

Unit 4: Help Improve Own and Team Practice in Schools

Unit code: T/601/7391

QCF Level 2: Specialist

Credit value: 3

Guided learning hours: 15

Unit aim

This unit aims to provide the knowledge, understanding and skills required to help improve own and team practice in schools. It requires demonstration of competence in reflecting on and improving own practice, and supporting the work of the team.

Unit introduction

This unit is suitable for people who work as part of a team in a school. It will enable learners to understand the process of continuing professional development and how this better equips them to improve their own work, and support the work of a team. It also enables learners to understand how to support the teacher and pupils effectively as part of a team of professionals to ensure effective teaching and learning can take place.

Learners will gain knowledge in ensuring learners can reflect on their own practice and its impact on the progress of learners and whether learners achieve the planned learning outcomes.

Learners will, after consulting with other appropriate professionals and evaluating their own contributions, know and understand the actions they need to carry out to improve their personal effectiveness and practice.

Learners will develop an understanding of 'teamwork', the concept of shared goals and objectives as well as understanding their roles and responsibilities within and to the team.

Learners will gain the knowledge they need to contribute positively to the work of a team, communicate effectively with team members and identify how to improve team effectiveness.

In this unit learners will develop an understanding of how their own knowledge and understanding can impact on the teaching and learning process and how to identify how they can improve their current capabilities to increase the effectiveness of the teams they work in.

Learning outcomes and assessment criteria

In order to pass this unit, the evidence that the learner presents for assessment needs to demonstrate that they can meet all the learning outcomes for the unit. The assessment criteria determine the standard required to achieve the unit.

On completion of this unit a learner should:

Learning outcomes	Assessment criteria
1 Be able to reflect on own practice	1.1 Take note of children and young people's responses to own practice 1.2 Ask for constructive feedback on own practice from colleagues 1.3 Take note of responses to own practice from others 1.4 Evaluate all aspects of own practice
2 Be able to improve own practice	2.1 Identify possible development opportunities relevant to improving own practice 2.2 Describe the importance of continuing professional development 2.3 Work with an appropriate person to identify own strengths and areas where practice could improve, plan ways in which practice could improve, identify goals and targets 2.4 Take part in continuing professional development that is relevant to own goals and targets 2.5 Review own personal development 2.6 Identify new areas of skill and knowledge to achieve new goals and targets
3 Understand the work of the team	3.1 Describe why teamwork is important in schools 3.2 Describe the purpose and objectives of the team in which they work 3.3 Describe own role and responsibilities and those of others in the team 3.4 Describe the importance of respecting the skills and expertise of other practitioners

Learning outcomes	Assessment criteria
4 Be able to support the work of the team	4.1 Support the purpose and objectives of the team 4.2 Carry out own role and responsibilities within the team 4.3 Communicate clearly with team members and others, making sure they have the information they need 4.4 Interact with others in a way that supports good teamwork 4.5 Identify and suggest ways in which the team could improve its work, challenging existing practice where necessary 4.6 Respond to differences of opinion and conflict constructively 4.7 Seek advice and support from relevant people when needed

Unit content

1 Be able to reflect on own practice

Children and young people's responses: gain responses eg reflect, respect, observe, listen, using evidence base

Constructive feedback on own practice: consultation eg discussion with professionals, individuals, groups; evaluation eg identification of successes, difficulties or challenges

Responses to own practice from others: according to own role eg parents, carers and guardians, other adults in the school, professionals external to the school

Evaluate all aspects of own practice: aspects eg reasons for making judgements, review, reflect, recognise where own knowledge has supported or hindered the work of a team, understand the perspective of others, identify successes, identify areas for improvement, consider how to improve own practice, interpret own understanding of team practice

2 Be able to improve own practice

Development opportunities: types eg training programmes, mentor, coaching, e-learning, open and distance learning

Importance of continuing professional development: reasons for CPD eg gain qualifications, updating knowledge, understanding and skills

Improve practice: discuss skills and areas for improvement eg produce individual development plan, seek advice from a professional colleague, feedback on competence and performance, appraisal

Continuing professional development: techniques eg SMART targets, search for and use information to improve practice

Review own personal development: ways eg previous goals and targets, self-assessment, achievements, barriers to improvement, skill development, contribution

New areas of skill and knowledge: areas eg skills analysis, aspirations, best practice, cycle of improvement

3 Understand the work of a team

Importance of teamwork in schools: reasons for teamwork eg aims, purpose, roles of individuals and the team

Purpose and objectives of the team: types eg common goals, scope of team

Own role and responsibilities and those of others: roles eg communication, job tasks, systems, structures

Importance of respecting the skills and expertise of other practitioners: ways eg through relationships, professionalism, knowledge and expertise of others, mutual support, skills brought to the team

4 Be able to support the work of the team

Purpose of the team: objectives eg responsibility, behaviours, contributions, relationship between team objectives and team behaviours

Own role and responsibilities: clarity of roles eg demonstrate, perform, support for other members, contribution

Communicate clearly: different ways of communicating effectively eg relationships, communication types, written, verbal, listening

Interact with others in a way that supports good teamwork: ways eg interpersonal skills, relationships, needs, body language, characteristics

Team improvement: ways eg proactive behaviours, formal, informal, frequency, meeting objectives, meeting or exceeding targets

Responding to differences constructively: ways eg find solutions, barriers to change, formal conflict, informal disagreement, policy for managing conflict situations/disagreements, confidentiality

Advice and support from relevant people: ways eg identified personnel, roles and responsibilities, professional comment

Essential guidance for tutors

Delivery

Some of the knowledge and understanding for this unit may come from learner research or practical work experience, whilst some will be gained in the classroom or from observed practice in a work placement. The unit gives learners an overview of the importance of teamwork and develops their ability to work constructively together with others.

Methods of delivery could include learners working in a group to develop a group response to case studies that illustrate support workers in schools working within teams in teaching and learning situations. Working in this way learners will be engaged in the experience of working together, collaboratively, to reach an agreed response. Learners could allocate roles and responsibilities for working on aspects of the case study and produce a group response that was consistent with the set objectives. Delivery could also extend to a review of their effectiveness and an agreed response as to how they may have improved the way they worked together to deliver their response. This could result in the creation of an agreed list of behaviours and barriers to effective teamwork. The concept of group and team working might also be extended to a review to inform the targets that should be set if the group were to work together again on a second task. This would develop learners' ability to appraise their own performance and inform how they could set targets for development.

Learners should be encouraged to research the development opportunities available to them both internally, within their working environment, and externally. Sharing the outcomes of this research with other learners is a further way of distributing best practice and engaging learners in group activities where professional respect and understanding is required and, therefore, develops the principles of 'teamwork' in delivery of the unit.

Assessment

As part of this unit learners will need to engage in some form of professional discussion or performance review with a class teacher or line manager in the workplace. Learners will need to think about their practice and set targets for personal development. It is essential that all learners are given an opportunity to have their competence assessed in the workplace setting.

When the learning outcome requires the learner to be able to... the assessment criteria will be need to be assessed in the workplace by direct observation, witness testimony or observation by an expert witness. This is in accordance with the TDA Assessment Principles.

Assessment criteria 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5 and 4.7 must be assessed in the workplace.

Simulation may be used for assessment criterion 4.6.

Suggested assessment activities

Whilst aspects of the delivery of this unit may take place within a group all assessments must be completed by the individual learner.

Learning outcome 1 may be achieved through the development of a personal diary explaining how learner behaviour has supported the school's aims and values,

describing situations when they have thought about their work with pupils, what they have learned from those experiences and also describing how they reacted to different situations and why.

The ability to improve own practice can be assessed by scrutinising a CPD record or evidenced by a witness statement that supports learner engagement in CPD relevant to their needs. This should describe how they 'grew' as a consequence of their engagement with the learning experience. The witness statement could also include a record of discussions held with professionals in the workplace environment where they have talked about their own personal development, agreed new areas of skills and knowledge they need to achieve and set new goals and targets.

To achieve learning outcome 3 learners must describe the work of a team. Evidence could take the form of a portfolio of evidence in which they describe why teamwork is important and explain the purpose and objectives of the team they work in. Learners describe their own role and responsibilities and those of others in the team by creating a briefing or presentation for delivery to any new member of the team they work in. The portfolio could also include a narrative to describe how to respect the skills and expertise of other team members or a checklist of behaviours that constitute best practice for individuals who work within teams.

Learning outcome 4 requires learners to demonstrate how they supported the work of a team and therefore requires them to present a study that evidences this. Learners could provide a series of prompts to support a potential review meeting where the success of a team in reaching its aims and objectives is discussed. The personal prompts they intend to raise at the meeting should illustrate how they have performed their own role and responsibilities, communicated with team members and interacted to ensure positive teamwork. They could identify how to improve teamwork and suggest alternative ways to achieve the objectives. Learners could talk about how they have responded to differences of opinion and managed a potential or actual conflict and drawn on the advice and support of others.

Essential resources

As this is a work-based programme, all learners will either be directly involved in working as part of a team or have access to situations or schools/organisations where adults work in teams to support teaching and learning activities. All learners will need the opportunity to participate in a team activity within the teaching and learning environment.

Indicative resource materials

Textbooks

Ashman C and Green S — *Planning, Doing and Reviewing* (David Fulton, 2004)
ISBN-10: 978-1843121992

Bentham S — *Practical Tips for Teaching Assistants* (Routledge Falmer, 2005)
ISBN 978-0415354721

Bentham S and Hutchins R — *A Teaching Assistant's Guide to Completing NVQ Level 3: Understanding Knowledge and Meeting Performance Indicators* (Routledge, 2008) ISBN 978-0415432443

Burnham L — *Supporting Teaching & Learning in Schools* (Heinemann, 2010)
ISBN 978-0-435032-03-6

Cheminais R — *Every Child Matters: A Practical Guide for Teaching Assistants, 1st Edition* (David Fulton Publishers Ltd, 2008) ISBN 978-0415458764

Hryniewicz B — *Teaching Assistants: The Complete Handbook, 2nd Edition* (Adamson Publishing, 2007) ISBN 978-0948543029

Kamen T — *Teaching Assistant's Handbook* (Hodder Arnold, 2 Revised Edition, 2008) ISBN 978-0340959381

Morgan J — *How to Be a Successful Teaching Assistant* (Continuum International Publishing Group Ltd, 2007) ISBN 978-0826493286

Richards G and Armstrong F — *Key Issues for Teaching Assistants: Working in Diverse and Inclusive Classrooms, 1st Edition* (Routledge, 2007) ISBN 978-0415434256

Websites

Assessment-related context varies according to the website. An indicative range of general websites is given below.

www.bis.gov.uk	Department for Business Innovation and Skills
www.cipd.co.uk	Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development
www.edexcel.com	Edexcel
www.ento.org.uk	ENTO
www.gtce.org.uk	General Teaching Council of England
www.napta.org.uk	The National Association of Professional Teaching Assistants
www.ofsted.gov.uk	OfSTED
www.open.ac.uk	The Open University
www.tda.gov.uk	The Training and Development Agency for Schools
www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/supportstaffguidance	Teachernet for support staff