Unit 9:   Support Learning Activities

Unit code: F/601/4073

QCF Level 3:   Specialist

Credit value: 4

Guided learning hours: 20

Unit aim

This unit provides the knowledge, understanding and skills to support learning activities. It requires competence in supporting the planning, delivery, assessment and review cycle.

Unit introduction

This unit is suitable for learners who support pupils during learning activities. This unit explores the role of a teaching assistant in supporting teaching and learning and the importance of continuous professional reflection. At the start of this programme, learners will complete a self-assessment in relation to their work in supporting teaching and learning. Learners will then be introduced to models to help them reflect on their experience of and develop their abilities in supporting teaching and learning by setting themselves goals. Learners will demonstrate providing agreed support and feeding back to the teacher about progress made by the pupils. Learners will need the opportunity to contribute to supporting teaching and learning in a setting. The learning activities may be for individual pupils, groups of pupils, or the whole teaching group. They could take place within the classroom environment or involve working with pupils outside the classroom in a setting where teaching and learning takes place such as breakfast clubs, educational visits, extended hours classes, field studies and study support.

This unit covers ensuring learners are able to deliver learning support within learning environments including the preparation, provision, assessment and evaluation of appropriate learning activities. Learners will investigate different approaches to supporting teaching and learning and will need to relate them to the developmental needs of pupils.

Learners will apply understanding of the needs of different pupils at all levels and assist pupils to develop independence in their learning. They will remodel resources and demonstrate how to use them to meet the needs of pupils with the support and guidance of teachers.

In this unit learners will develop the ability to have a positive influence on the teaching and learning process and to identify how they can improve their current capabilities.

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 contribute to planning learning activities	1.1 Explain how a learning support practitioner may contribute to the planning, delivery and review of learning activities
	1.2 Evaluate own strengths and weaknesses in relation to supporting learning activities and how these may impact on the support that can be provided
	1.3 Use knowledge of the learners and curriculum to contribute to the teacher's planning
	1.4 Offer constructive suggestions for own role in supporting planned learning activities
	1.5 Identify and obtain the information required to support learning activities
2 Be able to prepare for learning activities	2.1 Select and prepare the resources required for the planned learning activities
	2.2 Develop and adapt resources to meet the needs of learners
	2.3 Ensure the learning environment meets relevant health, safety, security and access requirements
3 Be able to support learning activities	3.1 Select and demonstrate learning support strategies to meet the needs of learners
	3.2 Explain how social organisation and relationships may affect the learning process
	3.3 Give attention to learners in a way that balances the needs of individuals and the group as a whole
	3.4 Demonstrate ways of encouraging learners to take responsibility for their own learning
	3.5 Demonstrate ways of supporting learners to develop: literacy skills, numeracy skills, ICT skills and problem-solving skills
	3.6 Explain the sorts of problems that might occur when supporting learning activities and how to deal with these

Learning outcomes	Assessment criteria
4 Be able to observe and report on learner participation and progress	4.1 Apply skills and techniques for monitoring learners' response to learning activities
	4.2 Assess how well learners are participating in activities and the progress they are making
	4.3 Record observations and assessments of learner participation and progress in the required format
5 Be able to contribute to the evaluation of learning activities	5.1 Explain the importance of evaluating learning activities
	5.2 Use the outcomes of observations and assessments to: provide feedback to learners on progress made, provide the teacher with constructive feedback on the learning activities, provide the teacher with feedback on learners' participation and progress and reflect on and improve own practice in supporting learning activities
6 Be able to evaluate own practice in relation to supporting literacy, numeracy and ICT	6.1 Evaluate how own knowledge, understanding and skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT impact on practice
	6.2 Develop a plan to improve own knowledge, understanding and skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT

Unit content

1 **Be able to contribute to planning learning activities**

Planning, delivery and review: importance of planning eg development of plans, aims and objectives of learning activities eg agreeing support required by the teacher, strategies to use when supporting individuals or groups

Strengths and weaknesses: factors eg advice to and from colleagues, expectations and requirements within own role and responsibility, boundaries of own role and competence

Contribute to the teacher's planning: knowledge of pupils eg learning levels, capability, individual learning plans, learning outcomes, curriculum content

Suggestions for own role: suggestions eg adapting resources, own behaviour, communication for learning activities as appropriate

Identify and obtain information: range eg relevant school curriculum, age-related expectations of pupils, teaching and learning objectives, learning resources, own role in supporting the learning activities, additional needs of pupils

2 **Be able to prepare for learning activities**

Select and prepare resources: furniture and equipment needed eg materials, equipment (including ICT), software, books, other written materials

Develop and adapt resources: resources eg materials appropriate to the age range, ability, need

Health, safety, security and access: requirements eg safety concerns or issues, taking account of the needs of all pupils, including those with additional or special needs, location and contents of first aid box, fire extinguishers, fire blankets, emergency alarms and exits; organisation's health and safety policy as it applies to learning environments, including the role of the teaching assistant in assessment, guidance for health and hygiene, safety, security and supervision

3 **Be able to support learning activities**

Support strategies: strategies eg creating a positive learning environment, managing behaviour, encouraging group cohesion and collaborative learning, prompting shy or reticent pupils to ask questions, check understanding, translating or explaining words and phrases, reminding pupils of teaching points, modelling correct use of language and vocabulary, ensuring pupils understand, helping pupils to use resources relevant to the learning activity, modify or adapt activities, providing individual attention, reassurance and help with learning tasks

Social organisation and relationships: through eg pupil grouping, group development, group dynamics, adult interaction, response to pupils, behaviour, how own role and responsibilities relate to other colleagues, developing positive relationships; using appropriate interpersonal and collaborative skills eg valuing diversity and multiculturalism, recognising the right of others to have differing opinions or ideas

Balance needs of individuals and group: be aware eg of needs of individual pupils and groups, one-to-one interactions, interactions with groups

Taking responsibility for own learning: expectations eg developmental stages, of learners, physical influences eg genetic, sensory impairment, puberty, special needs eg gifted and talented pupils, bilingual/multilingual pupils, pupils with disabilities

Supporting pupils *to develop skills:* techniques eg reading with confidence, fluency and understanding, use and apply numeracy to practical tasks, use and copy ICT software, approaches to finding solutions

Dealing with problems: problems eg confidence, lack of knowledge, development, emotional, physical; manage problems eg use learning activities, learning resources, learning environment, assessment

4   **Be able to observe and report on learner participation and progress**

Apply skills and techniques for monitoring pupil responses to learning activities: methods of recording eg event samples, checklist, target pupil (s), questioning, explaining and instructing before observing, objectivity, checking findings with others

Assess pupils in activities and monitor progress: monitor eg knowledge of assessment criteria, knowledge of pupil needs, progress, contributing to supporting assessment of pupils, identifying individual needs

Record observations and assessments: range eg records needed to monitor individual and groups of pupils, reporting and recording information accurately, record keeping systems and procedures, assessment of learning

5   **Be able to contribute to the evaluation of learning activities**

Evaluating learning activities: judgements eg reasons, evidence base, contribution to planning and learning process

Outcomes of observations and assessments: uses eg provide feedback to pupils, identification of difficulties and challenges, use assessment strategies to improve learning and support pupils to review, provide the teacher with feedback on pupils' participation and progress, keep colleagues informed, confidentiality and exchange of information, reflect on and improve own practice eg identify skills and areas for improvement, individual development plan, seek advice from a professional college, feedback on competence and performance, appraisal

6 **Be able to evaluate own practice in relation to supporting literacy, numeracy and ICT**

Impact on practice: interpret own understanding of learning materials eg recognise how own knowledge has supported learning or hindered the development of appropriate learning activities

Plan to improve: planning based on eg achievements, strengths and weaknesses relating to knowledge, understanding and skills, keeping up to date/maintaining currency of practice, using SMART principles, identifying short-term goals/targets, long-term goals/targets, reflection, monitoring processes, practices and outcomes from own work; reflecting with others on own practice, using feedback from others to improve own practice/plan for own development, importance of evaluation and review

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Essential guidance for tutors

Delivery

Learners should be supported from the start of their programme so that they can conduct an appropriate self-assessment to generate evidence for learning outcome 1 and to inform the activity required in learning outcome 6. An introduction to the principles of SMART planning will enable learners to reflect on their own development.

This support could be through tutorial activity and the development of individual learning plans. Delivery of this unit is likely to include group discussions, facilitated by the tutor, to enable learners to share their experiences and gain insight into a broad range of approaches for supporting teaching and learning in different schools and for pupils at different developmental stages and with varying needs.

Learners should be encouraged to consult relevant organisational documents for a specific teaching and learning setting in their home country as well as key national policies. Relevant aspects of frameworks for the learner's country, for example Every Child Matters (applicable to England only), particularly with reference to schools, pupil referral units and personalised learning, could also be consulted. Class activities involving supporting learning would provide active learning experiences of developing and adapting their skills on which learners can reflect. Learners will need to understand the difference between tasks and roles and reflect on how the activities they introduce and their individual behaviour influences learning. The importance of factors, such as clear goal setting, communication, sensitivity to cultural differences and the maturity of a support worker in influencing learning, could be discussed and evaluated.

Learning outcomes 2, 3 and 4 require learners to demonstrate their ability to use a range of strategies, resources and materials that support pupil learning which is a valuable part of a teaching assistant's role. It enables learners to quickly become part of the classroom team and to discuss the process with others, for example the teacher. The importance of maintaining clear, correct records of pupil performance and achievement to inform the evaluation of learning activities should contribute to the achievement of learning outcome 5.

The principles of reflective practice as a process for learning and enhancing performance may be introduced by learners completing a questionnaire to explore preferred learning styles. Learners need to profile their abilities in learning outcome 1 to provide a baseline against which to measure their progress and development throughout the programme. Exploration of personal values, beliefs and feelings as influences on their own learning is helpful, as would discussion of how to deal appropriately with difficulties that might arise.

Applying reflection models to different experiences throughout the programme would be valuable. Themes could be used, for example themes based on the unit topics such as supporting teaching and learning activities, preparation of resources, or promoting pupils to develop positive relationships with one another. Learners should be assured of confidentiality in relation to discussing their experiences within agreed boundaries defined within a class compact. Individual tutorials would be needed to monitor development of professionalism, particularly if signs of inappropriate development arise.

Assessment

Assessment criteria 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 3.1, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3 and 5.2 must be assessed in the workplace.

Suggested assessment activities

This unit could be assessed through tasks supported by other evidence (for example witness testimony taken from a professional development record/file) if it contributes specifically to the assessment requirements. Tasks would need careful sequencing to ensure that they are completed in an appropriate chronological order to reflect a learner's development over the duration of the programme.

Learning outcome 1 should be met early in the unit delivery, when learners have some experience of working to support learning. Learners may need the opportunity to discuss their strengths and areas for improvement to establish a benchmark against which progress can be measured. Therefore this outcome could be assessed via a tutor discussion supported by written evidence in which the individual also sets out how they contribute to the planning, delivery and review of learning activities. Some elements of learning outcome 1 could be evidenced by witness statements.

Learning outcomes 2, 3, 4 and 5 require learners to demonstrate, discuss and explain how their contribution to supporting teaching and learning has benefited individual pupils. Evidence of this could take the form of a storyboard that catalogues their contribution to the planning of the learning, how and why they selected and prepared the learning resources used, a narrative about how they demonstrated their ability to support learning, their observations of pupil participation and progress and how they were used to improve practice.

Learning outcome 6 cannot be achieved until learners have completed learning outcome 1 and they must illustrate their short- and longer-term development after the end of the programme.

In preparing their evidence for assessment, learners should be encouraged to maintain the anonymity of team members where examples from work experience are being used.

Essential resources

As this is a work-based programme, learners will either be directly involved in pupil support or have access to situations or schools/organisations running teaching and learning activities. All learners need an opportunity to observe others supporting learning in different teaching and learning environments.

Indicative resource materials

Journals

Disability Now

Special Children

Working with Early Years

Young Children – The Journal of the National Association for the Education of Young Children

Textbooks

Ashman C and Green S – *Planning, Doing and Reviewing* (David Fulton, 2004)

Bentham S – *Practical Tips for Teaching Assistants* (Routledge Falmer, 2005)
ISBN 9780415354721

Bentham S and Hutchins R – *A Teaching Assistant's Guide to Completing NVQ Level 3: Understanding Knowledge and Meeting Performance Indicators* (Routledge, 2008) ISBN 9780415432443

Burnham L – *Supporting Teaching and Learning in Schools (Primary)* (Heinemann, 2010) ISBN 9780435032043

Burnham L – *Supporting Teaching and Learning in Schools (Secondary)* (Heinemann, 2010) ISBN 9780435032050

Cheminais R – *Every Child Matters: A Practical Guide for Teaching Assistants, 1st Edition* (David Fulton Publishers Ltd, 2008) ISBN 9780415458764

Hryniewicz B – *Teaching Assistants: The Complete Handbook, 2nd Edition* (Adamson Publishing, 2007) ISBN 9780948543029

Isles-Buck E and Newstead S – *Essential Skills for Managers of Child Centred Settings* (David Fulton Publishers, 2003) ISBN 9781843120346

Kamen T – *Teaching Assistant's Handbook* (Hodder Arnold, 2 Rev Edition, 2008) ISBN 9780340959381

Morgan J – *How to Be a Successful Teaching Assistant* (Continuum International Publishing Group Ltd, 2007) ISBN 9780826493286

Richards G and Armstrong F – *Key Issues for Teaching Assistants: Working in Diverse and Inclusive Classrooms, 1st Edition* (Routledge, 2007) ISBN 9780415434256

Websites

Various websites are available with assessment-related content, some of which will depend on the specific sector, market and organisation. An indicative range of general websites is given below.

www.cipd.co.uk	Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development
www.bis.gov.uk	Department for Business Innovation and Skills
www.education.gov.uk	Department for Education
www.edexcel.com	Edexcel
www.ento.org.uk	ENTO
www.gtce.org.uk	General Teaching Council of England
www.teachernet.gov.uk	Teachernet
www.tda.gov.uk	The Training and Development Agency for Schools