

Lesson observation



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

PGCE 1Observation1 Date 24/11/2009 Author: Gareth Jones Observation of an ExperiencedTeacherAn Evaluation Introduction My first observation was at a4e, which is where I volunteer for 5 hours per week. These hours count towards my teaching hours as part of my PGCE. The teacher delivering the session was Charlotte Faichney who is the Skills for Life specialist. She delivers the Numeracy and Literacy modules at the a4e Wrexham office. The students's ages ranged from 16 to 18 and were at Entry Level 2 and 3. The session was held in Basic Skills Classroom, which is well equipped, well lit and well maintained.

This showed an understanding about ways to maintain a learningenvironmentin which learners feel safe and supported (BK 1. 1) This was my first observation and would count towards the PTLLS module of my PGCE. The session ran for 95 minutes. Planning The aim of the lesson was to introduce the learners to different aspects of handling data through the use of circus skills. The learner's objectives were to record numerical data, extract and interpret that data and to make comparisons with the use of bar charts. They would have to find the average and the range for a set of data.

The lesson plan showed a logical flow from introduction of the session, to the practical exercises, collecting and interpreting the data and the final Q & A session that evaluated the success of planned learning activities (DP 3. 1). These Q & A sections were relevant and acted as a natural stepping stone to progress the lesson. The first Q & A established prior knowledge, while the second assessed the newly acquired knowledge before starting the main activity. The next session re-capped the activity and gave the learners the opportunity to analyse their results.

The fourth session enabled students the knowledge to calculate arithmetic averages for their sets of data and the last session was a summative assessment of the whole session. This detailed plan really showed how to plan a teaching and learning session (DK 1. 2). Management of Learning Communication, both verbal and demonstrative was clear, concise and always relevant. The teacher was always engaging and confidently controlled the classroom. I noticed that she used open and Socratic questions to draw out answers from the learners.

There was strict adherence to the rules of the classroom that were predominantly displayed on a poster. These rules covered behaviour, what the teacher expected from the learners in terms of input and what the learners could expect from the teacher. Mobile phones had to be switched off and food and drink were not allowed. The teacher was proactive and walked confidently around the classroom.. It showed me the importance of establishing and sticking to firm rules and gave me a valuable insight on how beneficial classroom management can be to both the teacher and the learner.

The lesson was definitely learner focussed, as all students were fully engaged and participated in collaborative learning activities. Biggs (1994) argues “ The focus should not be on the skills itself, but whether its deployment has the desired effect on student learning. ” Learners were encouraged to discuss their findings and the Q & A ensured that the learners had to think about what, and how they could use, what they were learning. Gibbs (1981) states that “ this is one of the qualities displayed by learners with a deep approach”. . Resources

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The circus skills theme was fun and made the collection and interpretation of data less mundane than it could have been. This highlighted ways to engage, motivate and encourage active participation of learners and learner independence (BK 2. 2). The handouts were clear and relevant, whilst the flipchart provided a good point of reference throughout the session. Although I have used these resources myself, I could see how well thought out and good quality handouts greatly enhanced the learning experience. The flipchart was covered when not in use to prevent distraction.

There were three skills to try, which catered for the varying abilities. Information was easily recordable, which meant extraction and interpretation was very manageable. I could see that the impact of resources on effective learning (BK 5. 1) was clearly visible and the emphasis was on the needs of the student. Reece and Walker, (2007, p26) state that a teaching strategy maybe defined as “ a purposeful combination of student activities supported by appropriate resources to provide a particular learning experience (process) and/or to bring about the desired learning (product)” Assessment

Initial assessment was carried out by using a Q & A session to establish prior knowledge of tally and bar charts and also of the meaning of mean, mode, range and median. Formative assessment took the form of Q & A about the results from the tally chart exercise, the deliberate omissions from the tutor’s bar graph. The learner’s swapped graphs and had to interpret each other’s results, which showed ways to develop, establish and promote peer and self assessment (EK (1. 3). The results from calculating the mean, mode, range and median were discussed and an understanding of the terminology was verified.

For summative for assessment, we re-visited the flipchart to re-cap on the session, using Q & A to determine which areas the learners required more information on. The session showed the teacher used appropriate forms of assessment and evaluated their effectiveness in producing information useful to the teacher and the learner (EP 1. 1) Conclusion The first thing I noticed was how the layout and environment of the room impacted on the learner's attitude to the session. They are normally in a noisier more congested classroom and as a whole are generally quite rowdy.

They settled quickly and seemed eager to start the session and were asking questions before the session had even began. Once they realised they were going to try various circus skills their level of interest grew even more. It seemed to me to be a great way of delivering a session. They were having fun, learning about collating, recording and extraction of data, carrying out self and peer assessment and obtaining an understanding of various mathematical terms. This technique would be useful in covering differentiation within the classroom.

The teacher guided the session, whilst the learners drove it. She was inclusive and took an active part in what was going on. However she stood back as soon as the learners were actively engaged to observe and assess the activity. Most of the learners want to work in factories or retail, so an understanding of sales and production figures, which normally come in the form of charts, is required. Most stock taking is initially carried out using a tally system and knowing how to calculate the mean, range, median and mode is useful in most present day jobs.

Most businesses place a huge emphasis on the gathering and interpretation of data. Without detailed and up-to-date information they consider themselves to be “ running blind”. This session has shown me that you don’t just go out and deliver a given subject in its rawest form. I can see the benefits of innovative teaching methods and using visual and kinaesthetic strategies. The use of formative and summative assessment to establish that learning has taken place can not be argued against. Whilst the teacher’s use of peer and self assessment to compliment this strategy underlines the value placed on it.

I agree with Reece and Walker (2007, p369), who state that, “ The important thing is that assessment is an integral part of each lesson, the course and of the learning”. References Biggs, J (1999) Teaching for Quality Learning at University, Buckingham: SRHE and Open University Press. (Gibbs, G. (1981) Teaching Students to Learn. Milton Keynes and Philadelphia: Open University Press Reece, Ian and Walker, Stephen, (2007) Teaching, training and learning, 6th Ed. Tyne and Wear: BusinessEducationPublishers Ltd. Appendix Evaluation Sheets Session Plan Handouts