to work. In a new country I can say, so we are coming from start, from zero, but we are trying to reach something.

For me I think, it's about looking after your family, raising children, talking to them about what is right and what is wrong. Respect. Being honest. Help other people.

We often learn words that would be useful to describe what we do, where we come from, what we learn, and what we hope to do. Sometimes [the tutor] gives us texts about jobs, things to say at job interviews

I think since I started the course, I can understand better life in [local area].

7. More Information

EduMAP project's publications:
Books and articles
Academic publications that address key themes of the EduMAP project
Deliverables and reports
EduMAP's official deliverables, related reports and publications
Good practice cases
Key features from 40 'good practice' cases from 20 countries
Working papers
A selection of findings from desk and field research in 20 European countries
Other resources
Other types of resources made for the project (illustrations, comics etc.)