

HEA Action Plan

A1 Design and plan learning activities and/or programmes of study

I designed and planned all of my learning activities based on the CACHE Diploma curriculum for childcare practitioners. I linked theory to professional practice throughout my teaching time on the course.

A2 Teach and/or support learning

I taught each session and made sure I had access to learner profiles so that I could see which learners had learning needs or additional needs. I could then plan my lessons effectively and incorporate extra support if and when needed. For example, for a dyslexic learner, I could provide resources on different coloured paper if that helped. Each student is an individual.

A3 Assess and give feedback to learners

I would give constant feedback to the learners throughout the lesson and would use various assessment strategies including but not limited to question and answers, think pair share, peer questioning, the hot seat, written work and completed class activities, reflection exercises, 3-2-1, and many others.

A4 Develop effective learning environments and approaches to student support and guidance

Again, with reference to learner profiles, I would assess what would be suitable in each session, in particular pastorily. For example, if I was aware that a student was experiencing mental health issues, I would be very careful beforehand to explain to the student what we would be covering if during that lesson the subject material might be a trigger for them, or, I would design a lesson which sensitively discussed any issues pertinent to mental health if having to teach the topic was unavoidable. The same also applied when I had to teach safeguarding, knowing that some of the learners had been in foster care.

I would also ensure that the classroom had a positive atmosphere, and I would always engage the learners in active discussion, plenty of encouragement and eye contact, and would present a question and always ask “what do you think about this?”. If learners are more introverted or shy, I might alter my questioning with a more leading approach. I had to be very adaptable.

A5 Engage in continuing professional development in subjects/disciplines and their pedagogy, incorporating research, scholarship and the evaluation of professional practices

Being as I was teaching in health and social care, childcare and counselling, my professional values and standards would always have to align with the Social Care Institute of Excellence and

also Social Care Wales. I undertook E-learning activities to ensure I was teaching current and up to date material and guidance, in particular with child protection. I was also assessed via an internal quality assurance process by the College to ensure my practice aligned with the correct values processes.

K1 The subject material

I fully researched every topic to be taught in the units assigned to myself to deliver, and I would constantly be checking current research and legislation, policy and procedures for childcare professionals. For example, I taught a unit on speech, language and communication needs, and I researched current advice on how to support children in the early years who presented with SLC needs. I made sure to link theory to practice for the students by showing them current strategies that schools and early years settings use successfully. I also worked as a children's support worker for many years myself so had first hand knowledge of the subject material.

K2 Appropriate methods for teaching, learning and assessing in the subject area and at the level of the academic programme

I observed other experienced teachers, and also researched and followed CACHE's advice on how to best teach the diploma. The units have a practical element also where learners are assessed carrying out practical tasks. I got to know the learners and built a rapport with them so that I could find out what learning strategies worked and what did not. A teacher needs to be flexible and adaptable.

K3 How students learn, both generally and within their subject/ disciplinary area(s)

Again as already stated, learner profiles were consulted so that I would be able to plan for individual students' needs. It was important also that I built a rapport with the learners as I found that this aided in the positive learning environment I wanted to achieve for the learners. I also used constructivist teaching methods and incorporated the students into the learning as much as possible. I found that this approach resulted in better engagement and also better written work, alongside greater enthusiasm from the learners.

K4 The use and value of appropriate learning technologies

During my lessons, the learners were encouraged to use Chromebooks and mobiles to research topics, and I also used Kahoot and other online teaching resources like interactive quizzes.

K5 Methods for evaluating the effectiveness of teaching

I used various methods for evaluating the effectiveness of my teaching, which included games and knowledge recall activities (as mentioned above: 3-2-1, think pair share, sweeping, draw it, in hindsight, testing trio), and also via the written task and completed class activity and questioning and answering.

K6 The implications of quality assurance and quality enhancement for academic and professional practice with a particular focus on teaching

I was subject to an internal quality assurance process which evaluated how I taught and gave feedback to learners. This was also recorded and is part of this portfolio under IQA assessment. The college I did my placement at also requires staff to undertake 30 hours per year of CPD and I attended workshops about best and current practice in FE including course specifications and teaching methods.

V1 Respect individual learners and diverse learning communities

In line with the Equality Act (2010), I always ensured I did not discriminate any learner. Learner profiles were consulted again so that I could support learners with complex needs and from diverse backgrounds. For example, some students had expressed that they were unsure of their sexuality, others were struggling with self harm, and others had drug related problems. I had to remain completely impartial and non prejudice.

Some learners also had learning disabilities, and so I had to ensure these learners felt included as well.

V2 Promote participation in higher education and equality of opportunity for learners

The CACHE childcare diploma is a vocational qualification and as such, the majority of learners go on to the workplace. Some do apply to go to university and with one group of students in particular (the Level 3 extended group), I had sessions where I helped them with their personal statements for UCAS.

V3 Use evidence-informed approaches and the outcomes from research, scholarship and continuing professional development

Again, constructivist approaches have been shown to be the most successful at promoting student engagement and I would always be looking for new and improved ways that I could help the learners to have a more active role in their learning process.

SCIE (Social Care Institute for Excellence) was another source for my teaching content, the CACHE diploma and also books on teaching such as the Lazy Teacher's Handbook by Jim Smith (2010), the Welsh Government, and also books written by Mary Neary were my go-to for teaching advice.

V4 Acknowledge the wider context in which higher education operates recognising the implications for professional practice

There are many cross cutting enhancement themes including social inclusion, the Welsh language and the quality of opportunity, which I incorporated into my lessons by using the Welsh language frequently, ensuring I taught in a non discriminatory and inclusive way, and ensure that I engaged in frequent feedback from learners. I also made sure that the theoretical concepts I taught in class were linked with practice in the workplace. One example of how I did this was when we did a unit on disability awareness, and I gave the students a set of exercises where they had to experience what it was like to have a disability, and then they had to try and do an everyday task whilst experiencing this disability. The feedback from this was that they empathize more with individuals with a disability and it helped them to become more inclusive individuals. The learners on the course I undertook my PTE were child care professionals who supported disabled children and this helped them to understand the impact of disabilities in a wider context and not just theoretically in the classroom. Learning by hands on experience helps to concrete and consolidate the theoretical learning in the classroom.