National Teaching and Learning Change Programme overview

The National Teaching and Learning Change Programme brings together 'three enablers' to support the transformation of teaching, training and learning:

- subject specific teaching and learning resources
- subject coaching networks
- professional training for Subject Learning Coaches.

The coaching model

This model of support for tutors, teachers and trainers using our subject specific teaching and learning resources has been designed according to research evidence on the most effective ways to support professional development and the sharing of best practice.

How is the coaching programme organised?

- Providers offering courses in Business Education, Entry to Employment (E2E), Construction, Science, Health and Social Care, ICT, Land-based Studies, Mathematics, Adult Learning, Engineering and Modern Foreign Languages have been invited to nominate Subject Learning Coaches in these priority subject areas.

- The Subject Learning Coaches meet in Subject Networks, either regionally or sub regionally. They participate in a free national professional training programme that can lead to accreditation. This programme then prepares them to provide peer coaching for their colleagues to help them adopt the new approaches and teaching and learning resources in their own organisation.

- Regular Network meetings help to foster the development of subject learning communities and provide the Subject Learning Coaches with peer support from a range of different backgrounds as well as opportunities for practising their coaching skills with their fellow peers.

What is the background and evidence for this model?

Joyce and Showers studied 200 In-Service Education and Training programmes for teachers and trainers, each of which was designed with the specific aim of changing classroom practice. The research findings revealed that, even though teachers and trainers were often very enthusiastic about the training they received, they rarely applied it in a sustained way that led to long-term change in practice.

Joyce and Showers concluded that, for training to be truly effective, it needs to include the following five components or stages:
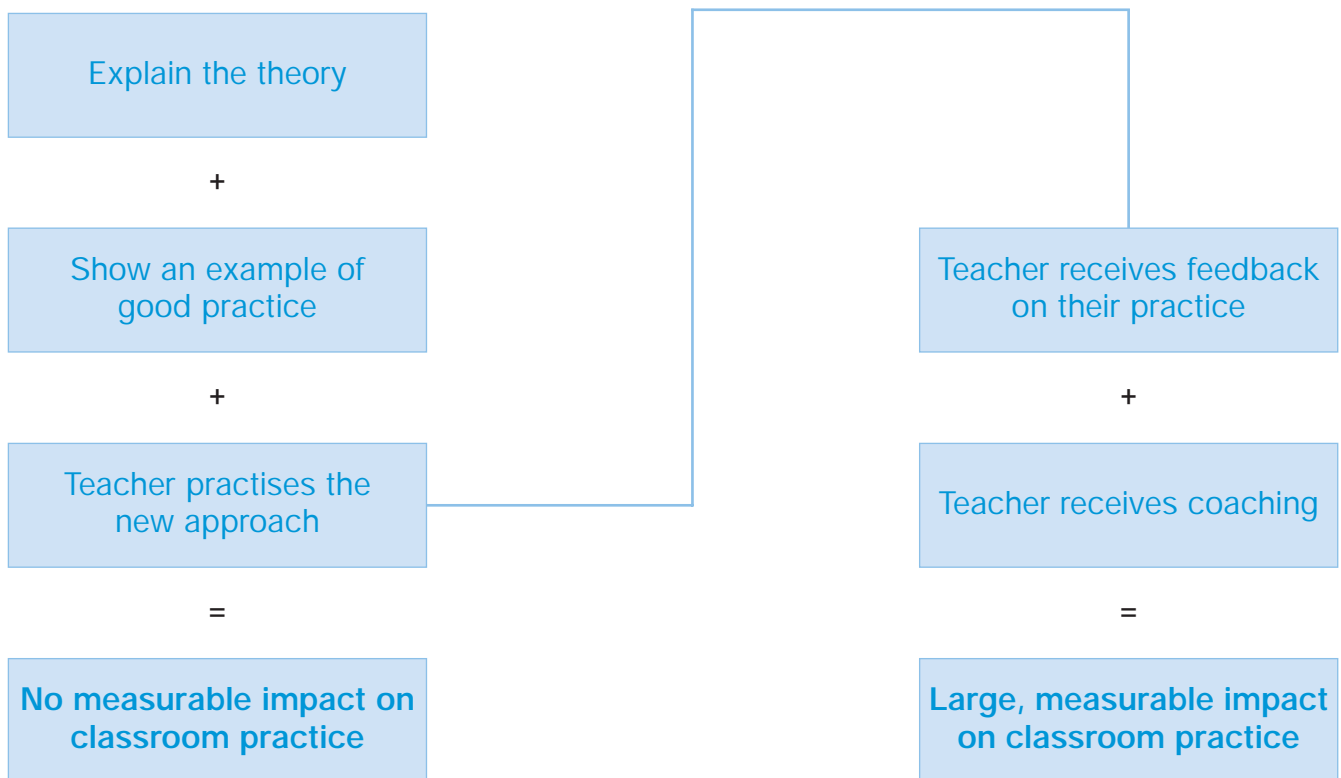
- theory – where the new approach is explained and justified
- demonstration – to give a model of how this can be put into practice
- practice – so that the teacher can try out the new approach
- feedback on how well the new approach is working; and
- coaching – to help the teacher discuss the teaching in a supportive environment and consider how it might be improved.

Their research shows that, without the opportunity to receive feedback and coaching, there is no measurable impact on classroom practice. However, once these two components are added, in particular the final coaching stage, there is a large and measurable impact on practice. Figure 1 offers a diagrammatic representation of the model.

[1] Showers B. *et al.: 'Synthesis of research on staff development'*, Nov.1987 Educational Leadership

[2] Joyce B. R.and Showers B., *Student Achievement through Staff Development*, 3rd edition, 2002, Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Figure 1

Explain the theory

+

Show an example of good practice

+

Teacher practises the new approach

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No measurable impact on classroom practice

Teacher receives feedback on their practice

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Teacher receives coaching

=

Large, measurable impact on classroom practice

The feedback might be provided by a colleague who observes the session. Alternatively, the teacher delivering the lesson might simply describe to colleagues what they did and what happened as a result, including things that went well and things that did not. Coaching goes one step further. It provides an opportunity for the teacher to reflect on the lesson and consider, in a supportive climate, why an approach did or did not work and how it might be changed or refined.

We hope that you will follow the guidance in this resource. For more information on how you can share in the professional Subject Networks and join in our coaching programme call 020 7297 9281 or visit www.subjectlearningcoach.net.

Developing schemes of work and session plans

Guidance notes

Introduction

The approaches and supporting materials developed in the teaching, training and learning resources are intended to enrich the experience of learners. They will support teaching, training 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 give some guidelines on effective session planning.

It is fully recognised that many teachers, trainers and tutors may already use the principles described below. The notes provide generic guidelines that describe good practice and may be used in Continuing Professional Development 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 that must be adopted.

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, trainers and tutors 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, trainers and tutors to work together to plan a coherent programme

- helps teachers, trainers and tutors to plan common activities, for example: work experience, visits, visiting speakers

- helps teachers, trainers and tutors to plan resources

- helps teachers, trainers and tutors to create their individual session plans

- helps new teachers, trainers and tutors joining the programme

- requires us to think about the essential underpinning skills that learners need and to incorporate strategies to ensure these skills are learnt

- requires us to think about a variety of learning and teaching styles that are appropriate for our learners

- helps teachers, trainers and tutors 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 learners' 'learning journey'.

This will mean that we consider:

- initial assessment to identify weaknesses in prior learning of both curriculum specific and essential skills

- developing and assessing essential/generic skills

- resources including workshops and study centre inductions

- integrating key skills

- including opportunities for e-learning and ILT

- guest speakers/visits/work experience

- a variety of teaching methods, learner-centred activities, plans for differentiating learning

- an assessment programme that includes a variety of assessment methods and opportunities

- strategies for providing individual feed-back and target setting for improvement and success.

Designing a scheme of work is a creative process and can be time consuming. There are clear advantages, however, for learners and teachers, trainers and tutors 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?

- 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, trainers and tutors working with a group or with individuals

- should be held centrally and integrated into the system operated by the institution, for example, on a provider network system or virtual learning environment

- should be reviewed regularly and adjusted by the team in the light of review.

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, trainers and tutors 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 tutor or programme manager. An overview of the programme 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 work load for a learner and it may be necessary, at that stage to create an assessment schedule or make ammendments 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.
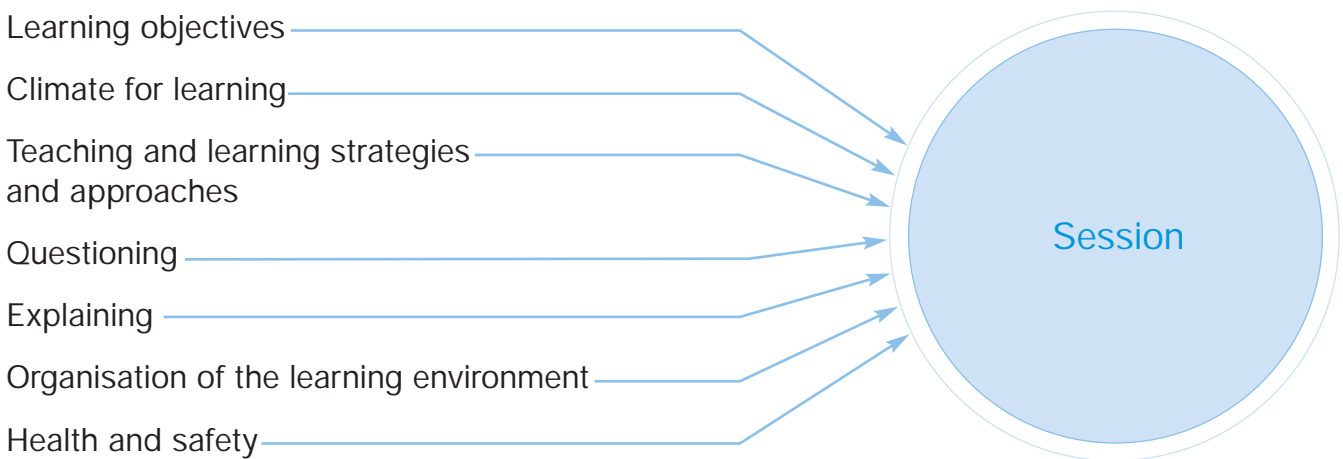
Developing a session plan

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' may 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, trainers and tutors.

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

Session

Learning objectives

The nature of the learning objective will influence the approach that the teacher, trainer or tutor adopts.

Climate for learning

Two aspects are important here:

• Learning style.

Constantly working outside a learner's preferred learning style can lead to frustration and lack of motivation. This does not 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 style.

• 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.

Teaching and learning strategies and approaches

Effective teaching uses a wide range of different teaching and learning strategies.

Teaching and learning strategies are vital in:

- presenting key concepts and ideas

- demonstrating skills and processes

- engaging and supporting learners in active learning

- establishing an interactive and well-paced dialogue with the learners

- creating the right level of challenge so that learners can make progress.

Some common teaching skills are:

Questioning

- Questions need to be planned in a sequence that guides and reinforces.

- Certain types of questions have inbuilt challenges that require learners to think deeply. Examples include:

  - open ended questions

  - questions that demand and develop higher-order thinking skills such as analysis, synthesis and evaluation

  - questions that encourage learners to speculate and take risks; and

- teachers, trainers and tutors should build in 'wait time' so that learners can reflect before answering.

Explaining

- Abstract concepts, principles, rules and important ideas can be difficult to understand without explanation.

- Common types of explanation deal with:
  - concepts
  - similarities and differences
  - cause and effect
  - purposes
  - processes
  - reasoning and proof.

- Explanations contribute to learners' ability to learn and to connect new information to what they already know.

- Explanations can be improved by using a range of techniques including illustration, use of props, voice or body.

- Asking learners to explain their thinking and reasoning helps them to crystallise and consolidate their learning.

Organisation of the learning environment

This is more than the arrangement of the furniture. It includes using displays of learners' work, 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, trainers and tutors 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.