

Case Study 1: Career-focused Personalised Plans for EAL Students

1

**Intervention 1:
Personalised Plans**



**EAL Tutor, Teaching
Assistant, Intervention
Support Worker, Careers
Staff**



**Improved Confidence
Happier about learning
Feeling positive about the
future
Building skills
Trusting supporting adults
Improved English
Building supportive
relationships
Gaining qualifications
More enjoyment of free time**



**1 hour per week, 1:1,
1 term**



**Personal
Challenges,
Institutional
Factors**



**Effectiveness rating
(n.b still being
developed)**

Summary

Clare, the LA's EAL Advisory Tutor identified a group of refugee students in Years 9 and 10. Post-16 transitions are often difficult for this group because language barriers impact their attainment and can prevent them attaining the minimum GCSE requirements for the courses they wish to take.

Clare adapted her existing outreach language support sessions to focus on exploring their career interests and motivations. Together, they made highly visual pathway maps and word mats. These mapped out the different routes the student could take, depending on their exam results and gave them access to vocabulary relating to their chosen pathways and careers.

"I didn't know what courses I need to do next year so it helped me know what I could do next"

Why the Intervention was successful

Clare identified 3 key factors as central to the success of the intervention

- Being flexible
- Personalising the sessions to the student
- One-to-one conversations and support

"The point of the session was to be exploratory I think and to respond to what they were interested in."

Being flexible and personalising the content of the session to the individual students were seen as critical to the success of the sessions. Personalising meant being guided by the young person's interests and responses. This was not just about focusing on their chosen career, but also about being open to them changing their mind about which career or course they focus on, taking time to chat and check in with them and developing authentic, positive and trusting relationships.

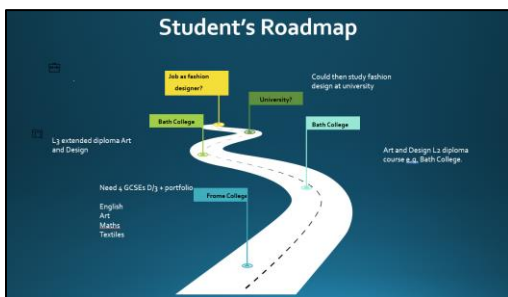
"As soon as she saw that I was spending time on whatever it was she wanted me to look at, that I wasn't just, I hadn't pre-planned the session that I was just going to do with her regardless of what she said, I did what she asked for really, and with all of the others as well."

Engagement increased as time went on. At first, one student often skived the sessions and looked bored. Clare persisted and saw a dramatic shift in attitude once the student realised the sessions would focus on her interests. For other students, engagement deepened as they opened up to her about their specific challenges or about their genuine personal interests.

Learning point 1: Make roadmaps of alternative routes in case the typical one is not open to them

“Sometimes they have to go on a really round-about route because they might have a lot more steps that they have to go through to get to that point on the road. So it made me think....obviously we need like more roads, a different road A, road B, road C.”

EAL learners face additional language barriers so may not be able to achieve course entry requirements in the short term. Mapping a pathway A, pathway B and a pathway C reassures them that they can achieve their goals even if they cannot achieve the grades and are a valuable tool in managing students expectations. It helps them plan for potential disappointment and be ready with an alternative next step. It is important that students have access to and ownership of this journey plan, whether that is having digital access to it, taking a photograph of it, or being able to take it away. They and their families may have little knowledge of the UK educational system, so these roadmaps give them a record of other ways forward at a later date.



Learning point 2 : Navigating cultural barriers

“You have to navigate the different cultural things going on as well, like you’re navigating parental expectations alongside their expectations and then what the actual curriculum offer is and what they can do at school.”

This group of learners started the sessions choosing to talk about very traditional careers, such as medicine or law. Over time, it became clear that, for several of them, these were the dreams and aspirations of their parents. The sessions gave them the opportunity and vocabulary to connect with what motivated them and explore what educational and work possibilities this might lead to.

Informal conversation during session also allowed them to unpick specific barriers they faced in lessons, and ask for advice on what they might do. Understanding why a teacher might be entering them for a foundation rather than a higher tier, how to approach a conversation with the teacher about it, how speak to teachers to ask for help were three key examples of ways in which the sessions helped them get more out of their time in lessons.

Learning point 3: Unlocking motivation through ownership

“When I actually thought about this idea (interior design) I was like oh my god that’s so exciting. And then it just helped me, I liked everything about it.” (YP4)

The personalised nature of the support, allowing individuals to explore careers that specifically motivate them, alongside focused EAL language support positively impacted all the students in terms of their feelings, relationships and future plans in a powerful and positive way. They reported feeling more confident, motivated and in control as a result of the sessions.

Developing the intervention

The 1:1 nature of the work is integral to the personalisation. Working with more students at once would be ineffective and dilute the impact.

Steps to increasing impact could include:

- Disseminating more widely to the other staff through meetings
- Disseminate the learning points with the Syrian Resettlement Team and Post-16 Advisor
- Liaise with School Improvement Team to raise profile of EAL pupils and appropriate careers guidance
- Translate existing careers materials and web pages for EAL students and families

