

ECAD 6008 - Professional and Pedagogic Studies:
Leading the Learning: what, how and why am I
teaching?

Part 1

Professional Experience Template 1	Our Learning Journey
Pedagogy Standard	Assessment for Learning
What did you do and why?	During PTE 2, my placement school was very keen on using multiple assessment for learning strategies during lessons. I decided to use “Our Learning Journey” as a means of assessment for learning as it allows for learners to reflect on their own practice and allows for the teacher to listen to learners’ opinions on the lessons delivered. “Our Learning Journey” is a mountain that uses a traffic light system in a way that the pupils find more enjoyable. The system is in place in order for the pupils to express to their teacher how they feel their learning has progressed during the lesson. I decided upon using the method of allowing the pupils the choice of worksheets in order to avoid any pupils feeling as though they are less able than their peers and also in order to allow all pupils to complete a task that would be challenging to them as all of the pupils in the class were at different levels of ability within the class.
What have you learned?	While using “Our Learning Journey I was able to properly understand how the pupils felt about the lessons that they were involved in in addition to improving the pupils’ skills as critical thinkers. In addition to this I was able to assess the pupils’ progress based off of where they had stated they felt they were on the mountain. I was also able to understand the importance of self-assessment and pupil reflection having not utilised these tools often in my practice prior to this.

What next?	"Our Learning Journey" proved to be extremely effective in practice. It did, however, prove challenging at times as less confident pupils did not always involve themselves in the use of the strategy as they did not like speaking in front of the whole class. Due to this constraint I was able to modify the strategy and ask the pupils, who were not involved in the discussions with the class, separately so they did not feel embarrassed.
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Professional Experience Template 2	World War 2 research Task
Pedagogy Standard	Employing a broad repertoire of teaching approaches

What did you do and why?	During my PTE 3 experience I decided to begin employing different methods of teaching to expand my repertoire of teaching techniques. One such method was the use of research tasks during certain sessions. This specific session was an Humanities session centred around History, ICT and oracy skills. The pupils, in small groups, were first assigned a specific event from World War 2 that the class had previously done a separate activity on. They were then told, in their groups, to conduct research on the event and then make a presentation using Microsoft PowerPoint and later to present it to myself and the rest of the class. During this session classroom management was extremely important due to the fact that the pupils were utilising ICT and were given the opportunity to choose their own groups and, therefore, work with their friends. For these reasons I felt that it was extremely important to continuously move around the classroom and ensure that I made proper use of the school's behaviour policies to ensure that pupils remained on task and produced their best work. The school's behaviour policy is centred around the use of a rocket with three steps each of green, amber and red, and also a bronze, silver and gold star. all pupils start the day at the top level of green and can move up or down the rocket based on their behaviour throughout the day. The lesson was initially planned to take place in a single session, however, it was extended to two sessions due to the pupils working at a slower pace than expected. The pupils were determined to complete the task despite finding it challenging and showed great effort in overcoming the challenge and all groups were able to produce good presentations and present them well in their groups. The behaviour during the lesson was also very well controlled with the majority of learners needing no guidance or reminders surrounding their behaviour. The learning intention for the lesson was successfully met by all pupils in their groups.
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What have you learned?	During this experience I found that utilising a variety of techniques when teaching is extremely important to the progress that pupils make in school. I also found that using a more hands on approach to classroom management and ensuring that all pupils behaviours are managed efficiently makes for a lesson that is far more productive for both myself and the learners. In addition to these points I also found that the pupils' resilience during these two sessions was extremely positive as the pupils produced excellent work as a result of wanting to continue even when they found the task challenging. This experience was overall an excellent one due to the variety of aforementioned reasons.
What next?	As a result of this experience I intend to continue to widen my repertoire of teaching styles as the different style of lesson was refreshing to the pupils, evidenced by their continued efforts and resilience through the sessions, and also the sessions yielded excellent presentations and the learning intention was successfully met. I also intend to continue with the level of classroom management used in this session as the pupils all responded positively to the teacher being more involved and on top of their behaviour.

Professional Experience Template 3	Learning about money
Pedagogy Standard	Real life authentic contexts
What did you do and why?	During my PTE 2 experience, my class' theme for the term was "money saving experts". The theme was chosen because of the cost of living crisis, in addition to the school being in a low-income area so that the pupils are able to understand how to use money wisely and effectively in the world outside of school. Between the 7th and 9th of November 2022 I had the pupils complete differentiated worksheets during their mathematics sessions. I felt that these worksheets were a good way to challenge all of the pupils in the class by giving them the choice of three worksheets. The pupils were then able to complete the worksheets at their own pace and progress to the higher difficulty worksheets if/when they completed the sheet that they had chosen.
What have you learned?	During this experience I truly realised how important including real life concepts in the classroom is as the pupils were able to better understand money and how it works as opposed to just numbers on a piece of paper. I also discovered that differentiating the worksheets while also allowing the pupils to choose their worksheets in order to challenge themselves is a crucial part of the progression of the learners and I found that the majority of pupils found that they enjoyed the learning more when they were being challenged more and when they were learning about topics that would actually help them outside of school, I found that the lessons went well and that the pupils grasped the concept of money very well and that the work being differentiated helped both myself and the pupils greatly.

What next?	Moving forward I aim to use more concepts that pupils will use in life outside of school both due to the enjoyment that the pupils displayed, and to the importance of learning how to transfer skills from inside the classroom to outside the classroom. I aim to continue with the same level of differentiation when planning future sessions as I feel that it benefitted both myself and the learners. I also aim to continue to challenge learners wherever possible as it is vital to the progression of their learning.
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Professional Experience Template 4	Class Challenges
Pedagogy Standard	Cross-curricular themes
What did you do and why?	While on PTE 3 I decided to implement class challenges. The challenges were designed to be completed by pupils whenever they had completed other work and also on Friday afternoons. There are six challenges, one for each Area of Learning Experience (AoLE). The pupils are also given the choice of order in which they complete the challenges and complete them independently or in small groups with minimal support from staff. As the challenges encompass all six AoLEs they also connect to the four purposes of the Welsh curriculum in a multitude of ways. I decided to plan this set of activities in order to have the pupils experience all of the AoLEs more often than they normally would and to improve the pupils' skills in all of the AoLEs.
What have you learned?	During this experience I found that using the class challenges was an incredible means of making my lessons cross-curricular as well as incorporating all of the four purposes of the Welsh curriculum and allowing pupils to lead their own learning by choosing from multiple tasks and completing them independently or in small groups. I discovered that allowing pupils the opportunity to lead their own learning in a variety of tasks allowed them to utilise and hone skills that they use less commonly when completing tasks in the classroom during other sessions.

What next?	As a result of this experience I plan on continuing to use class challenges as a method of implementing cross-curricular themes, the four purposes and allowing learners to lead their own learning as I feel it was a very successful task. In the future I plan on further developing the use of challenges by building a large amount of resources and challenge ideas to give to pupils of various age and ability levels. I do not plan on changing anything about challenges at present, however, limitations such as lack of support staff could mean that the format needs to change in the future.
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<u>Target 1</u>	Try not to be over-reliant on direct quotations when citing sources. Paraphrasing and summarising the key ideas will help you to demonstrate your knowledge and understanding.
<u>Target 2</u>	Ensure that all points are supported by literature

Part 2

Introduction

During this assessment I will be identifying pedagogical principles that are, at present, areas for development. I aim to justify the identifications made, utilising a variety of literature from multiple sources. I will also be discussing how I plan on developing these areas and what I will do differently in my future teaching practice. The areas that I plan on discussing are: employing a broad repertoire of teaching approaches and cross-curricular themes. My reasoning for choosing these particular experiences are that they are two that I feel at this point were excellent examples of my practice but also examples of how, as a student teacher, I am able to continue to identify weaknesses and improve upon them. During the assessment I aim to, using relevant literature, discuss the two principles and analyse my experiences and make judgements and recommendations for improvement based upon my judgements of the experiences included in addition to evidence from a variety of sources. The experiences that will be discussed took place in a rural school in a Year 5/6 class. The class has twenty pupils in total. The school has a free school meals percentage of 36.8% compared to the national average of 23.7% and an additional learning needs percentage of 32.5%, considerably higher than the national average of 13.2% (Estyn, 2024). The purpose of including these statistics is, simply, to give context of the school and some of the challenges that may have been encountered during the experiences that will be discussed throughout this assignment.

Experience 1 - Employing a broad repertoire of teaching approaches

The first pedagogical principle that I will be discussing is the use of blended learning experiences. According to Hrastinski (2019) blended learning can mean either one of two things. The first being a combination of face-to-face and online learning. While the second is the

use of a variety of teaching styles. The latter is the definition that will be focused on in this discussion. There are a multitude of different methods of delivering a lesson to learners with the most commonly used still being teacher-centred instruction. Teacher-centred instruction is the 'traditional' style of teaching whereby the teacher gives the learners information and asks them to complete a task based upon what they have learned (Leming, Ellington and Porter-Magee, pp.94-95, 2003). While teacher-centred still has its place, the use of multiple approaches in the classroom have proven beneficial with the same source stating that

"Teacher-centered instruction has again and again proven its value in studies that show it to be an especially effective instructional method. Yet, when self-appointed education leaders meet to share best practices or write about effective teaching, teacher-centered instruction, as the comedian Rodney Dangerfield used to say, gets no respect."

This source truly evidences that, despite being a valuable teaching method that there are other methods of teaching that, when used alongside teacher-centred instruction, could yield greater rewards.

Leming, Ellington and Porter-Magee (2003) proceed to introduce "*student-centred instruction*" as the only other method of teaching, encompassing "*hands-on activities*", "*cooperative, group learning*", "*integrated themes... such as history and geography*" are the only other methods of delivering sessions in a less 'traditional sense'. There are of course many other means of delivering a "*blended learning experience*" (myewc, n.d.). Some other methods include; "*small group instruction*"; "*project-based learning*"; "*inquiry-based learning*" and "*cooperative learning*". (Happy Numbers, 2021). It can be observed that despite using different names for the methods many of the methods were detailed by Leming, Ellington and Porter-Magee (2003).

The experience that will be discussed within this pedagogical principle is a World War 2 research task. The task was set as part of the class' concept of conflict. The task was decided upon as it was believed that the pupils had experienced a much larger amount of 'traditional' teacher-led instruction. As a result, it was thought that by allowing the pupils to cooperatively conduct a research task and discover facts about this topic would be an excellent opportunity for the pupils to experience learning in a way that was, at the time, relatively new to them by completing the task in a student-centred way after receiving instruction from the teacher prior to the research task taking place. According to Bragg and Fielding (2003) "*evidence suggests that Students as Researchers projects have a positive impact on students*".

This statement supports the use of research tasks for students and even continues by stating that research tasks develop “*a positive sense of self and agency*”; “*inquiring minds and learning new skills*”; “*social competences and new relationships*”, allows learners the opportunity to reflect “*on their own learning*” and gives them the opportunity “*to be active and creative*”. The University of Reading (2019) supports these points stating that research tasks can develop “*students' skills of critical analysis and ability to make judgements and come to conclusions*” and also builds upon the point by stating that students being researchers “*develops students' transferable skills of finding, creating, synthesising and presenting information*”.

During the activity it was observed that the learners, despite facing some challenges and seeking support from staff members, were able to successfully complete the task with minimal support from staff, using primarily the other members of their groups. While the majority of the task went smoothly, the session was initially planned to take place in a singular session, it was necessary to extend the session to be completed over two sessions as a result of the pupils feeling as though they needed more time in order to complete the task to an acceptable standard. This could have been avoided by planning for the session to be longer beforehand due to the fact that the learners had not experienced this style of lesson before. As a result of this, in future practice it would prove beneficial to introduce different methods of teaching in a more gradual fashion as opposed to introducing them so abruptly. In addition, despite the fact that this particular group of pupils responded well to the new style of lesson delivery, it is also important to note that this may not apply to all learners in all learning environments. Upon reviewing the literature, it has been decided that, due to the resoundingly positive results observed during the experience, in addition to the sources supporting the use of blended learning, that blended learning will remain an integral part of my teaching practice in the future.

Experience 2 - Cross-curricular themes

The second pedagogical principle that will be discussed is the use of cross-curricular themes in the learning environment. Cross-curricular themes are employed in almost every session that is taught in a classroom. The benefits of cross-curricular themes are so prevalent that the Curriculum for Wales 2022 includes only six Areas of Learning Experience (AoLE) as umbrellas for subjects that are easily linked together, such as, Humanities including History, Geography and Religious Education rather than recognising them as independent subject areas. Rowley and Cooper (2009) supported this by stating that subjects are “*interdependent*” with one another. According to Aslan (2016), the use of cross-curricular themes in education is extremely important as they “*Improve reading skills*” and “*expand concepts and background*”. This point is further supported by Savage (2010) who stated: “*Cross-curricular approaches to teaching and learning can result in a powerful, new model of subject-based*

teaching and learning". An alternate view on the use of cross-curricular themes comes from Greenwood (2015) who wrote that "*Entwistle (1970, 10) suggested that integrated studies seemed a 'poor instrument' for acquiring knowledge and skills in a manageable, disciplined form.*" Greenwood (2015) further states that:

"The argument is that it may be difficult for pupils to make sense of experiences and knowledge without the benefit of the conceptual structures which disciplines provide (Morrison 1986; Kerry and Eggleston 1988; McNamara 1994)."

An example of cross-curricular themes could be as simple as a 'Mathematics' lesson based around problem solving questions, requiring learners to read full sentences as opposed to numbers and symbols. In this instance Mathematics and Languages, Literacy and Communication (LLC) are being used in a cross-curricular manner. While this example is the use of cross-curricular themes is the use in a more traditional sense, the experience that will be discussed interprets cross-curricular themes in a different manner. The specific experience that will be discussed is the use of "class challenges" (see appendix 2). "Class challenges" were introduced as a means of the pupils having access to all six AoLEs. An example of cross-curricular themes could be as simple as a 'Mathematics' lesson based around problem solving questions, requiring learners to read full sentences as opposed to numbers and symbols. In this instance Mathematics and Languages, Literacy and Communication (LLC) are being used in a cross-curricular manner. While this example is the use of cross-curricular themes is the use in a more traditional sense, the experience that will be discussed interprets cross-curricular themes in a different manner. The specific experience that will be discussed is the use of "class challenges" (see appendix 2). "Class challenges" were introduced as a means of the pupils having access to all six Areas of Learning Experience (AoLE), over multiple sessions, in a manner that was student led with the pupils having the choice of which challenge they decided to complete and the order in which said challenges were completed. The learners had already completed some tasks based on the topics that the challenges contained and, therefore needed very little instruction at the beginning of the session. Upon completion of a task the learner would take the completed work to the teacher and once approved put a lollipop stick of the corresponding colour to the challenge completed and put it in their plastic wallet so that the teacher can assess which pupils are on track and which pupils are not yet working at the pace expected of them. The challenges incorporate many skills that pupils of 9-11 years old are expected to be meeting and, on the whole the challenges were very successful when implemented in the Year 5/6 class. AoLE), over multiple sessions, in a manner that was student led with the pupils having the choice of which challenge they decided to complete and the order in which said challenges were completed. The

learners had already completed some tasks based on the topics that the challenges contained and, therefore needed very little instruction at the beginning of the session. Upon completion of a task the learner would take the completed work to the teacher and once approved put a lollipop stick of the corresponding colour to the challenge completed and put it in their plastic wallet so that the teacher can assess which pupils are on track and which pupils are not yet working at the pace expected of them. The challenges incorporate many skills that pupils of 9-11 years old are expected to be meeting and, on the whole the challenges were very successful when implemented in the Year 5/6 class. While the “class challenges” were successful, and remain a permanent fixture in the class to this day, there is definite potential for improvement. One possible way in which the challenges could be improved is by giving the pupils more complex challenges and more time in which to complete them as, when this particular experience took place, the class was only assigned one hour on a Tuesday and two hours on a Friday. An additional area for improvement for this experience is that, potentially, it may prove beneficial to assign challenges to pupils in a learning carousel in order to ensure as much focus on the tasks as possible. Despite making this suggestion, however, it is based on any class that may decide to adopt “class challenges” as the learners involved in this experience were well behaved with each pupil completing all or most of the challenges that they were given in the allocated time. While these limitations exist, it has been decided that “class challenges” will continue to be implemented in the learning environment due to the overwhelming positives that can be drawn from the template included. Overall, the pupils enjoyed the challenge sessions and the work completed was, mostly, of an excellent quality, either meeting or exceeding what was expected.

Conclusion

To summarise, upon reviewing the literature, in addition to making my own judgements, I have come to the conclusion that both of the experiences that I have discussed were, overall, positive experiences. In regards to the experience on employing a broad repertoire of teaching approaches, I have made the decision to plan this brand of research sessions to be completed over longer periods of time due to the fact that the learners involved felt as though one session was not enough and, in hindsight, they were correct as adjustments were made in the experience that was discussed. I have also decided that, due to the success of this experience and the primarily supportive literature, I will be continuing to employ this style of research session, in addition to, further blended learning style experiences. In regards to the experience on cross-curricular themes, I have decided to continue to include cross-curricular sessions into my practice. Despite this decision, I have come to the conclusion that, while the experience does contain all six AoLEs, it is not a lesson containing cross-

curricular themes in the sense that this assessment was referring to. I have made this conclusion based on a limited amount of literature supporting this style of experience and therefore leads me to believe that this style of experience would be better suited to innovation than cross-curricular themes. Despite this the experience still encompasses multiple AoLEs and is relevant. As I have made these conclusions it has been decided that “class challenges” will remain a part of my practice but in addition to this I will strive to better my practice in regards to cross-curricular themes by furthering my own knowledge and employing different tactics and means of using cross-curricular themes in the learning environment.

Appendix

App. 1 – Class challenges

Challenges - Concept		
<u>Science and technology</u> We have found out how different forces effect different objects in our class experiment. - Can you create your own experiment showing the effect air resistance has on an object? - record your video on seesaw. <u>Seesaw</u>	<u>Humanities</u> We have looked at some countries experiencing conflict in the world right now. - Can you make a fact file on one of the current conflicts we have looked at? Palestine/Sudan/Ukraine/Mexico/Haiti. <u>Concept Book</u>	<u>LLC</u> We have looked at imperative verbs in detail. Create a word mat with as many different imperative verbs as you can think of to help with your instructional text. <u>Literacy book or A4 paper glued into Literacy book.</u>
<u>Maths and Numeracy</u> We have done a lot learning on multiplying fractions. Complete either the 1*, 2* or 3* worksheet. Make sure you challenge yourself! <u>Maths Book</u>	<u>Expressive arts</u> We have recently learnt the Welsh national anthem - Can you create a dance for it and record it on seesaw? <u>Seesaw</u>	<u>Health and well-being</u> Can you create a conflict resolution sketch? <u>A4 Paper - Glue into concept book when it's done</u>

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