

LEVEL 6 ASSESSMENT SPECIFICATION

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Submission method:	All written assessments, where practical and possible, must be submitted via Turnitin unless otherwise instructed by the Lecturer. (Please DO NOT put this assessment specification into Turnitin or it will match many similarities with other students' submissions.) Alternative submission method (if applicable): Late submission of the assessment will result in a late penalty mark. Penalties for late submission: Up to one week late, maximum mark of 40%. Over one week late, 0%. Only the Extenuating Circumstances Panel may approve a change to submission dates.		
Academic honesty / referencing:	Academic honesty is required. In the main body of your submission you must give credit to authors on whose research and ideas your work is based. Append to your submission a reference list that indicates the books, articles, etc. that you have used, cited or quoted in order to complete this assessment.		

Microteach: Critical Reflection and Evaluation

Review of Literature

In the teaching profession, methods used when delivering lessons are expected to be based on sound, peer reviewed research. This should underpin all aspects of lessons, from the Scheme of Work (SoW), lesson plans and the resources for those lessons. It is therefore important to be aware of the most recent developments within the field of learning principles and pedagogy, and to use these to underpin classroom practice. This will ensure that all within the teaching profession are aware of best practice and are delivering learners with a high-quality education in line with current research. In order to receive Qualified Teachers Status (QTS), trainee teachers must also fulfil a certain set of standards. These standards also underpin teaching best practice.

For the microteach session on the 9th October 2018, a SoW, lesson plan and resources were made. The materials were all developed with these principles in mind.

Starter Activities

Firstly, each lesson within the SoW began with a planned 'starter' activity. A starter activity is an essential part of each lesson, with starter activities help to hook learners at the beginning of the lesson, and to help stimulate ideas around the lesson theme (Clipson Boyles, 2013). Furthermore, starter activities are recommended for the beginning of each lesson as a way of giving guidance to learners about the knowledge and skills they are expected to develop during the remainder of the lesson (Rouvrais et al., 2010). There are also suggestions that open-ended questions should be used for starter activities to enthuse learners which will allow them to develop questions regarding the topic (Magee & Flessner, 2011).

Lesson Objectives

At the beginning of the lesson, either prior to or after the starter activity, the aims and objectives of the lesson are outlined. This is important, both for the teachers planning and for learners to be aware of what is expected of them with regards to the knowledge they are acquiring (Reed, 2012). QTS standard **S3.1.2** states that these objectives should be used in order to plan lessons and to assess the learning that the pupils have undertaken (Welsh Government, 2009). QTS standard **S3.1.1** outlines the factors that objectives should be founded upon, for example the content required to be covered for the topic and age range, and the learners' attainment (Welsh Government, 2009). The objectives determined at the beginning of the lesson should be the main guidance of the teacher for developing activities for the class in order to achieve these (Oliva, 2009). Within the teaching community there has been some debate regarding how these objectives should be presented to learners. Some teachers advocate using the 'All, Most, Some' learning objectives which outlines that not all learners in the class may understand all of the concepts discussed, but all of them will be able to gain something from the lesson. This, however, is dismissed by other teachers as

it implies that a significant portion of the lesson will be inaccessible to much of the class (Blair, 2007). Furthermore, learners may underachieve, and only strive to obtain the 'all' lesson objective to avoid failure. Also, it implies that the teacher has higher expectations of some learners within the class than others. The QTS standard **S3.3.1** states that teachers should have high expectations of their learners (Welsh Government, 2009). Therefore, in the SoW for the microteach sessions, the objectives were not delivered in the 'All, Most, Some' method. It should be noted though, that a teacher could use the 'All, Most, Some' method for their own planning and expectations of a lesson.

Differentiation and Scaffolding

Within the SoW, resources, such as worksheets, were the same for all members of the class. This means that differentiation did not occur by task, but scaffolding was available to ensure all learners could access the content. Differentiation is extremely important in lessons, and the teacher is required to adapt their teaching in order to meet the requirements of all learners within the class, according to QTS standard **S3.3.4** (Welsh Government, 2009). Differentiation is therefore essential for ensuring that all learners learn from a lesson. Beecher and Sweeny (2008) found, that when differentiation was implemented as a part of a school improvement plan to increase attainment, that the achievement gap was greatly reduced.

Differentiation by task is when different ability learners within a class carry out different activities. Whilst this may be beneficial in some circumstances, anecdotal evidence from some teachers states that the easier activities are often too simplistic, and the more difficult tasks not understood by the more able and talented learners in the class. Additionally, preparing differentiated tasks is extremely time consuming, and much of the lesson is taken by explaining each of the activities and trying to clarify confusion. Due to this, in the SoW developed for the microteach, the activities were differentiated using scaffolding.

The idea of scaffolding is a metaphor. Scaffolding is there to support learners through the learning process and will aid learners in the formation of new ideas and the understanding of some lesson content. However, like with building scaffolding, it should only be required temporarily and should gradually be removed until required again by learners when introduced to new concepts that prove difficult (Hammond, 2001). An example of this type of scaffolding can be seen on the worksheet that was used for the starter activity during the microteach session. The words that were required for the labels were provided, colour coded on the worksheet. However, should the learners have been given this worksheet during a later lesson, the words required would be removed, in order to achieve the gradual removal of the support. Despite the small number of studies involved with the effectiveness of scaffolding, the results have been found to be positive (Van de Pol et al., 2010) and it is a method widely accepted within the teaching community. All resources within the SoW contain appropriate scaffolding for lower ability learners, whilst the task still challenges those of a higher ability within the class.

With the use of scaffolding, the same tasks can be given to all learners within the class. Learning occurs most effectively when the learner is put into the 'struggle zone'. The right

level of scaffolding allows the same task to be accessible by all learners, whilst ensuring all of them are in this optimal learning zone (Figure 1).

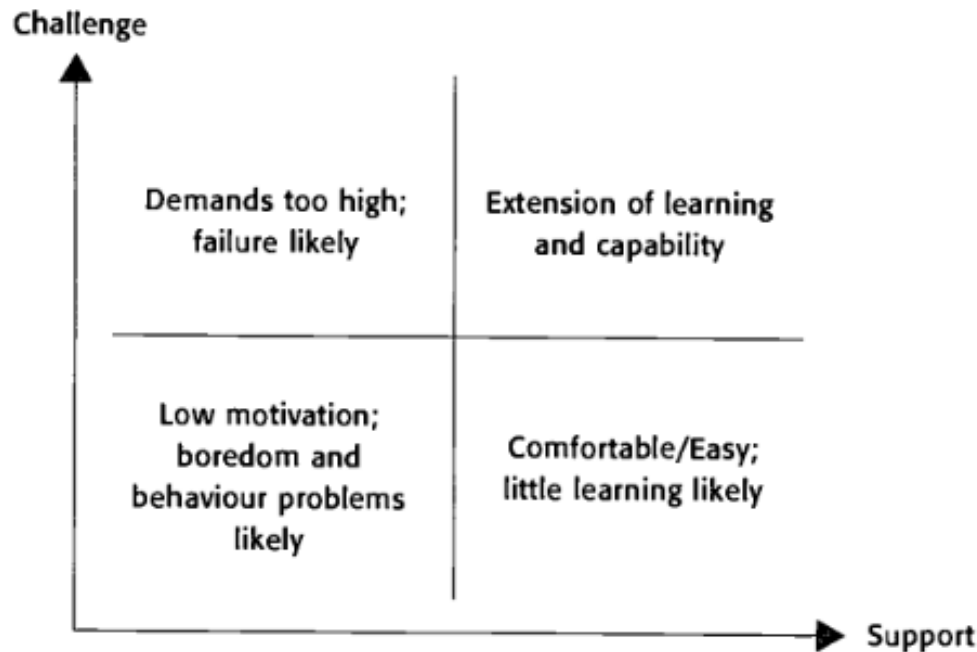


Figure 1 – Matrix of challenge and support levels within the classroom.

(Developed by Hammond, 2001 from Mariani, 1997).

Within the scheme of work, there are tasks with a high level of challenge, which will be accessible and challenging for those learners of high ability but will still be accessible with scaffolding for those who require the extra support. This will push both levels of learner into the optimal learning zone, which will pave the way for a successful lesson where all learners are making progress.

Group Work

An activity that features heavily within the scheme of work is group work. Working as part of a group has been found to enhance the learning outcomes of a class as opposed to working on activities alone (Alandeom & Sadler, 2008). However, teachers are often reluctant to use it as a method of learning within their classes (Hammar Chiriack & Forslund Frykedal, 2011); this is due to several factors. One factor is that conflicts arise from groupwork, with learners of a higher ability being more reluctant to participate in groupwork (Monk-Turner & Payne 2005). This could be due to the fact that they contribute more to the work than others. It is therefore important if using groupwork in a classroom context that there is continuous circulation and supervision of the group activity to ensure that everyone is actively participating rather than being a passive group member.

Groupwork can also pose an issue for classroom management when groups are selected by learners themselves. Whilst this method may be preferable to higher achieving learners, as they find it preferable to work with those with the same level of achievement, it could cause disruption to the class and the advantages of groupwork are lost with lower ability learners

not receiving the support that a higher ability learner would provide and the higher ability learner losing the advantages of aiding and lower ability learners. Alandeom and Sadler (2008) also found that the composition of the groups was extremely important with regards to the outcome of groupwork, therefore should be considered and monitored carefully when being used as a method of learning within the classroom. This is an important factor to take into consideration with regards to using it as an activity within the scheme of work.

To conclude, a range of methods were put into practice in the planning and organisation of the microteach session, and indeed the scheme of work. Many of the planning decisions made were based upon current thinking and research of best practice within the teaching profession in order to enhance the effectiveness of the lessons. Many of these methods need to be developed further for future planning and teaching practice, however the sound learning principles they are based upon will remain the foundation of this planning.

Word count of B, ii. 1,520

Critical Evaluation of Microteach

Reflecting on the microteach having completed the majority of PTE 1, there are many practices that, should the microteach have been carried out with current knowledge and experience, would have been improved upon within the lesson.

Many of the microteach sessions carried out by the group of Biology PGCE students were centred around cells and their organelles. The topic of this microteach session was slightly different as it was based on the substance cellulose, and the information from the other microteach sessions was useful information required to carry out the starter activity. The starter activity was designed to be a recap of the information covered in the previous lesson, as per the scheme of work, however due to the fact the information had been covered by several other of the PGCE students' presentations, it meant that the task was completed extremely quickly, to the detriment of the planned timings for the session. The activities which had been planned, whilst appropriate for a class of secondary school age who had very little previous knowledge of cells and their organelles, were too simplistic for a class of student teachers who had just been presented with approximately five presentations on the same topic. In the lesson plan, some of the time from the starter activity had been set aside in order to cover any gaps in knowledge that had arisen as a result of the activity. This ensures that learners fully understand basic knowledge before building upon that knowledge. However, in this microteach session it was not required. This was beneficial for future planning, as it demonstrated the need for stretch and challenge questions for more able and talented learners who complete planned tasks quickly in a classroom environment. This is something which has been incorporated in lesson plans for lessons in the placement school and provides essential differentiation for learners which is outlined by QTS standard **S3.2.4** - They (the teacher) are aware of more able and talented learners and support them with relevant activities (Welsh Government, 2009).

Furthermore, with regards to the starter activity, having had school practice, the worksheet given for the starter activity would be changed for future lessons. Rather than having the colour coded labels for each of the cell parts in a box on the worksheet, the class would be expected to label the parts themselves, then discussing with their fellow learners before supplying those individuals who require extra support with the scaffolding. Not all learners would receive this scaffolding, which would be given as a separate list of labels. This would reflect QTS standard **S3.3.3** by promoting independent learning that allows learners to think for themselves (Welsh Government, 2009). Though this must be timed correctly in order for the learners who are struggling with the task to retain concentration, the effects of providing scaffolding are far more valuable for the learner as they can work out the answers themselves rather than being given the answers (Van de Pol et al., 2010).

Whilst the starter activity was being carried out, the learners (in this case the PGCE students) were silent. This was felt to be quite uncomfortable, and so the decision was made to interrupt the task and the time limit that was originally set was brought forward as a result of this. Having had the experience of a classroom in the placement school, this is not a common occurrence. However, should it happen with a class of school children, as long as all learners were on task, there would be no reason for the activity to be interrupted. If this was the case in a classroom, when learners finished the activity they would, from experience, begin talking, therefore indicating a natural end to the activity. This experience has therefore been learned from and would not be dealt with in the same way in future classes.

One final improvement with regards to the starter section of the microteach session, would be the way in which the answers to the worksheet were reviewed as a class. In this instance, learners recited the answers to the labels as a class. This was extremely repetitive and having had the experience of PTE 1, this would result many of the learners in the class becoming disengaged and would pose an issue for behaviour management for the remainder of the duration of the lesson. Therefore, a much more engaging way to have gone through the answers and ensure the whole class was engaged would have been to question using learners' names. For example, 'what have you put for the first label, learner x?' could have been asked. Once they had given their answer, this could have been extended to another learner 'do you agree with learner x, learner y?'. This means that a good overview of the class understanding is received and the whole class is involved in the process, which will mean that learners are not disruptive due to losing interest in the task. This style of questioning is something regularly implemented with classes in the placement school and has proven to be extremely effective, as supported by much of the literature in pedagogical questioning methods (Smart and Marshall, 2013). This method being used for effective behaviour management would be classed as one of the methods outlined by QTS standard **S2.7** – they (the teacher) implement several strategies to promote good behaviour and establish an effective learning environment (Welsh Government, 2009).

Once the starter activity was completed, and the answers talked over as a class, the objectives of the lesson were then introduced. As explained in section B, i. the decision was made not to use the all, most, some method as this can cause some learners to only aspire to learn the 'all' objective, whereas learners should believe that all objectives are expected to be reached

by them as per QTS standard **S3.3.1** they (the teacher) have high expectations of learners (Welsh Government, 2009). Whilst these objectives are attainable for a low ability class, should this lesson be delivered to a higher ability class in a school, the objectives and lesson content would have to indicate that a more in-depth knowledge is required from the lesson. For the microteach session particularly, these objectives were far too simplistic. The objectives, were however made clear to learners, therefore achieving QTS standard **S3.3.3** (Welsh Government, 2009).

After the objectives were outlined, the statement 'the cell wall is made from a substance called cellulose' was made. It would, perhaps for this session, have been more beneficial to ask, 'does anyone know what substance the cell wall is made from?'. This statement was then followed up with the question 'what did we say the function of the cell wall was?'. This again refers back to the content covered within the starter activity and would be particularly helpful for a lower ability class in a school where over learning of subject content is required. This question was followed up with 'therefore, what properties do we think the substance cellulose has?'. This type of question will help learners to apply their current knowledge to answer a question posed to them and will ensure they are thinking about the concepts discussed. However, as previously mentioned, targeting the questions at certain learners would be beneficial, as the only learners that will contribute answers otherwise are the ones that are confident in their responses.

Having explained that cellulose can be used by humans, learners were then asked to discuss in groups what they thought some of these uses could be. This is when there was the most interaction with the learners as the classroom was circulated to ensure all members of the groups were contributing and when needed, the group discussion was guided in the right direction by suggestions being made to the learners. Interactive group work is an example of good practice as outlined by QTS standard **S3.3.3** (Welsh Government, 2009). Working as a group is also a good method of scaffolding as it allows more able and talented learners to assist those learners who may have struggled to think of uses of cellulose in every day life. In a classroom setting, the learners would have been put into allocated groups to ensure there was a mix of abilities and effective outcome of the activity (Alandeom & Sadler, 2008), whereas in this case learners picked their own group. Having had the PTE 1 experience, it is now known that this would lead to classroom management being challenging for the duration of the task.

As was the case with the starter, the task took significantly less time than expected due to the ability of the learners during the microteach session, which again indicated the need for extension tasks or stretch and challenge questions. If this lesson was delivered in future, learners could use the answers contributed to the class by each group to investigate how exactly cellulose is used by humans. For example, one group said clothing. Depending on the ability of the class, learners could then be given ten or fifteen minutes to investigate how exactly clothes are made due to cellulose, and their findings presented to their peers. This would allow learners to achieve digital competency within the lesson, and would also allow them to organise their own learning which is outlined in QTS standard **S3.3.3** (Welsh Government, 2009).

It was difficult to incorporate curriculum Cymreig into this lesson as the subject content does not ordinarily allow for it. However, upon further reflection, a stretch and challenge question which could have been posed to the more able and talented learners could have been 'there is a welsh company that makes paper products out of sheep poo. What information have we covered today about the properties of cellulose that enable paper to be made from sheep poo?'. This is referencing a Welsh company which would achieve the curriculum Cymreig aspect of the lesson and is a good example of how to improve scientific literacy, as it is expecting learners to apply their knowledge of cellulose not being fully digested, therefore cellulose would still be found in the sheep poo which enables the company to make paper from it.

After the group discussions, the plenary task which was a ten question Kahoot quiz was carried out. This was both beneficial as an effective use of ICT (which is required for QTS standard **S3.3.10** (Welsh Government, 2009)) and as a method of assessment for learning. Although all learners were engaged in the task and it is a positive tool to use, having been in a placement school with regulations on the use of phones, it requires a significant chunk of the lesson to distribute and collect in the tablets which are required to carry out the plenary, therefore what should be a 5 to 10 minute plenary takes closer to 15 or 20 minutes. Therefore, since the microteach, Kahoot has only been used once. It is more time efficient to hand out whiteboards and markers at the beginning of the class, this way mini plenaries can be carried out throughout the lesson as an ongoing method of assessment for learning in addition to a big quiz as a plenary. This generally works better as it enables the explanation of particular concepts further if I can see many of the learners struggling during the lesson rather than realising that some knowledge has not been understood from a Kahoot quiz at the end of the lesson. It also makes better use of the resources that have taken time to be distributed.

The use of PowerPoint was quite ineffective in the microteach session. Whilst the information was kept to a minimum in order to encourage discussion around the slides, as a first teaching experience this did not work as well as hoped. Furthermore, the final slide which referred to the lesson objectives was not used during the lesson. This would have summarised the lesson nicely and effective questioning techniques (as discussed previously) could have been used in order to ensure all learners were aware of how the class content and activities related back to the objectives outlined at the beginning of the session.

One final improvement that could have been made during the microteach session, and something that also impacts classes within the placement school, is the use of incidental Welsh. In the lesson plan, incidental Welsh had been taken into account. However, during the teaching session none of it was used. This is one of the main targets moving forward with lessons in the placement school.

Section B, ii. Word count – 2088 words.

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Appendix

OBJECTIVES (relate to QTS Standards where appropriate).	ACTIONS TO BE TAKEN	SUCCESS CRITERIA	TARGET DATE
To increase the use of incidental Welsh within the classroom	➤ Include Welsh commands/phrases I intend to use within the lesson plan, so a conscious effort is being made to plan for its use. ➤ Continue to present the date in Welsh. ➤ Have a list of Welsh phrases visible during the lesson to prompt for their use.	❖ Will start to feel comfortable with the use of incidental Welsh within lesson. ❖ It will be used for commands and praises in every lesson.	Before the completion of PTE 1
Time keeping within lessons	➤ Have back up questions/activities included in the lesson plan to ensure that learners always have a task. ➤ Have flexibility within lesson plans to spend longer on certain tasks if further explanation of concepts is needed.	❖ Timelines outlined in the lesson plan will be adhered to, and all content covered. ❖ Learners will be occupied with tasks for the entirety of the lesson.	Before the completion of PTE 1

Use of more open questions to ensure all class is engaged.	➤ Ensure learners names are added after the question has been asked. ➤ Use of a random name generator or similar method to ensure different learners are questioned each time. ➤ Use questions such as why is that? How does that happen? Etc to probe learners understanding further.	❖ Learners will all be engaged during questioning – they will be able to respond to the question each time and I will be aware of who is paying attention during the lesson. ❖ Learners will start thinking more deeply into the class content by use of the how, why questions.	Before the completion of PTE 1
Ensure scaffolding is appropriate for task and ensure learner is challenged suitably. S3.3.4 They differentiate their teaching to meet the needs of learners	➤ Have scaffolding separate from task and only distribute once learners have attempted the activity and asked for support/if you can see then need support. ➤ Have different levels of scaffolding to support all abilities through the task. ➤ Have extension/stretch and challenge questions for those who finish the tasks with ease.	❖ All learners within the group should be able to complete the activities (with or without scaffolding) ❖ All learners should be challenged by the work and should be pushed into the optimal learning zone.	Before the completion of PTE 1