

**Bath Spa
University**

2011/12

Achieving Teaching Excellence



**Guidance for Teaching Staff
and Trainees**

August 2011

Lifelong Learning
Initial Teacher Training

School of Education

WHAT IS TEACHING EXCELLENCE?

Views about what constitutes 'Teaching Excellence' will vary from writer to writer, and organisation to organisation. Overall we believe there is a core of key principles and practices which many will agree on, and we have based this document on those core areas.

Bath Spa University Lifelong Learning Initial teacher Training (LL ITT) Team developed a shared vision about what we believe constitutes teaching excellence during 2008, and this document is the updated guidance resulting from that as of **July 2010**.

This **Model of Teaching Excellence** takes account of best practice and ideas from a variety of sources¹, and from the values and experiences of our teaching team and other teachers we have trained. The LL ITT team believes that excellent teachers:

- Understand how their students learn and use a range of resources and approaches in their teaching.
- Secure achievement and personal growth for all students irrespective of their ability, background and national origin.
- Use student-centred teaching which promotes autonomy.
- Promote an inclusive atmosphere and ensure equity throughout their teaching.
- Support students who encounter difficulty in their learning for any reason.
- Demonstrate clarity, creativity and innovation in the design, planning delivery and evaluation of learning activities and programmes.
- Use assessment to support achievement.
- Evaluate their teaching performance regularly and enhance their teaching and learning as a result.
- Regularly take advantage of professional development opportunities.
- Engage with scholarship in valued forms of knowledge related to learning and teaching.
- Champion high quality learning and teaching in their organisation.
- Support and collaborate with colleagues to share and promote good practice.
- Equip their learners for life in its broadest sense.
- Contribute to community cohesion.

¹ Coffield, F. (2008) Just suppose teaching and learning became the first priority. London: Learning and Skills Network.

Collegenet Update 2 (2005) <http://www.collegenet.org/> (accessed 3/2/08)

Institute of Education (2008) Criteria for defining teaching as excellent: Discussion document www.ioe.ac.uk/calendar/QualityAssur/CriteriaForTeachingExcellence.doc - Accessed 05/02/08

OfSTED (2009) Grading Criteria for the Inspection of Initial Teacher Training 2008-11. London: OfSTED

RATIONALE FOR THIS GUIDANCE

This guidance, and the supporting documents, are aimed at supporting our trainees to achieve the best quality outcomes, and the most sustainable improvement in their teaching whilst on the Cert Ed / PG Cert.

We will support all trainees in making progress towards achieving teaching excellence over the two years they spend on the Lifelong Learning Initial Teacher Training programme.

The **Course Handbooks** and **Guides to Practical Teaching and Professional Development** already provide detailed guidance and assessment activities which will help every trainee to improve their teaching and demonstrate outstanding qualities in their teaching.

This additional guidance aims to:

1. Develop a shared understanding of 'Teaching Excellence'.
2. Highlight ways in which trainees can demonstrate excellence in their teaching.
3. Identify the characteristics of unsatisfactory teaching.
4. Support trainees towards recognition and achievement as excellent teachers.

PROVIDING EVIDENCE OF TEACHING QUALITY

In the existing course documents there is already substantial advice relating to developing and improving practical teaching, and this is evidenced by trainees in their:

- **Practical Teaching File**
- **Module Assessment Activities**

In addition, guidance is available within a variety of course documents, and online in the 'Information Zone' on how to evidence competence in a range of dimensions of practical teaching including Equality and Cultural Diversity, embedding Skills for Life and using Information and Communications Technology (ICT) appropriately.

EXCELLENCE IN PLANNING AND PREPARATION

To some extent this will differ depending on the context, subject being taught and the level of learning of the group. For example planning for those working in Work Based Learning, Skills for Life or Severe Learning Difficulties and Disabilities will have a greater focus on individual work & use of ILPs.

OfSTED (2008) have identified the following key aspects of planning which should be demonstrated by outstanding trainees through their course file:

- Demonstrate a clear and deep understanding of how to plan for progression – stages in learning, different rates of progress, identifying clear ‘strands of progression’ and the use of these to plan ‘steps in learning’, their teaching, dealing with barriers to learning, and through this demonstrate depth of subject knowledge and subject pedagogy.
- Demonstrate the clarity of links between learning objectives, teaching approaches and assessment strategies – ‘what I want learners to learn, how they will learn, and how I know that they have, what I will do next’
- Show innovation within the constraints of a scheme of work / curriculum
- Innovative approaches to the integration of Every Child Matters, and social and cultural diversity

In addition, OfSTED (2008) have identified the following ‘*noticeable characteristic*’ for outstanding trainees in relation to planning:

- Show innovative and creative thinking – lateral thinkers

SCHEME OF WORK

There is an example of a ‘best practice’ scheme of work on the information zone, in the **Practical Teaching and Professional Development** Section. A Scheme of work should be in table format and include key information about the group and course on the front page.

Key Headings:

- programme details (aims; entry requirements; assessment arrangements; planning for student needs and differentiation)
- learning objectives / outcomes
- topics / content
- key / essential Skills / Skills for Life
- session number
- learner activity (including differentiation / extension / assessment and evaluation)
- resources / facilities / equipment.

The SoW will show thorough knowledge of the course requirements, syllabus or specifications.

An **EXCELLENT SCHEME OF WORK** should contain most of the following:

- Objectives/Outcomes which are SMART, relevant, written at the appropriate level, and cover all 3 domains of learning.
- Opportunities for participative self directed learning.
- Content / topics which clearly align with objectives / outcomes, indicate themes and provide a logical progression through the sessions.
- Account taken of varied learning styles and student needs.
- A balance of whole class, individual & small group learning activities, supported where appropriate with Information and Communications Technology (ICT), and which promote deep learning.
- Equality and diversity which is embedded into the variety of methods and resources used.
- Opportunities for developing Key / Essential Skills / Skills for Life are present throughout
- Opportunities for monitoring of learning and appropriate timing of any formal assessments are clearly indicated. (NB ILPs should for most courses be referred to within SoW)
- Opportunities for student feedback on their learning, and trainee evaluation of their teaching occur regularly.
- Differentiation: Any extension activities or anticipated additional support needs should be included.

NB - The SoW should be a working document and not in pristine condition. It should show the changes that have occurred during its use and suggested changes for the future.

A SCHEME OF WORK THAT MAY BE CONSIDERED INADEQUATE is likely to be where:

- Planning is minimal
- Methods, resources and assessment are repetitive
- Levels of learning are too high or more often too low for learners' level & course requirements,
- Planning for Key Skills/SfL is not included
- No use of ICT or ILT.
- No reference to Equality & Diversity or differentiation.

A 'GRADE 1' LESSON

One indicator, though by no means the only one, of teaching excellence, is the grade awarded by OfSTED, when observing teaching, with Grade 1 the top result available. The 'Collegenet' web site (2005)² used an analysis of over 300 OfSTED inspection reports of FE colleges to describe a '**Grade 1 Lesson**'. The next page shows their key elements of a grade 1 lesson as a flowchart.

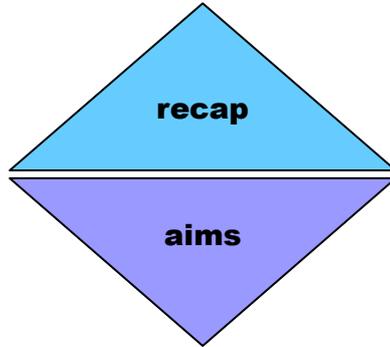
² Update 2 (2008) Batley: Collegenet

The grade 1 lesson plan – a visual representation

With thanks to Henley College, Coventry

lesson introduction

greet and welcome



tutor exposition

learner activity

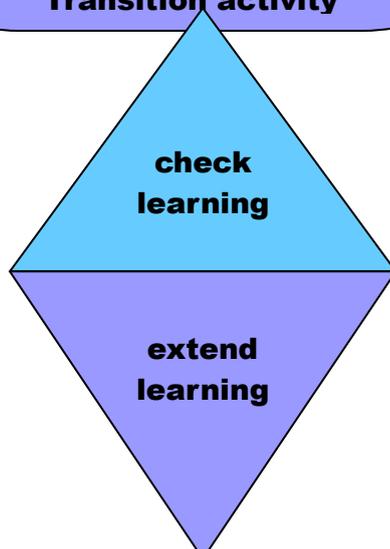
question

answer

Transition activity

lesson development

lesson summation



- Ensure an upbeat, enthusiastic welcome.
- Recap using an active learning technique and involve **all**.
- Set clear aims or a maximum of three key learning points.
- Link to the syllabus / exam and highlight key skills.
- Introduce the topic with a short exposition.
- Aim to challenge and inspire and to build rapport.
- Use up-to-date statistics, latest research findings or current commercial activity.
- Support with some visuals, handouts, ILT and appropriate resources.
- Check for learning and ensure key points are recorded.
- Set an individual, paired or group activity to build key skills and to help **all** consolidate learning.
- Use planned questions to ensure differentiation and seek answers from **all**.
- Offer positives and praise to each learner.
- Summarise learning with an appropriate transition activity i.e. visual memory aids.
- Repeat learning cycle or end with an overall lesson summation.
- Conduct a final check on learning against expressed aims.
- Set formal homework task or an extended learning task.
- Aim to consolidate learning or to introduce a bridge to the next lesson.

SESSION PLANS

Some of the same information as on the front of the SoW will also be on each session plan. This should include:

- key information about the group & course
- identified individual support needs and reference within planning to the management and role of other professionals in working with the group (e.g. Learning Support Assistant).

The session planning document, like the SoW, should be a working document and not pristine after the session delivery but contain notes and changes that could improve sessions in the future.

EXCELLENT SESSION PLANS should include most of the following:

- **Sessions show thorough planning** and are clearly based on the SoW, with all aspects of the session working together to achieve the intended learning
- **Key information about the group**, additional needs support, level of course qualification outcomes, key skills/SfL references etc all need to be present.
- A **clearly planned structure** to the session with clear introduction, middle & conclusion. In long sessions this may be repeated more than once.
- **Objectives / Learning Outcomes** which are SMART and as per SoW but might be adapted based on evaluation of previous sessions or changing circumstances / needs.
- **Teacher activity / methods used / learner activity** are stated at each point in the lesson and extension activities are included.
- All **practical, experiential activities** including group work is consolidated via a plenary activity or activities which draw out key learning points from learners.
- **Assessment strategies** and monitoring techniques are in use and linked to assessment activities either in or outside the session.
- **Key skills or Skills for Life** are identified and relevantly linked to the subject matter, and referenced to the relevant KS specifications or the core curriculum codes.
- **Embedding of Every Child Matters** across the session.
- **Equality & Diversity** are shown in planning e.g. via planned differentiation activities (Extension activities for brighter learners, additional support for learners having difficulty).
- **Linking back & linking forward** between sessions is planned and recorded.

SESSION PLANS THAT ARE INADEQUATE are likely to have several of the following features:

- No clear objectives or learning outcomes; objectives or learning outcomes at inappropriate level to learners & course; objectives which cover only cognitive learning
- A lack of structured development to the learning process
- Learning activities which are not effective in allowing learners access to the learning required
- Only 1 or 2 delivery styles or methods used
- Planned use of inappropriate resources or equipment;
- Do not include IA of learners existing knowledge of the topic subject or skill to be taught
- Do not link back to previous learning
- Do not link forward to future learning
- Do not show links to relevant assessment activities for the course
- Have learning that is not appropriate to learning level of learners

EXCELLENT DELIVERY

Will include most of the following features:

- A flexible and adaptable approach which can meet changing conditions and learner needs.
- All learners actively engaged in and making progress as a result of the session.
- Learners supported, challenged and inspired by their teacher to learn and achieve challenging learning outcomes.
- High quality resources appropriately used to enhance learning.
- Teacher and learners clear at all points in the session what they should be doing and why.
- Excellent communication skills taking account of learners' ability.
- A rapport with learners – high-quality dialogue and questioning, guiding learning, with attention to individuals and groups
- A deep subject knowledge which will support learners' in acquiring subject skills and understanding.
- Varied, inspiring and differentiated learning activities.
- Others working with the learners briefed and managed in a way to support individual learning
- Relevant use of ICT which enhances learning.
- Management of the behaviour of learners which allows ALL Equality of Opportunity to learn.
- Inappropriate and racist behaviour, attitudes or comments are challenged and dealt with in a way which does not permit discrimination of any learner or group but also maintains an effective learning atmosphere.
- Learners able to explain how the teaching helped them make progress.
- Opportunities for learners to develop self directed deep learning.
- Effective links are made to where Key Skills, Skills for Life and ICT are needed to help learning in the subject or achieve qualifications.

In addition, outstanding trainees should be able to demonstrate the following '**noticeable characteristics**'³ while they are teaching:

- Take risks when trying to make teaching interesting, are able to deal with the unexpected and 'grab the moment'
- Inspire and communicate their enthusiasm to learners
- Show innovative and creative thinking – lateral thinkers
- Are highly respected by learners and colleagues and, where appropriate, parents/carers and employers
- Demonstrate, or show the capacity to develop, leadership and management skills

A SESSION THAT IS INADEQUATE will show the following feature:

- All or most learners not engaged in effective interesting learning

EXCELLENT PRACTICAL TEACHING FILE

An excellent Practical Teaching File will:

- Meet all the requirements laid down in the Course Handbook and Guide to Practical Teaching fully and clearly.
- Demonstrate progression and improvement through:
 - work submitted for assessment during the year
 - ongoing reflection on their practice in their Professional Development Journal
 - completion and updating of their own Individual Learning Plans.
- Be clearly indexed, easily accessible and with a high quality of presentation.
- Be a working file, showing changes, adaptations and development in teaching activity.
- Include additional material selected by the trainee to showcase and reinforce aspects of their teaching.

OfSTED (2008) indicate what the characteristics of an excellent 'Course File' should be, which applies equally to our Practical Teaching File. They are:

- Demonstrate a clear and deep understanding of how to plan for progression – stages in learning, different rates of progress, identifying clear 'strands of progression' and the use of these to plan 'steps in learning', their teaching, dealing with barriers to learning, and through this demonstrate depth of subject knowledge and subject pedagogy.
- Provide evidence of monitoring and recording learners' progress and how the outcomes are used in subsequent planning, with a clear focus on groups and individual learners

³ OfSTED (2009) Grading Criteria for the Inspection of Initial Teacher Training 2008-11. London: OfSTED

- Demonstrate the clarity of links between learning objectives, teaching approaches and assessment strategies – ‘what I want learners to learn, how they will learn, and how I know that they have, what I will do next’
- Show innovation within the constraints of a scheme of work/ curriculum
- Maintain files as working documents – annotated as part of self evaluation
- Show high-quality self-evaluation with clear focus on learners and setting challenging targets for their own professional development – including, for example, future career progression with evidence of implementation and further review, and critical analysis and reflection, taking full account of feedback from trainers and other professionals they work with
- Innovative approaches to the integration of Every Child Matters, and social and cultural diversity

In addition, OfSTED (2008) have identified the following **'noticeable characteristics'** of an outstanding trainee which may be evidenced through the Progress File / Practical Teaching File:

- Take risks when trying to make teaching interesting, are able to deal with the unexpected and ‘grab the moment’ (*session plans and observations*)
- Inspire and communicate their enthusiasm to learners (*observations and learner feedback*)
- Have an intrinsic passion for learning (*reflective journal*)
- Show innovative and creative thinking – lateral thinkers (*planning, observations, reflective journal*)
- Have the ability to reflect critically and rigorously on their own practice to inform their professional development, and to take and evaluate appropriate actions – they are able to learn from their mistakes (*observation feedback, self-evaluations, reflective journal*)
- Take full responsibility for their own professional development (*reflective journal, records of CPD*)
- Are highly respected by learners and colleagues and, where appropriate, parents/carers and employers (*observations, reflective journal, other relevant evidence*)
- Have the clear capacity to become outstanding teachers (*observation feedback*)
- Demonstrate, or show the capacity to develop, leadership and management skills (*observations, reflective journal, other relevant evidence*)

What makes a teaching file inadequate?

- Key components are not present e.g. SoW
- Sessions have been delivered without relevant appropriate planning evidenced in file.
- Poor quality resources with little relevance to learning, little or no evaluation of sessions
- Reflections in the PDJ are not evaluative or critically reflective.

BRILLIANT TEACHING – ADDED AUGUST 2011 – FROM THE IfL⁴

We find that brilliant teachers and trainers have a good repertoire of teaching methods, experiment and reflect on what leads to excellent outcomes for learners, and that they:

1. Make time for reflective practice and critically analyse their own objectives. They build their confidence in their own professional judgement, tailoring learning activities to individual students' and trainees' needs and circumstances.
2. Learn from others and are willing to share practice and engage in peer support, mentoring and collaborative action research, sharing, networking with other teachers and trainers and learning from others in communities of practice.
3. Require the support of leaders who are experts in learning and can prioritise improving teaching and learning. The best leaders set the tone for brilliant teaching and develop a culture of self-improvement.
4. Are expert at how to design and match teaching and training methods to learners' needs, the subject and level of programme. They have a wide repertoire of methods on which to draw and know which are most effective in what circumstances.
5. Continually listen and respond to learners, bringing enthusiasm and creativity to learning, monitoring progress and acting upon feedback. They recognise the importance of being a professional with a full commitment to the learner.
6. Are confident in their use of technology, inventive with different and emerging technologies to enhance the learning experience and successful learning.
7. Maximise use of virtual learning environments (VLEs) and online learning to build knowledge and become more effective teachers and trainers.
8. Are actively involved in assessment for learning and target-setting for learners.
9. Work with newly qualified teachers and trainers, and peers, to build discussion and reflective practice.

Brilliant teachers and trainers are real experts in their subject area, and they:

1. Work hard to maintain their occupational, specialist or subject knowledge.
2. Are passionate about their subject and do not feel it is a chore to teach it.
3. Build their own links with their appropriate professional institutions to keep up to date.
4. Engage in sector vocational or subject networks.
5. Continually develop and build links with employers, experts and higher education in related fields.
6. Spend time out in industry with employers for their own development.
7. Actively engage employers in the student or trainee learning experience.
8. Plan for the coherence of on and off-the-job training in their vocational area.

Brilliant teachers and trainers keep up with change in the wider context, and they:

1. Recognise changes in the political, social and economic climate that impact on their learners' needs.

⁴ IfL (2010) Brilliant teaching and training in FE and skills. London: Institute for Learning.

2. Continually consider the implications of these changes for their learners and their teaching practice.
3. Develop distinct capabilities and skills to teach different groups, such as 14 to 16-year-olds; those in offender learning; those not in education, employment, or training; adults within the workforce; and older adults.
4. Adopt a more work-based approach, emphasising employability with employer-focused training and apprenticeships.
5. Understand the requirements for safeguarding within the context of teaching and training, and in using technology.
6. Explore ways in which the greater flexibility of the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF) can be exploited for the benefit of learners.
7. Keep in touch with emerging technology and social media developments that could help learners better.
8. Actively reflect on practice and CPD with other teachers and trainers across their organisation.

(pp 5,6)

Conclusion

We hope you will enthusiastically work to move towards teaching excellence, and wish you good luck on your journey!