

Pedagogy, teaching and learning strategies

Business



Pedagogy: Teaching and Learning Strategies During my PGCE placements I felt I have used a wide variety of assessment, teaching and learning strategies.

I feel that this is absolutely necessary in terms of providing the best possible service to the pupils. To be repetitive, predictable and non-contemporary with such strategies is to compromise the effectiveness of your teaching and limit the chance of achieving your Learning Objectives. It is crucial at the outset to understand that the pupils under your tutelage will not learn at the same pace continually.

Similarly, they will not understand or grasp concepts uniformly. Therefore, it is important to tailor your methods to best support each child as individually as possible.

During my PGCE I tried to develop or challenge the pupils in my classes to take responsibility for their own performance as much as possible by involving them in tasks and projects that allow them to plan, create, produce and assess collaboratively. Not only does this strategy enable scaffolded support from a stronger support group but it also reduces the fear of those pupils who may feel isolated and unsure during individual challenges.

Therefore much planning went towards developing the notion of team work and community within the classes. At the outset of each teaching unit I outlined what my expectations were in terms of behaviour, approach and outcomes. At this early stage, I didn't discuss the qualitative expectations, in fear of intimidating those less confident; rather I outlined the expectations of how the task would come together and what the (hoped-for) end point would

be. I was determined to make sure that the challenges I presented to the students would not be blandly and irrelevantly academic in their make-up.

To that end, I felt it was important to engage students in trying to solve problems that were based in reality and had a direct link to both real-life experiences and, ideally, subjects or topics that they were interested or had an appreciation of. For example, therefore, one activity may involve the pupils being asked to bring in stimuli from the media to galvanise a topic, rather than being flatly presented with material from the teacher. This may then lead to pupils crafting the terms of the challenge themselves (With the guiding hand of the teacher to 'steer' them).

In addition to engaging their interest, using materials of their own choice opened the door for the pupils to consider alternative approaches and answers as they sought to understand and appreciate the work of their cohort. Don't believe everything you see in the press.

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sometimes, though, they do tell you the truth! The Next Step Was to create an awareness of the actual learning journey itself. I felt it had become too restrictive in terms of what the range of outcomes must be and the path the pupils had to take in order to reach the final goal.

Therefore, we collectively designed a learning continuum whereby each smaller step of the path was 'chunked up'. The value of this was to move the pupils along in increments that were individually right for them and their level of understanding. Each pupil would therefore have an awareness of the task (e. g.

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what most contributed to success of the Norman invasion? or Explain the narrative, meaning and language in Keats' ' Eve of St Agnes') but would not be stuck with a daunting slab of work to be ploughed through in order to reach a final goal that may at this early stage, seem wearily far away.

So, following a collaborative discussion of what would make a successful piece of work, the pupils would design their own continuum of planned progress and utilise this along each step of their learning journey. Of course, it was crucial for me to retain overall control and direction of any tasks or challenges and to maintain an awareness of the progression of both individual pupils and the overall progress of the group. Therefore, once a task was underway, I felt it was important that my role became more of a facilitator and coach.

As keen as I was to encourage students in the individuality of their development, I was always aware that I couldn't simply leave the students to their own devices. I found that much pedagogy was involved with correcting, altering, refocusing and generally encouraging students to make progression whilst reminding them of their overall focus.

It was crucial, however, for their own development that they took responsibility for as much as possible at this stage.

Perhaps the most crucial aspect of my teaching and learning strategies during my PGCE were the ones I utilised at the end of each piece of work. Prior to my commencement, I had felt that the success of the pupils' learning would be reliant solely on the depth and quality of information I supplied them with. Experience has suggested otherwise however. In retrospect, the

really important work was always done during, and particularly, at the end of a module (or section of a module).

Back to: Example Assignments Conclusion Reflection on practice was, by far, the most useful technique I developed during my PCGE.

This applied absolutely equally to the evaluation of my own work and to the pupils. By developing a system of checking and reviewing (always in the context of the continuum they had developed), pupils are encouraged to be evaluative and analytical of their own work in the middle of a task. The value of this is significant.

Not only are pupils encouraged to break down and examine smaller chunks of work but they can correct faults or tendencies to tangent or go ' off-task' which, over the course of a sizeable project or essay task could be extremely detrimental to their time management. By using a variety of teaching strategies and methods, I feel it benefits both the practitioner as well as the pupils; involving pupils in the creation and assessment of tasks, a collective ownership is initiated and a communal sense of purpose is engendered.