Step – Managing learners

Answers

Preventing situations

Situation 1: It's a good idea to make it very clear to learners what's expected of them before they start learning with you. If you expect them to do homework so that you can build on that homework in the next lesson, make this expectation very clear. Some online teachers even have a policy whereby if the homework isn't completed, the next lesson is cancelled without refund. Similarly, they may have a policy to deal with latecomers, e.g. if you're more than 10 minutes late to a group lesson, you cannot attend.

Situation 2: Not all learners will be confident with technology or know how to use the different tools you want them to use. Make sure that you help them to develop learner autonomy when using different tools; you can demonstrate how to use the tool in a lesson, and/or provide a written or video guide on how to use it. You could make your own screencast tutorial - this is a video of you demonstrating how to use the tool as you are using it, with a voice recording of you explaining what you're doing. You can make these through a website such as https://screencast-o-matic.com, or find a video tutorial already created on a site such as YouTube.

Situation 3: It's a good idea to discuss the needs and wants of the parents before their child starts lessons with you. Make it clear to the parents what your lessons will comprise and why. If you make the purpose of activities clear to the parents, they'll be better able to see the benefits. If they still have concerns, consider adapting your lessons to better suit the parents' wants while still ensuring lessons are effective. It's also a good idea to discuss the needs and wants of adult learners too, as well as making the purpose of activities clear to them too. That way, they understand how their lessons are helping them to develop their language skills.

Dealing with situations

Situation 4: You could type the instructions on the whiteboard in your platform or in the chat box so that the student who missed them can catch up.

Situation 5: It's great that this learner is enthusiastic but, just as in a face-to-face lesson, you need to ensure all learners have the opportunity to contribute to the lesson. You could have a private chat with him before

or after a lesson; let him know that you appreciate his enthusiasm, but that you need to make sure everyone speaks in the lesson and that means you might need to choose other learners to speak instead. Then, in the lesson, nominate other learners and mute the microphones of the other speakers. This way, if the enthusiastic learner does speak, he won't talk over anyone else.

Situation 6: In this situation, you might want to talk to the parent through the chat box to check what they'd like to do as it's likely the parent will be in the room with the child. However, it might just be a case of waiting for a minute or two while still smiling and looking positive. Then move onto something else that the learner can do to give them some confidence and engage them again, e.g. use a puppet or sing a familiar song. The important thing is to stay relaxed so that the child doesn't feel your anxiety too.