Planning learning and the Teaching and Learning Programme model

Guidance notes

The Teaching and Learning Programme model is designed to support teachers through active development of their practice. This model engages teachers in the use of resources, developed in partnership with teachers and their learners and underpinned by research evidence. The programme encourages the sharing of effective practice, the development of personalised, active programmes of continuing professional development (CPD) and the use of reflective practice.

Bruce Joyce and Beverley Showers studied 200 in-service education and training programmes for teachers, all designed to change classroom practice. They found that without the chance for teachers to experience peer observation and peer coaching there is no measurable impact on classroom practice.

Coaching provides an opportunity to reflect on a session and consider, in a supportive climate, why an approach did or did not work and how it might be changed or refined.

Based on their research, Joyce and Showers assert that after attending a continuing professional development (CPD) event, if a teacher receives coaching on the new practice, on their return to the workplace there will be a positive impact on performance. However, where there is no coaching there will be much less impact.

We use 'teaching and learning' and 'teacher' as generic terms to include:

- teaching, training and learning; and
- teachers, tutors, trainers, lecturers and instructors in the further education (FE) system.

The Teaching and Learning Programme aims to support providers to improve the quality of teaching and learning by linking organisational strategies for quality improvement, continuing professional development (CPD) and the Subject Learning Coach model.

**Planning learning**

**Introduction**

The approaches and supporting resources in the Teaching and Learning Programme are intended to enrich the experience of learners. They will support teaching and learning in a wide variety of courses and offer opportunities for further development in other areas of the curriculum.

Any learning programme has to be planned carefully if it is to be successful. These notes outline some essential elements that can be incorporated into a successful scheme of work and gives some guidelines on effective session planning.

It is fully recognised that many teachers will already use the principles described below. These notes provide generic guidelines that describe effective practice and may be used in CPD activities and when mentoring or coaching colleagues.

There is no single solution to curriculum design. Each curriculum area will have its own requirements and approaches and these notes are not intended to provide a rigid structure.

The notes are divided into two sections.

1. Developing a scheme of work
2. Developing a session plan
1. Developing a scheme of work

The scheme of work organises course content and describes how it will be delivered. It allows teachers to plan a programme that is appropriate for their learners. It will also provide a framework for session planning.

Some schemes of work will provide a detailed breakdown of course content including the time required to cover each topic. In other curriculum areas this may not be appropriate.

Although there are key differences in the planning required for different programmes, there are also some common principles that can be employed when creating an effective scheme of work.

Purpose of a scheme of work

An effective scheme:

• underpins a comprehensive learning experience for the learner;
• requires teachers to work together to plan a coherent programme. This can be especially challenging where teachers do not work in the same department or even in the same institution as may be the case where learning is planned with partner organisations;
• helps teachers plan common activities, for example, work experience, visits, visiting speakers and so on;
• helps teachers plan resources;
• helps teachers create their individual session plans;
• helps new teachers joining the programme;
• requires us to think about the essential underpinning skills that learners need and plan to incorporate strategies to ensure these skills are learnt;
• requires us to think about a variety of learning and teaching approaches that are appropriate for our learners; and
• helps teachers plan assessment methods and a coherent schedule.

Creating a scheme of work

As a starting point, it is useful to think of the scheme of work as a comprehensive document that explains the ‘learner journey’.
This means we consider:

- initial assessment to identify strengths and areas for development in prior learning of both curriculum specific and essential skills;
- developing and assessing essential and generic skills;
- resources including workshops and study centre inductions;
- integrating key skills;
- including opportunities for e-learning and using technology;
- guest speakers, visits, work experience;
- a variety of teaching and learning approaches, learner-centred and learner-directed activities, plans for differentiating learning and plans for meeting individual needs;
- an assessment programme that uses a wide range of assessment for learning approaches, including peer assessment opportunities; and
- strategies for providing individual feedback and target setting for improvement.

Designing a scheme of work is a creative process and can be time-consuming. There are clear advantages, however, for learners and teachers, in investing time to create a well-planned learning programme.

Important considerations are outlined below.

- What skills will the learner need to cope with the work at each stage?
- How will skills acquisition be built into the programme?
- Are there opportunities to practise newly acquired skills? This can include identifying opportunities with learners where they can develop their skills outside the classroom or workshop, for example, in their employment.
- How will achievement be measured?
- How will the workload be managed?
- How will feedback be given?
- What will the completed programme look like?

Thus the scheme of work should be:

- constructed by the team of teachers working with a group or with individuals;
• held centrally and integrated into the system operated by the institution, for example, on a provider network system or virtual learning environment (VLE); and
• reviewed regularly and adjusted by the team in the light of review.

Learning in multiple environments

Teachers and learners in the national pilots explored this theme and recognised that:
• learning takes place in many environments as well as the classroom and workshop;
• learners are comfortable with, and expect to make use of, a range of technology and virtual environments;
• learners need support to design and manage extended projects; and
• learning programmes are frequently planned in partnership with other providers and across several locations.

These factors mean that we need to plan learning programmes that exploit a wide range of learning opportunities. We need to encourage learners to take the ‘driving seat’ and become partners in planning learning. Learners uniquely ‘hold the ring’ on the whole learning journey and with careful planning we can avoid fragmentation and missed opportunities. The process of planning partnership also fosters the characteristics of the ‘expert learner’.

Using the scheme of work

Whether the plan has been developed to cover an entire programme or an element within a programme, it is essential that all teachers have access to it. Many learners will be on individual programmes, which are built on the learner’s experience. However, the principles of design are the same.

Plans that form part of a larger programme should be coordinated so that an overview of assessment and workload is available. This is an essential role for a personal teacher or programme manager. An overview of the plan should be shared with learners so that they are familiar with the programme structure.

When all plans are available it will be possible to assess the overall workload for a learner and it may be necessary, at that stage, to create an assessment schedule or
make amendments to individual schemes to ensure that the learner is not faced with impossible or conflicting deadlines.

It may also be possible to review the activities in each plan at this stage to make sure that the programme is varied and interesting.

2. Developing a session plan

When the scheme of work is complete, consideration can be given to individual sessions. In some curriculum areas a ‘session’ can be easily defined as an event that happens at a particular time on a particular day, with a clear start and end time.

However, for many learners a session is not time bound in this way. In this type of learning environment a useful first step may be to decide what a ‘session’ might look like and how long it will last.

There is no perfect session plan or one method that can be used by all areas in the learning and skills sector. To provide a sample framework could limit the imagination and flair of teachers.

However, there are key features that form part of a successful session. These are shown in the diagram below and may be useful in developing your session plans.
Factors that influence session design

- Learning objectives
- Climate for learning
- Teaching and learning strategies and approaches
- Questioning
- Explaining
- Organisation of the learning environment
- Health and safety

Learning objectives

The nature of the learning objective will influence the approach that the teacher adopts.

Climate for learning

Two aspects are important here.

1. Learning style

Research by Coffield (Coffield et al 2004) Should we be using learning styles? London: Learning and Skills Research Centre) has brought into question the use of learning styles inventories. However, a common sense view tells us that learners find some approaches to learning suit them better than others. Constantly working outside a learner’s preferred learning styles can lead to frustration and lack of motivation. This does not mean we should ‘label’ learners or restrict them in any way. Nor does it mean that every session should cater for the full spectrum of learning styles but that all learners should have regular opportunities to learn in their preferred styles.

2. Prior attainment and knowledge
Learners need to be encouraged to work at a level in advance of their current attainment level but not to the degree where they become stressed by the learning opportunities developed.

**Effective teaching and learning approaches**

Guidance notes on Effective teaching and learning approaches are available at [http://tlp.excellencegateway.org.uk/tlp/pedagogy/](http://tlp.excellencegateway.org.uk/tlp/pedagogy/). Explore this site further and consider the 10 pedagogy approaches that are described. They build on the principles of 'active learning' that were introduced in the programme’s earlier resources.

The term ‘active learning’ has been refined to embrace 10 key pedagogy approaches that we know can make a positive impact on learners’ experience. The aim is to help learners move from surface learning to deep and profound understanding. The 10 approaches are underpinned by evidence from research and from teachers’ and learners’ experiences. They are:

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<tr>
<th>Assessment for learning</th>
<th>Co-operative learning</th>
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<tr>
<td>Differentiation</td>
<td>Embedding literacy, language and numeracy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experiential learning</td>
<td>Learning conversations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modelling</td>
<td>Multi-sensory learning</td>
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<tr>
<td>Relating theory and practice</td>
<td>Using new technology</td>
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You can use the **Quick start guides** that provide more in-depth information about the 10 pedagogy approaches and ideas sheets that offer easy to use teaching and learning methods to get you started. You can also explore some of the approaches in depth in four **pedagogy toolkits**:

<table>
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<th>Co-operative learning</th>
<th>Effective questioning</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Peer review</td>
<td>Using case studies</td>
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Organisation of the learning environment

This is more than the arrangement of the furniture. It includes using displays of learners’ work, updated and inspiring visual displays that reflect the learners’ subject and vocational areas, choice of equipment, and the role of learning assistants. Attention needs to be given to the impact of different social settings and equality and diversity issues on effective learning.

Health and safety

This may be an obvious point, but teachers have a responsibility to ensure that the learning environment is safe and comfortable for all learners. Your plans should indicate any special health and safety features that need to be taken into account.

Throughout the teaching and learning resources you will find worked examples of session plans created for the learner activities.