

Bunting rooms

Essex Integration offers free English courses at the Bunting room for refugees and migrants of variety of different countries. People from many nationalities are gathering in this hall for one purpose which is learning English, where there are a lot of volunteers who like to help people and support them to be integrated in British society.

Many levels are being taught in the Bunting room and it arrives to 6 or 7 levels, so that means 6 or 7 groups. Each group consists of 7 people led by two volunteers one of them is a teacher and the other one is a teacher assistant.

the different nationalities include but not exclusive to Napoli, Turkey, Nigeria, Syria, Iraq, Bangladesh, Russia, Romania and Brazil.

the environment in Bunting room is friendly and helpful. Everyone is trying to help each other in their needs such as reading letters they receive and helping them to understand words in English and teach their children most of whom are suffering from understanding it in their HomeWorks for school. they help some of them to be enrolled in the university as writing reference letters for them and guiding them because their problem is not the language but it's how to apply for it. While other type of their help is by helping them to be ready for the job that they apply for, by teaching them the relevant words and vocabularies.

Also, this Bunting room is disability accessible as well.

after this stage they will continue to their road of having independence by having their language's courses in ACL (Wilson Marriage) or Colchester institute.

At the end of each term they are celebrating by having a big meal together and share it.

Here is some point of view of some students who are attending the classes in Bunting room:

1) Written by a care worker from Nigeria.

She joined our group in July 2017, having come from Nigeria via Italy. When she arrived, she could speak some English but was totally illiterate (she struggled with the letters of the alphabet). She came with three children who are now attending school. She was stressed anxious, and tearful. With lots of support from V-team students and her own efforts she has made tremendous progress. Now (February 2018) she is proud of her progress, has gained so much confidence, and always comes in smiling.

This is what she wrote with some, but not much support.

When I started here I could not read or write. I am making progress. I did not go to school when I was a child. Now I can read what the food is in the supermarket. I have to read and write at work because I'm working with elderly people. These classes have given me confidence to speak to people, and my children. I'm very happy.

1) From a wife of an Afghan interpreter. This was written by her husband.

She was brought up under the Taliban and never attended school. She came to the UK 1 ½ years ago with her husband who had been wounded while working as an interpreter for the British army.

When she came to the UK she found it bewildering and frightening. The people and customs were so alien. At the classes she met friendly people from other nationalities (including an Afghan University V-team student/teacher) and began to gain courage. She is now able to communicate at a basic level, and is confident enough to go shopping alone, and take her child to the doctor. Though separated from her family in Afghanistan, she now feels safe and happy here.

2) From the wife of a Ghurkha soldier.

She was brought up in a remote village in Nepal and attended one day of school! After that she worked in the fields and tended livestock. Her husband became a Ghurkha soldier, and they moved from country to country before being given the option to retire in the UK. She has been attending classes for two years. She is in her 70's. The classes have helped her make (slow) progress in English, and she can now communicate a little with her grandchildren (who speak no Nepali). She can also make sense of her appointments with her doctor. Importantly too, the classes give her an opportunity to leave her house and meet other people. She says the classes have been a lifeline to her in combatting loneliness and low self-confidence.

3) From Syria

He has started his study in Bunting room since Oct.2016, at the beginning he attended 3 sessions a week but one session when he started working. from his point of view, learning language is a cumulative (gradual) process,

because if he learns a word every day that will make him have at the end of the year a lot of words. The environment is so comfortable because the teachers are so friendly, and you feel free if you are sick or tired of not attending the class without formal justifications. Another side, I don't feel stressful because of the car's parking which is available for free. Besides he takes his daughter with him where they can take care of her and read stories for her and do many activities, even sometimes he takes his son with him if he is on holiday. He is so thankful for certain teachers whom he found them so good and even better than other institutes where they are paying over there. About the management in the hall, he thinks that is so flexible, so it's easy to change a level if you feel that you are better or it's hard for you.

4) A lady from Turkey who has been attending English classes 3 times a week for 6 months ago. She is so happy in this course because she can progress in her English language, and as she said " I still have many problems in pronunciation, and I found it difficult to talk and understand people in the streets". She likes the teachers in general and found the course so useful and interesting.

5) A lady from Iraq Kurdistan

She has started her English classes in Bunting room one year ago attending 3 sessions per week, she feels better in talking with others but she still struggling in writing. She appreciates about the teacher's role in her progressing because they keep persisting about her talking and encouraging her to express herself despite her lack of vocabularies.

Here is some point of view of some volunteer teachers who are leading the groups:

1. Peter who has been as a volunteer teacher for 4 years ago and sometimes he is replacing the responsible for Bunting room Mr. Le Seve for holidays but those are payed days.

He is teaching for 3 days per week, and he has started by an advice from his friend even he has not had any experience of teaching before, but he agreed for assisting and for his time filling. But after staying for a while, he started feeling empathy with people. He found his job so interesting mostly and sometimes he feels a little bit lousy, but it comes like once in 20 times.

2. Liisi

She started her volunteering as a teacher in last January 2018, she found it while she was googling for something interesting and she found this free English course by Essex integration as an interesting and useful activity for her. She is attending 2 days per week and its good for enriching her experience as well. She is so happy because everyone is so lovely, and she thought that supporting others is so pleasant. Teaching English at Bunting room is "challenging, interesting and filling time" she says. In her teaching, she focusses on listening, speaking and daily skills.

Address:

Essex Street
Colchester
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The sessions are: every Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays from 10:30am-12:00 pm
, 12:30pm-14:00pm

For more information, you can contact John Le Seve: john@essexintegration.org

If you would like to participate and be as a volunteer, you can contact us and send an email: info@essexintegration.org.