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School Context

The topic discussed in this paper is the use and application of digital competency across the curriculum and within the mathematics department at School X. School X is an English medium selective 11 to 18 mixed secondary school in South Wales with 9% of pupils eligible for free school meals, this is 8% below the average from across Wales of 17%. (Appendix 1). School X has a current student body of 1263, including an onsite sixth-form of 295 students from a wide geographical area due to the selective and specialised nature of the school. There is £5041 available in the school budget per pupil which is just above the local authority average and national average. (My Local School) (Stats Wales)

Digital Competency Overview

Digital competency is highlighted as a recommended area for development for School X in the 2018 Estyn report. The report states that the school should work to “Ensure that pupils develop their higher-order information and communication technology (ICT) skills across the curriculum” (Appendix 1). Digital competency is also a national area of focus and development for schools across Wales as there is a need for learners in Wales to become global citizens (Donaldson 2015).

Digital competence is a term used to describe the skills and knowledge used by an individual when confidently interacting with technology and technological systems with a critical eye (Welsh Government A, 2016). These skills are seen to be playing an increasingly vital role in the professional world as well as the lives of children in Wales. (Donaldson 2015).

Digital competency is one of the three cross-curriculum responsibilities outlined in “Successful futures” (Donaldson 2015). Due to its cross-curricular nature, digital competency is seen to be an area of development and responsibility for all teachers regardless of subject specialism. (Welsh Government A, 2016) Its importance has become a key focus for development in Wales as Wales was at an educational disadvantage when compared to England. As changes to the curriculum in England were already emphasising the importance of digital competency and literacy through the inclusion of coding and formalised computing lessons through-out both primary and secondary education changes which the Welsh government have only recently adopted with the overhaul of the curriculum through the Donaldson curriculum bringing digital competency to the forefront of education in Wales. (A.Jones, 2014)

The Digital Competence framework produced by the Welsh Government is the first part of the developing curriculum to be rolled out across all of Wales. The document outlined the skills development expected of learners in Wales for ages 3 to 16-plus. The framework also considers learners in Wales with a wide and varied range of additional learning needs through its inclusion of “Routes for Learning” (Welsh Government B, 2018) which allow development to be best tailored to a learner’s unique educational needs. The digital competence framework looks at digital competency as a cross-curricular responsibility (similar to the National Literacy and Numeracy Framework (LNF) which is already in place across Wales. The similarities in structure and responsibility of the digital competence framework to the National Literacy and Numeracy Framework (LNF) is to ensure fluidity in the implementation of the digital competence framework in school routines and practices. The digital competence framework has four key strands of focus - Citizenship, Interacting and Collaborating, Producing, and Data and Computational thinking. (Welsh Government B, 2018)

Strategic Planning

Strategic planning in education is a process by which schools systematically evaluate their long-term vision, to define goals and objectives to work as a success-criteria which must be met for the school to have realised this vision. The length of time allocated to achieving these goals will often vary depending upon the urgency of the task outlined by external bodies such as Estyn or the local authority or by internal decision by governors, senior leadership or subject departments. (BD Dictionary)

Strategic planning in education was first developed from the strategic planning in the corporate world. The motivations and challenges faced during strategic planning for education are vastly different to those during

strategic planning for corporations. Those spearheading strategic planning in education often face greater political interference as schools are answerable to local and national governing authorities. (C.Rutherford, 2006)

Educational strategic planning also experiences more participation by stakeholders, who in the case of School X are the senior leadership team, faculty, students, parents, the local authority and community leaders who contribute to school life with each of these stakeholders demanding different things from School X. (Bryson, 1995) Each stakeholder both directly and indirectly contributes to the choices made during the strategic planning process as without political support, often from government policies, many proposed changes do not pass an initial discussion. Senior leadership and staff within the school also have an effect as they are the best sources to declare whether a proposed strategy for change would be workable in that particular school. School leaders also have a major influence over a proposed strategy as they are the most knowledgeable base to decide if a strategy fits the values, ethos and philosophy of the school. (Bryson, 1995)

As in the case of School X, due to the selective nature of the school, all strategies for change would need to fit in with the selective criteria set out by the school's senior leadership team, school governors and community liaisons. If these criteria were not met the routines and ethos of the school would be questioned by the local authority and parents as the school would not be for filling its promises to students.

Strategic planning is seen to be the most effective way of reform in education as it is far superior to attempts at change with no planning or where planning is not done in a cohesive and inclusive way, leading to alienated and disillusioned staff. (Bryson, 1995) Effective change in education through strategic planning is reliant on a positive development of relations and leadership factors as staff have the ability to halt change despite planning. Without a motivated faculty schools will struggle to enact any reach change. The importance of effective, supportive and committed leadership is also essential for any proposed plan to be successful as this allows the plan to better fit the ethos of staff. (Hopkins, 1994)

Strategic planning is carried out in a number of steps to ensure maximum effect and success in changes within a school, beginning with the initial stage in which the framework and proposal of the potential changes are discussed (Lerner, A.L., 1999.) This is done with special focus on the environment and a school's readiness for development and change. This is of paramount importance to the success, not only of the strategies, but of the subsequent steps taken in strategic planning. It is through readiness of senior leadership staff, general faculty and the school as a whole to take on changes to their routines and practices. Without this schools will inevitably struggle to successfully execute the plan. This readiness is drawn directly from teaching staff who are motivated and informed of the change, Whole school commitment is needed from senior leadership teams to students to support and encourage change within the school. (Robert E. Slavin 1997) Schools then being to implement of these plans, often on a small scale. (Bryson, 1995) Following this these plans are then distributed more widely throughout the school as the strategy becomes an internalised routine behaviour for staff and thereby for students. (C.Rutherford, 2006)

The use of strategic planning on both a departmental and school level will help to develop the higher-order of digital competence specifically in Mathematics and across the curriculum. Strategic planning has influenced School X's school improvement plan and the departmental improvement plan for mathematics as both are cohesive and bred from the same clear goals and visions for School X set out by the senior leadership team as a result of the Estyn 2018 report. These over-arching goals and expectations mean that the plans that School X have are more likely to succeed as they are born of a common need for development in digital competency not only on a departmental level but for the school as a whole.

School X School Improvement Plan Discussion

School X has begun to respond to the recommendation made by ESTYN in 2018(Appendix 1) to improve the provision of I.C.T across the curriculum with high expectations of attainment through the use of strategic planning at both a whole school level and an individual departmental level. (Estyn A 2018) (Estyn B 2018) This paper will explicitly focus on the departmental improvement plan of the Mathematics department. School X has outlined an improvement plan to be carried out from 2017-2020, this plan is broken down in to 4 key areas of development - Teaching for Learning, Ethos and Environment, Achievement and Standards and Maximum Opportunities for Staff. These key areas are then subsequently split in to 4 core targets. (Appendix 2)

Teaching for Learning

Within Teaching for Learning School X is working to ensure individual subject areas effectively use strategies to develop higher-order skills in students. This is done through the individual departmental improvement plans and the intervention and monitoring conducted by senior staff throughout the developmental period. The use of a departmental improvement plan allows the targets to be tailored to the bespoke needs of the individual subject areas within a school while also ensuring staff are included and consulted regarding the vision and changes made by senior leadership. (Estyn A 2018) (Estyn B 2018)

School X is specifically working to provide students with the necessary skills for the future to prepare them for a dynamic and ever-changing work place. This is through a dynamic curriculum created through the adaptations recommended by the Welsh Government and the requirements of Donaldson (Donaldson 2015). This is being done, initially, through the consideration of the Key Stage 3 provision of Information and Communication Technology lessons as a discrete subject area (as it is currently taught at School X). This develops the knowledge of Information Communication Technology specialised staff in the new curriculum and allows School X to have a strong and able group of digital leads in-house based out of the Information and Communication Technology department. These digital leads generally are members of school faculty who are able to confidently support and enhance the use of the digital competency framework throughout the school. The role of digital leaders within School X is to develop and support other staff in their own skill development. Digital leaders are at risk of becoming depended upon by staff who are less confident in their use of digital competency. This must be monitored and managed by members of the senior leadership team as without the support and guidance of the senior team as without this well-structured support and motivation from the faculty as a whole to enhance the digital competency provisions already in place any attempt to further develop professional skills at School X would not be as successful as possible. (Appendix 1)

In the school improvement plan School X outlines objectives to produce digital resources to allow staff to better support the pursuit for excellence within their classrooms. The greater development of digital competency within the curriculum for Information and Communication Technology will organically lead to a wider range and more comprehensive wealth of digital resources to be produced and invested in by School X who in their school improvement plan (Appendix 2) have set a portion of the school budget to aid this development of resources with support from the local authority.

Ethos and Environment

Within the area of Ethos and Environment in School X's school development plan multiple objectives are outlined. Those that have the greatest and most direct impact on the development of digital competency provision within School X, allowing it to meet the Estyn recommendation to provide digital competency at a high order across the curriculum, will be discussed. (Appendix 1) (Appendix 2)

One of these objectives is to ensure that sufficient funding is provided to the correct areas within the learning environment such that each student is provided with dynamic learning resources to best prepare them for the 21st century. This will ensure that the skills development milestones set out in the digital competence framework are met (Welsh Government C, 2016/2017) as well as pushing the learners at School X to meet key aspects of the four purposes for these curriculum changes. These four purposes look to develop generations of learners ready to become lifelong learning citizens for Wales to provide a more prosperous future not just for themselves but their school, communities and Wales as a nation. (Welsh Government D, 2015) School X has also planned to further maximise the existing school resources to ensure the resources are able to support the curriculum delivery for all students. (Appendix 2) This will primarily be done through the auditing of resources and training of staff. The former to ensure all resources available are safe and acceptable for school use as well as being used to maximise development and progress while the latter will aid in effective use of all resources to meet the cross-curricular needs of the learners. In the school improvement plan created by School X, a share of £12,000 of the school budget has been set aside with the express purpose of looking in to the introduction of a laptop scheme to improve student access to technology within school. The access to these resources is paramount to the success of a more comprehensive delivery of digital competency skills across the curriculum at School X.

Achievements and Standards

The third objective outlined in School X's school development plan is Achievement and Standards. (Appendix 2) This objective works to creating a dynamic curriculum that ensures high standards of achievement that meets the need of the 21st century learner. The dynamic nature of the new curriculum design adopted by School X will allow skills development to better respond to the needs of learners and the developing resources from the Welsh Government. (S.Arthur, Dr T.Crick, J.Hayward, September 2013) School X are also working to review the key stage 3 curriculum going forward to better align with Welsh government and British government policy changes within education. This is being done with focus on key policy areas such as the development of the Donaldson Curriculum (Donaldson, 2015) and new emphasis of skills development through new frameworks. Specifically discussed in this document is the digital competence framework (Welsh Government C, 2016/2017). These policy changes, though government supported, can often fall short of success. Changing common practise without the support of all levels of school faculty and local authority means that the government policies (at varying levels) are unsupported and poorly manged leading to less success and poor delivery. Schools can feel blindsided by rapid and drastic changes over a short time frame or by changes that would more greatly disrupt current day to day education. (Bryson, 1995) This is why the use of the school development plan as a form of strategic planning is beneficial to the developing educational landscape at School X and further as it allows all stakeholders to contribute to the methods of change employed by the School allowing them be better motivated to support and deliver new practices both within individual classrooms and across school. This gives staff and senior leadership ownership and a greater sense of responsibility for these changes within the school and classroom. (Hopkins, 1998).

Maximising Opportunities for Staff

The fourth sector of focus for School X in the school improvement plan (Appendix 2) is for the school to provide "maximum opportunities for staff" this section focuses on providing the staff of School X with high standards of training that is differentiated and tailored to the needs to the staff so they can deliver effective classes to the learners. This in turn contributes to the professional development of the staff which is of paramount importance to policy change and school development strategies as staff with greater access to training are able to more positively adapt to change. The staff with additional access to training in school to develop their skills are then able to transfer these skills to the classroom environment which has positive impact on the students. (National College for School Leadership, 2003) School X is also working to have internal staff deliver bespoke training in light of the school's development priorities both on the recommendations of external bodies such as Estyn (appendix 1) and the priorities brought to light by internal data such as GCSE results. This contributes directly to School X's desire to develop faculty skills and contributes to an increase in learner attainment as staff are better informed. (P.Perry, 1980)

School X are covering the Citizenship strand of the digital competence framework (Digital Competence Framework: Welsh Government 2017), working to inform and educate learners about the e-safety, digital behaviour and well-being through P.S.H.E (personal, social and health education) lessons through resources from Hwb (online resource provider from the Welsh Government) and CEOP (Child Exploitation and Online Protection) from the British police.

School X Mathematics Department Improvement Plan Discussion

As part of the strategic planning strategy used by School X, not only is a school improvement plan (Appendix 2) used to ensure a clear and concise future plan but also a departmental improvement plan (Appendix 3). These are vital as throughout the school the development needs can differ wildly from department to department due to the diverse nature of the skills used in each of these areas. The departmental improvement plan that will be discussed further is that of the mathematics department at School X. This departmental improvement plan much like the school plan has outlined its objective for the future over the 2017 to 2020 period. These objectives much like those of the school improvement plan have also been categorised in to the four focus areas of development to aid clarity and ease of use. The mathematics department are setting out to make the best use of strategies available to develop learners' skills by producing resources to aid problem solving and digital competency with real world applications. The

increased use of digital resources stems from the greater training provided to members of staff as this allows mathematics teachers at School X to be better informed and able to change their teaching practices to better suit the needs of the learners through the use of a more advanced set of resources. (T.R.Guskey, 1985). The department have also outlined many of the same objectives as those expressed in the school development plan with responsibilities falling on certain members of the department to ensure effective management. The mathematics department at School X have also outlined that as they develop the skill of the learners in problem solving and digital literacy, they endeavour to use real world applications to reinforce the skills. This use of context will allow learners to use a range of digital tools to interact and engage with mathematics in a new way as well as developing their critical analysis skills when asked to choose when best to use the digital tools provided in mathematics. The subject specific nature of this integration of digital skills into lessons will re-enforce that the skills are transferable, and the applications varied across mathematics and across the curriculum as a whole. (Ala-Mutka, Punie, Redecker 2008) The department is also going to further review the digital resources already in use to better support learners through technology such as tablet devices and laptops. The resource provision varies in its target demographic as some resources developed and researched by School X are primarily for the use of staff as they are able to better demonstrate processes and diagrams in mathematics than is traditional done by hand. This develops the learners' understanding of a process or method much quicker with less confusion as the clarity of specialist resources comes in to its own, for example the use of "GeoGebra" (<https://www.geogebra.org/>) to more effectively demonstrate graphs and other mathematic diagrams and process is used by many members of staff as this allow a greater clarity of the resource and accessibility to students who are able to access the same resource from other devices later on. This in turn allow better attainment as learners are encouraged to "play around" with process to better understand the limitations and used of them in and outside of mathematics. (A.Ferrari, 2012) (D.Harley et AL, 2006)

Progress Overview

The school improvement plan and mathematics departmental improvement plan have yet to be fully audited as the plans are both being carried out from 2017 to 2020. However, small scale interventions and department check ins have been done by School X's digital lead. During these meetings of departments, ideas of the use of the digital competence framework in a cross-curricular setting is discussed as well as the sharing of best practice to better inform faculty of the uses of digital resources in traditionally non-digital subject areas. School X has also created a bespoke key stage 3 success criteria that can be implemented alongside an existing scheme of work. (Appendix 4) School X also uses optional professional development sessions to meet the new professional standards for all school practitioners to be actively developing and researching throughout their career. (Welsh Government E, 2017)

Progress in the inclusion of digital competency cross-curriculum is the responsibility of School X's digital leaders, who are school faculty acting as the primary source and pioneers at School X for outlining, motivating the inclusion and development of digital provision. The senior leadership team continue to monitor progress of practise change as best to manage staff, training requirements and resources. (L.Bell, 1992)

Further development is still needed as highlighted in the discussion of the school improvement plan as School X is still in the review stage of providing further physical resources for the school. The budget attributed to the resources required for cross-curriculum digital competency to be common practice across the school is currently limited due to external factors. (Appendix 2)

Recommendations for Cross-Curricular strategy development

Following the discussion of the current school improvement plan for School X, there are still opportunities for further development of cross curricular digital competence. The following points are recommendations that would promote the success that School X is able to achieve with the current school improvement plan. (Appendix 2) The use of the school improvement plan provides a clear vision for School X moving forward this can be more effectively

used as staff would benefit from greater communication from senior leadership on the digital competency development being looked in to within the school and regular progress reports. This greater communication in either of these forms will motivate and engage staff as they are able to engage with developments in education, have an opportunity to contribute and celebrate the progress made by the school, departments and individuals. (Estyn July, 2018 B) supported by (S.Arthur, T.Crick, J.Hayward, September 2013).

School X could also take the opportunity of the developing curriculum to consult with the major stakeholders such as pupils, parents/guardians and staff. This would allow the developments made by School X to truly fulfil the needs of the school while still meeting digital competency targets. (Estyn July 2018 A)(S.Arthur, T.Crick, J.Hayward, September 2013). As pioneer schools across Wales have already begun to fully integrate the digital competence framework it could be beneficial to School X's integration of this same framework to share best practices with these pioneer school both on a one to one basis and in regional consortia forums. This will allow school X to produce new strategies to meet targets and further train in-house digital leaders through these forums. (Learning Wales, 2016) The use of a more comprehensive whole school audit including physical resources, their efficiency and accessibility would better inform faculty at School X of the resources that are available to them when planning and preparing content to deliver. (Learning Wales, 2016) The accessibility of the resources is an important area to be monitored as it would add to School X's ability to deliver the same high order digital skills to learners of all abilities with use of the "Routes for Learning" (Welsh Government B 2018) aspect of the digital competence framework. (Welsh Government C 2016/2017).

As a placement school, School X has a unique opportunity to use student teachers and Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs) to enhance and develop the resource within the school and to motivate and engage long term members of staff. The nature of training for student teachers is changing, as they are now able to access and utilise digital resources more effectively in personal circumstances and therefore are more inclined to bring technological developments into the classroom. This ingenuity and motivation to use digital resources held by students and newly qualified teachers can thereby be embraced and used to educate and trail new methods of content delivery. (F.M.Røkenes, R.J.Krumsvik) 2014 (Jang, 2008) (Krumsvik & Smith, 2009). These recommendations made to School X are derived from the most recent Estyn report (Appendix 1) , school improvement plan (Appendix 2) and mathematics department improvement plan (Appendix 3) and in good faith as they are without in depth investigation and full budgetary context due to the limitations of this paper.

Recommendations for Mathematics specific strategy development

Following the discussion of School X's mathematics department improvement plan some recommendations to the department regarding it's use of digital competency in the lessons and as a department will be outlined.

School X's mathematics department has outlined its dedication to enhance and develop new resources to better incorporate digital skills in to mathematics lesson with responsibility shared amongst all members of staff in the department. (Appendix 3) The use of best practice sharing not only within the department as is currently done bi-weekly and optional monthly sessions would continue to enhance the practice for involving digital resources and tools in to mathematics lessons. This would be best done both cross-curricular with mathematics staff observing and developing methods similar to those teaching similarly computational subjects such as classical sciences within school and by utilising the presence of a digital lead in school.

Having the opportunity to observe and learn from mathematics teachers from a pioneer school who have already worked to more effectively integrate the digital competency framework alongside the curriculum needs for mathematics a key stage 3 would allow School X staff to develop their own understanding of the framework and its role in mathematics. (Learning Wales, 2016)

A mathematical route in to the digital competency framework will also better allow learners to access the “Data and Computational Thinking” ((Welsh Government B 2018) strand of the framework. Mathematics also lends itself well to the use of a greater variety of resources the mathematics department at School X could use as the multimedia nature of presentations used by the mathematics department currently can be enhanced through interactive resource bases such as Desmos which allows students to engage using games. (K.Scharaldi, 2018)

The mathematics department at School X can also further utilise it’s current QR-code set through the use of videos linked to them as mini lessons. This capability would allow teachers to develop a bank of video resources that can be shared to students and parents/guardians through QR-codes to ensure consistency in learning and allow students to access the mathematic content of lessons from a reliable and safe source within school. (Guido, 2017) These recommendations made to School X are derived from the most recent Estyn report (Appendix 1) , school improvement plan (Appendix 2) and mathematics department improvement plan (Appendix 3) and in good faith as they are without in depth investigation and full budgetary context due to the limitations of this paper.

Conclusion

Overall, digital competency at School X has been and remains a priority area for development due to recommendations made by Estyn (Appendix 1) and the changing educational climate following the publication and adoption of the digital competency frame work in schools across Wales (Welsh Government C 2016/2017) and Donaldson’s Successful futures document (Donaldson 2015). The additional recommendations made in this paper are put forward using these same documents however the limitations of funding and changing socio-economic landscape in Wales may limit the progression of any further recommendations. These limitations are due to the high demand for additional resources and training that would be required to meet the discussed recommendations short term. This is why the 2017 to 2020 time frame School X has used is a realistic time scale to achieve the necessary changes to the practice and pedagogy of School X’s cross-curricular skills delivery and to meet individual departmental needs.

Appendices

Appendices 1 to 4 will be sent to UWTSD tutors and not attached to this document to ensure confidentiality and anonymity remain in place to protect myself, the staff and students at School X and any other stakeholders in this document of any of the relevant documents.

- Appendix 1 – School X Estyn Report 2018
- Appendix 2 – School X School Improvement Plan 2017-2020
- Appendix 3 – School X Mathematics Department Improvement Plan 2017-2020
- Appendix 4 – School X digital competence training PowerPoint

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LEVEL 6 ASSESSMENT SPECIFICATION

Student name:	Amy Franklin	Student ID number:	18002201
Programme:	Secondary PGCE Mathematics		
Module:	Investigating Contemporary Issues in Secondary Education		
Module code:	ECSP6003	Contribution to Overall Module Assessment (%):	100%
Lecturer:	Shân Samuel-Thomas	Internal Verifier:	
Assignment Title:	Investigating Contemporary Issues in Secondary Education	Word count (or equivalent):	5,000 words
Submission deadline:	January 28th 2019	Return date of provisional marks & written feedback:	February 19th 2019
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.
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Module Learning Outcomes (from module syllabus)
Upon successful completion of this module, students should be able to: • Critically consider current priorities identified by the Welsh Government and the Estyn inspectorate along with their arrangements to secure change; • Critically reflect upon and discuss the impact of contemporary priorities and initiatives on whole school/college organisation and development processes; • Examine processes adopted by schools to identify areas for development along with the role of Estyn in supporting change and strategic planning procedures to secure improvements in learning and teaching; • Demonstrate a thorough knowledge and understanding of school improvement processes driven by contemporary issues to support improvements in standards of teaching and learning; • Demonstrate the ability to select, consider and evaluate research evidence to support pedagogic decisions and organise their knowledge and learning through the use of a range of information sources.

TASK DESCRIPTION

ASSESSMENT

Prepare a paper for school governors which explores critically a school initiative or system that is identified in the school / college action plan (This could include a school improvement plan, a departmental improvement plan or a recent ESTYN inspection report) Include a well referenced, evidence based action plan of next steps on the area of focus.

Some of the areas which are likely to be included in the Departmental Improvement Plan **could** be

the development of strategies within a subject area to:

- ❖ **Embed aspects of literacy, e.g. extended writing;**
- ❖ **Further develop numeracy;**
- ❖ **Strengthen the use of Welsh in lessons;**
- ❖ **Improve planning for the inclusion of Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig within schemes of work**
- ❖ **Develop subject based strategies to respond to the poverty agenda;**
- ❖ **Prepare for the implementation of the Donaldson curriculum;**
- ❖ **Improve the inclusion of Assessment for Learning within lessons.**

Details of Assignment:

This assignment is to be carried out during PTE 1 and consists of a paper prepared for a board of governors within a school or college.

The word count for this assignment is 5000 words

Recommended structure:

Your paper should include:

- A clear introduction to explain the context of the topic you will be discussing and why it is important;
- An overview of your school or college's Departmental Improvement Plan;
- A thorough explanation of how the topic you have chosen from the Departmental Improvement Plan relates to the whole School (College) Improvement Plan (SIP);
- A critical review of why the role of strategic planning to secure improvement is important, along with clear references to professional and academic research to support your stance;
- A critical evaluation of what literature and key research notes about your particular topic along with suitable references;
- An in-depth critical analysis of evidence which notes why work within the topic you have decided to focus on needs to be improved, e.g. Estyn inspection reports, a departmental review, Key Stage data, external examination results, etc.;
- A detailed critical review of how your school/college is responding, i.e. what are they doing to improve, what new strategies have been put into place and how does this link with key literature and research?
- A critical analysis of the progress made to date along with examples of learners' work, where appropriate;

- Explain how this relates to what the literature/key research says;
- Next steps – what actions would you recommend to drive this initiative further and why?
- References.
- Appendices – e.g. Departmental School (college) Improvement Plan, whole School (college) Improvement Plan, examples of learners' work, images, etc.

GUIDANCE FOR STUDENTS IN THE COMPLETION OF TASKS

NOTE: The guidance offered below is linked to the five generic assessment criteria overleaf.

1. Engagement with Literature Skills

Your work must be informed and supported by scholarly material that is *relevant* to and *focused* on the task(s) set; you should make use of scholarly reviews and primary sources, where appropriate (for example, refereed research articles and/or original materials appropriate to the discipline). You should provide evidence that you have accessed a wide *range* of sources, which may be academic, governmental and industrial; these sources may include academic journal articles, textbooks, current news articles, organisational documents, and websites. You should consider the *credibility* of your sources; academic journals are normally highly credible sources while websites require careful consideration/selection and should be used sparingly. Any sources you use should be current and up-to-date, mostly published within the last five years or so, though seminal/important works in the field may be older. You must provide *evidence* of your research/own reading throughout your work, using a suitable referencing system, including in-text citations in the main body of your work and a reference list at the end of your work.

2. Knowledge and Understanding Skills

At level 6, you should be able to demonstrate coherent and detailed knowledge and a systematic understanding of the subject area, at least some of which is informed by the latest research and/or advanced scholarship within the discipline. You should be aware of the uncertainty, ambiguity and limits of knowledge. Your work must demonstrate the growing extent of your knowledge and systematic understanding of concepts and underlying principles associated with the subject area. *Knowledge* relates to the facts, information and skills you have acquired through your learning. You demonstrate your *understanding* by interpreting the meaning of the facts and information (knowledge). This means that you need to select and include in your work the concepts, techniques, models, theories, etc. appropriate to the task(s) set. You should be able to explain the theories, concepts, etc. meaningfully to show your understanding. Your mark/grade will also depend upon the *extent* to which you demonstrate your knowledge and understanding; ideally each should be complete and detailed, with comprehensive coverage.

3. Cognitive and Intellectual Skills

You should be able to: critically evaluate evidence, arguments, assumptions, abstract concepts and data some of which are at the forefront of a discipline (and that may be incomplete) to devise and sustain arguments, to make judgements and/or solve problems; describe and comment upon particular aspects of current research, or equivalent advanced scholarship, in the discipline. Your work must contain evidence of logical, analytical thinking, evaluation and synthesis. For example, to examine and break information down into parts, make inferences, compile, compare and contrast information. This means not just describing what! But also justifying: Why? How? When? Who? Where? At what cost? At all times, you must provide

justification for your arguments and judgements. Evidence that you have reflected upon the ideas of others within the subject area is crucial to you providing a reasoned and informed debate within your work. Furthermore, you should provide evidence that you are able to make sound judgements and convincing arguments using data and concepts. Sound, valid conclusions are necessary and must be derived from the content of your work. Where relevant, alternative solutions and recommendations may be proposed.

4. Practical Skills

At level 6, you should be able to apply the methods and techniques that you have learned to review, consolidate, extend and apply your knowledge and understanding, and to initiate and carry out projects. You will deploy accurately established techniques of analysis and enquiry relevant to the discipline, and apply them in complex and unpredictable contexts, to devise and sustain arguments and/or to solve problems. You should be able to frame appropriate questions to achieve a solution - or identify a range of solutions. You should be able to demonstrate how the subject-related concepts and ideas relate to real world situations and/or a particular context. How do they work in practice? You will deploy models, methods, techniques, and/or theories, in that context or circumstances, to assess current situations, perhaps to formulate plans or solutions to solve problems, or to create artefacts, some of which may be innovative and creative. This is likely to involve, for instance, the use of real world artefacts, examples and cases, the application of a model within an organisation and/or benchmarking one theory or organisation against others based on stated criteria. You should show awareness of the limitations of concepts and theories when applied in particular contexts.

5. Transferable Skills for Life and Professional Practice

Your work must provide evidence of the qualities and transferable skills necessary for graduate-level employment requiring the exercise of initiative and personal responsibility and decision-making in complex and unpredictable circumstances. This includes demonstrating: the learning ability for professional development to advance existing skills and acquire new competences of a professional nature that will enable you to assume significant responsibility within organisations; that you can initiate and complete tasks and procedures, whether individually and/or collaboratively; that you can use appropriate media to effectively communicate information, arguments and analysis in a variety of forms to specialist and non-specialist audiences; fluency of expression; clarity and effectiveness in presentation and organisation. Work should be coherent and well-structured in presentation and organisation.

STUDENT FEEDBACK FORM

This section details the *extent* to which the assessment criteria are demonstrated by you, which in turn determines your mark. The marks available for each category of skill are shown. Lecturers will use the space provided to comment on the achievement of the task(s), including those areas in which you have performed well and areas that would benefit from development/improvement.

Generic Assessment Criteria	Marks available	Marks awarded
1. Engagement with Literature Skills		
2. Knowledge and Understanding Skills		
3. Cognitive and Intellectual Skills		
4. Practical Application Skills		
5. Transferable Skills for Life and Professional Practice		

Assessment Mark (Assessment marks are subject to ratification at the Exam Board. These comments and marks are to give feedback on module work and are for guidance only until they are confirmed.)	Late Submission Penalties (tick if appropriate)		%
	Up to 1 week late (40% Max)		
	Over 1 week late (0%)		

GENERIC ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

Level 6

In accordance with the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications, at the end of Level 6 students should have coherent and detailed knowledge and a systematic understanding of their subject area, at least some of which is informed by the latest research and/or advanced scholarship within the discipline. They will be able to accurately deploy established techniques of analysis and enquiry within a discipline, using their conceptual understanding to devise and sustain arguments and/or to solve problems. They should be aware of the uncertainty, ambiguity and limits of knowledge. They should be able to critically evaluate evidence, arguments, assumptions, abstract concepts and data (that may be incomplete), to make judgements, and to frame appropriate questions to achieve a solution - or identify a range of solutions. They will apply the methods and techniques that they have learned to review, consolidate, extend and apply their knowledge and understanding, and to initiate and carry out projects. They will have the ability to manage their own learning, and to make use of scholarly reviews and primary sources (for example, refereed research articles and/or original materials appropriate to the discipline). They will demonstrate the qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring: the exercise of initiative and personal responsibility; decision-making in complex and unpredictable contexts; the learning ability needed to undertake appropriate further training of a professional or equivalent nature.

Level 6	FAIL	MARGINAL FAIL	SATISFACTORY	GOOD	VERY GOOD	EXCELLENT
Category	F	E	D	C	B	A
Engagement with literature (including reading, referencing, academic conventions and academic honesty)	Little or no evidence of reading and/or reliance on inappropriate sources. Views and findings mostly unsupported and non-authoritative. Referencing	Poor engagement with essential reading. No evidence of wider reading. Reliance on inappropriate sources, and/or indiscriminate use of sources. Heavily reliant on	Engagement with a limited range of mostly relevant and credible sources. Some omissions and minor errors. Referencing conventions evident though not always applied accurately or consistently.	Engagement with an appropriate range of research-informed literature, including sources retrieved independently. Some over-reliance on texts. Referencing may show minor inaccuracies or	Engagement with a wide range of research-informed literature, including sources retrieved independently. Selection of relevant and credible sources. Very good use of referencing, with no/very	Engagement with an extensive range of relevant and credible literature, informed by the latest research. Consistently accurate application of

Level 6	FAIL	MARGINAL FAIL	SATISFACTORY	GOOD	VERY GOOD	EXCELLENT
Category	F	E	D	C	B	A
	conventions used incoherently or largely absent.	information gained through class contact. Inconsistent and weak use of referencing.		inconsistencies.	few inaccuracies or inconsistencies.	referencing.

Knowledge and understanding (Coherent and detailed knowledge and systematic understanding of the subject area, at least some of which is informed by the latest research and/or advanced scholarship within the discipline.)	Major gaps in knowledge and systematic understanding of the subject matter. Substantial inaccuracies. No awareness of knowledge of the latest research and/or advanced scholarship within the discipline.	Gaps in knowledge, with only superficial systematic understanding. Some significant inaccuracies and/or irrelevant material. No awareness of knowledge of the latest research and/or advanced scholarship within the discipline.	Limited knowledge and systematic understanding of the relevant concepts and principles within the subject area which to some limited extent, is informed by current research and scholarship.	Knowledge is reasonably detailed, accurate with a good systematic understanding of the field of study and to some extent, current research and scholarship.	Knowledge is reasonably extensive coherent and detailed. Exhibits very good understanding of the breadth and depth of established views, and the work is, at least in part, well-informed by current research and scholarship.	Excellent coherent and detailed knowledge and systematic understanding of the principles and theories of current research and scholarship. Clear awareness of challenges to established views and the limitations of the knowledge base.
Cognitive and intellectual skills (Conceptual and critical thinking, analysis, synthesis and evaluation of research, assumptions, abstract concepts and data (that may be incomplete); logic, argument and judgement.)	Wholly or almost wholly descriptive work. Little or no analysis, synthesis or evaluation. Failure to develop arguments, leading to illogical or invalid judgements. Unsubstantiated generalisations, made without use of any credible evidence.	Largely descriptive work, with superficial use of critical evaluation. Weak development of arguments and judgements. Information accepted uncritically, uses generalised statements made with scant evidence and unsubstantiated opinions. Ideas sometimes illogical and contradictory.	Limited attempt at critical thinking, analysis, synthesis and evaluation, tending towards description. Some evidence to support emerging arguments and judgements but these may be underdeveloped or with a little inconsistency / misinterpretation. Asserts rather than argues a case.	Some critical thinking, analysis, synthesis and evaluation. Can analyse new and/or abstract concepts and data without guidance. An emerging awareness of different stances and ability to use evidence (that may be incomplete) to support the argument. Mostly valid	Sound critical thinking, analysis, synthesis and evaluation demonstrating critical thinking. Ability to devise and sustain persuasive arguments, and to review the reliability, validity and significance of evidence (that may be incomplete) to make mostly appropriate and valid judgements.	Excellent critical thinking, analysis, synthesis and evaluation. Ability to investigate contradictory or incomplete information and make strong, persuasive arguments and sophisticated judgements. Some evidence of independent thought and ability to 'see beyond the question', suggesting

				arguments and logical judgements. Some tendency to assert/state opinion rather than argue on the basis of reason and evidence.		a grasp of the broader field and wider concepts.
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Practical skills (Apply/deploy accurately established tools and techniques; initiate and carry out projects; formulate solutions to solve problems in complex and unpredictable contexts.)	Limited or no use of methods, materials, tools and/or techniques. Little or no appreciation of the context of the application. Limited understanding of the application of theory to practice or making appropriate links between the two. Very weak problem-solving skills in complex and unpredictable contexts.	Rudimentary application of methods, materials, tools and/or techniques but without consideration and competence. Flawed appreciation of the context of the application. Weak understanding of the application of theory to practice, with only occasional evidence of making appropriate links between the two. Weak problem-solving skills in complex and unpredictable contexts.	An adequate awareness and mostly appropriate application of well-established methods, materials, tools and/or techniques. Basic appreciation of the context of the application. Theoretical knowledge and understanding applied in practice, but not always making logical links between the two. Can identify problems and propose basic solutions in complex and unpredictable contexts without fully appreciating the complexity.	A good and appropriate application of standard methods, materials, tools and/or techniques. Clear appreciation of the context of the application. Mainly consistent, accurate and logical application of theory to practice, making appropriate links between the two. Can identify problems and propose mostly appropriate solutions in complex and unpredictable contexts.	A very good application of a range of methods, materials, tools and/or techniques. Very good consideration of the context of the application, with perceptive insights. Can identify problems and propose appropriate solutions in complex and unpredictable contexts. Evidence of some innovation and creativity.	An advanced application of a range of methods, materials, tools and/or techniques. The context of the application is well considered, and insightful. Application and deployment extend beyond established conventions. Can identify complex problems and propose excellent solutions. Innovation and creativity evident.
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Transferable skills for life and professional practice (Exercise of initiative and personal responsibility; professional development; initiate and complete tasks and procedures: individually and/or collaboratively; use appropriate media to communicate effectively; fluency of expression; clarity and effectiveness in presentation and organisation .)	Communication medium is inappropriate or misapplied. Work is poorly structured, disorganised and/or confusingly expressed. Very weak use of language and/or very inappropriate style. Little or no evidence of autonomy (or collaboration, where relevant) in the completion of tasks. Little or no evidence of the skills required in graduate employment.	Communication medium is poorly designed and/or not suitable for the audience. Work is poorly presented in a disjointed manner. It is loosely, and at times incoherently, structured, with information and ideas often poorly expressed. Weak use of language and/or inappropriate style. Weak independent initiative (or collaboration, if relevant). Limited evidence of the skills required in graduate employment.	Can communicate in a suitable medium but with some room for improvement. Mostly ordered presentation and structure in which relevant ideas / concepts are reasonably expressed. Work may lack coherence in places. Can work as part of a team, but with limited involvement in group activities. Demonstrates the basic skills required in graduate employment, with some areas of minor weakness.	Can communicate effectively in a suitable format, but may have minor errors. Mostly coherent, organised work, in a suitable structure and is for the most part clearly expressed. Can work effectively independently and/or as part of a team, with clear contribution to group activities. Demonstrates the skills required in graduate employment, with some areas of strength and some of minor weakness.	Can communicate well, confidently and consistently in a suitable format. Work is coherent, fluent, well-structured and organised. Can work very well autonomously and/or as part of a team, with very good contribution to group activities. Demonstrates very good graduate employment skills, with just occasional minor weakness.	Can communicate professionally confidently and consistently in a suitable format. Work is coherent, very fluent and is presented professionally. Can work autonomously with initiative. Where relevant can work professionally within a team, showing leadership skills as appropriate, managing conflict and meeting obligations. Demonstrates excellent graduate employment skills and an appetite for further development.
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