

## Teaching Excellence Case Study

### Teaching practice as community outreach: Connecting students and refugees through English lessons

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**Course:** BA English and TEFL (Teaching English as a Foreign Language)

**Student Level:** Undergraduate (Level 5)



#### LINKS TO EDUCATION STRATEGY PILLARS

- Intercultural and international engagement
- Embedded employability
- Community contribution and responsibility

#### AIMS

This initiative aimed to develop students' **intercultural and international awareness** by engaging them in a **community project**. This involved the students teaching English as Foreign Language to refugees from a local refugee and migrant centre, enabling them to gain valuable **teaching practice** and make a positive difference to the local community.

#### ACTIONS

The course team were aware that the city's English teaching providers are heavily oversubscribed. The idea of **providing support in this area** was used as a trigger for the design. As a first step, the course team contacted [Coventry Refugee and Migrant Centre](#) (CRMC) to suggest that students could provide free English classes to its service users. The Centre welcomed the offer, and so a series of 11-week courses were subsequently developed, in which **students teach learners** (groups of 8-20) at different levels during 40 minute slots.

Two modules at Level 5 were designed to incorporate the teaching practice as their assessment components. **CU staff supervise students** throughout the courses: a teaching practice tutor is always present. Academic colleagues observe students' teaching practice, and students write a short reflection after each lesson to support their development.

#### IMPACT

- Since the project was established in 2010, around **300 people** have come to the classes from CRMC.
- About **150 students** have gained Cambridge teaching qualifications thanks to the teaching practice this makes possible.
- Many students have **continued to volunteer** at the refugee centre after their teaching experience has ended.
- Refugees, asylum seekers and migrant workers of all ages come to the CU campus for the classes, which **supports community integration** and fosters social relationships.
- There are countless **success stories** from individuals who have taken the classes- e.g. one recently passed an English test to secure a job as a taxi driver.
- Additionally, **intercultural awareness** has increased for both students and refugees involved in the classes.

#### STUDENT FEEDBACK

- "Tutors clearly point out what you can improve on and how you can do that. I also love that us as learners get to **teach real learners** so that we are prepared for the working world."
- "I have **developed skills** such as: leadership, patience, team-building and the ability to improvise and adapt to different situations outside of my comfort zone. Definitely seize the opportunity, it is life-changing."

#### TOP TIPS

- Consider **which organisations you could work with** to help students gain practical experience- and how they could benefit from the students' support.
- Be **proactive in contacting external partners** to suggest potential collaborations- they will likely be grateful for the offer.
- Working with external organisations can give students opportunities to **enhance their employability and community responsibility**.
- Students' international and intercultural awareness can be increased by **interacting with the local community**.

