

Primary School Experience Guide to Observations



Academic Year 2018-2019

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Introduction

This booklet applies to all Postgraduate Primary and Undergraduate Primary students regarding school placements.

This will be an exciting opportunity for you to start finding more about your school and the members of staff and pupils you will be working with.

Your preparation time will enable you to begin to develop your professional persona and to take responsibility for your own professional learning and development.

School Experience

Prior to your block placement you will be allocated a set number of days for visits to your placement school. These will enable you to gain appropriate knowledge of the school, its policies, resources and organisation; so that you can prepare effectively for School Experience placement. These visits also provide opportunities for you to develop your skills of observation, reflection, planning and teaching.

It is worth bearing in mind that:

- A good knowledge of the school, its policies, resources, and staff will help you to prepare effectively for School Experience.
- You will be able to demonstrate some knowledge of the key skills.
- Members of staff and pupils will be forming their impressions of you from the first day you appear in school!

The aims of the preparation visits:

1. To enable you to familiarise yourself with the school procedures and documentation, at whole school and class.
2. To observe lessons and identify elements of lesson structure which contribute to effective management and teaching.
3. To prepare for your block placement, under consultation with your SBT.

During these visits you will be operating within the timetable and organisational demands of the school. You may not be able to gain all the information you need immediately, but over the period of time leading up to your block placement.

1. School Procedures and Documentation

Endeavour to obtain as many of the following as you can, so that you are aware of how systems work prior to your placement.

- School handbook
- Gain information with regard to the school's pastoral system and the procedures for dealing with such things as poor behaviour and non-submission of homework, under the school's sanction system. Try to understand the 'Rewards System' and so that you can use it effectively.
- Gain information with regard to school policies for assessment/marketing, provision for individual needs and target setting e.g. use of RAISEonline (Reporting and Analysis for

Improvement through School Self-Evaluation (DfE), National Bench Marking, transition information.

- Gain information regarding the support and administration systems.
- Familiarise yourself with the Teaching Assistant staff, and how they work within your department.
- Familiarise yourself with the procedures required for ordering equipment such as TV/computer suites and how to organise your photocopying and printing needs.
- Receive guidance on how to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. "Keeping children safe in education' (2016)

2. Health & Safety Checklist

It is your responsibility to ensure that you are aware of how to access the different policies and procedures listed below. This will be in direct relation to part two of the Teachers' Standards (2012) – Personal and Professional Conduct.

	Date Achieved	
	Module	Module
Have you read a copy of the school's Health and Safety Policy?		
Do you know how to report an accident?		
Do you know where the Accident Book is kept?		
Do you know who the First Aid Officers are?		
Do you know what the Fire Drill is and where to assemble?		
Have you been made aware of any workplace hazards?		
Do you know who to report any faulty equipment or anything which may cause any injury to?		
Do you understand your responsibility towards Health & Safety?		
Do you know who the Child Protection Officer is?		

3. Observations

These will be part of your collection of information about groups that you will teach or tutor. They will enable you to observe practitioners in action, and provide you with an opportunity to gain invaluable tips and advice. Please refer to the 'Guide for Successful Observation' in the later section of this booklet.

4. Preparation for The Teaching Aspect of Your Placement

The time has arrived for you to deliver your first lesson – are you ready?

Use the table below as a ‘checklist’ to success!

Please insert relevant module code to the top of each column.

	Date Achieved	
	Module	Module
Preparation		
The timetable for SE has been decided		
Trainee has received class lists and met classes they will be teaching (where possible)		
Trainee has discussed schemes of work for each class with the class Teacher and how these fit into the whole year's teaching for the year group and work done in previous years		
Trainee has planned some initial lessons for the classes for the first week of the block practice. These are set out on the correct proforma and have been signed off by <u>BOTH</u> the class teacher and the Partnership Tutor.		
Trainee has undertaken some teaching - team / small group/ whole class		
Trainee has found out about resources (library, ICT, reprographics, stockroom ...)		
Trainee has found out about department and school policies (homework, discipline and reward systems, marking ...)		
Trainee has met the Form and Form Teacher they will be working with and has discussed wider school issues concerned with pastoral initiatives.		
Trainee has a schedule of meetings in school that they are expected to attend (e.g. daily/weekly meetings with classteacher and/or school-based tutor, departmental/year meetings, training days, parents' evenings).		
Trainee has received a schedule for whole school induction.		

School-Based Tutor Signature:

Guide to Successful Observation

Why Observe?

During your placement you will be required to observe teachers and pupils and it is a crucial part of your early training. Observing and being observed is a common feature of professional development throughout a Teachers' career.

Focused observation with a clear purpose should allow you to achieve a number of objectives –

- An understanding of a child's learning experiences
- An appreciation of the variety of skills which teachers employ in the classroom e.g. classroom organisation, behaviour management strategies
- Experience of different teaching and learning styles to facilitate Visual, Auditory and Kinaesthetic learning, to cater for the differing emotional needs of pupils e.g. SEN, Gifted and Talented
- An introduction to the classes which you are going to teach
- Induction into the life of the department, its policies, strategies and approaches
- How to work with other colleagues within the classroom e.g. TA's.

What to expect and what is expected of you?

- Lessons will vary. Few lessons will be perfect, some will be routine.
- All lessons should provide you with a learning experience.
- You will need to be positive and pro-active in your approach. Avoid being negative and passive ('all I have done is sit at the back and observe')
- Ensure your observation time is well spent. With the agreement of the usual classteacher, when appropriate go around the class, talk to the pupils, look at their work and help them with their activities.
- If it is convenient ask/discuss with the teacher why he/she adopts a certain approach. Remember teachers build up a whole bank of experience over the years that they draw on instinctively. Teachers often take their skill for granted and you may need to prompt them to analyse why they behave like they do (do not necessarily expect them to have detailed knowledge of the wording of Teachers' Standards (2012) with which you will be familiar).
- Be reflective and constructive. Avoid criticism and insensitivity in discussion with the usual classteacher – remember you are the one being trained.
- Make sure you keep a record or log of what you observe (some instruments are provided at the back of these guidelines).
- Go into the observation with something specific in mind to look for e.g.; SEN provision, Gifted and Talented provision, Differentiation, the use of adults other than teachers and how they are deployed in the classroom. A lack of focus may result in you learning very little (*this is different to subject specific observation mentioned later*). Select one of the proforma at the back of this booklet to help you do this, or even better adapt one to use for your own focus.

What are the different types of observation?

During your placement you may be involved, under the direction of your classteacher and school-based tutor, in many different types of observation –

- School routine observations e.g. assemblies, lunchtime canteen systems, corridor movement.
- Pupil shadowing – following a pupil or group of pupils around for half a day or a whole day. This allows you to access a range of different teaching and learning styles. This will help you understand what a day in the life of a pupil is like.
- Subject/class specific – you will be looking at how your subject is taught or how pupils of certain age groups/abilities/gender learn and are taught.
- Peer – observe other Trainees and get them to observe you. This can be helpful and non-threatening because you are both at the same point of training and experience.
- DVD – watching a DVD of classroom teaching which has the advantage of a pause and playback to allow detailed analysis. You might even be brave enough to volunteer to have your lesson recorded!
- Tutor time – you will be joining a tutor team. Eventually, after working alongside a tutor, you will be expected to carry out the duties of the tutor. It is important to observe and identify good practice both in registration and PSHE. Good tutoring requires as high a level of skill as good classroom teaching.

What to observe? How to record your observations?

The areas of observation are far-ranging and should cover most aspects of Teachers' Standards (2012). There is no shortage of things to observe. It is very important that you determine a focus for your observations which you record, analyse and evaluate.

Your lesson observation record should help you to identify what went well in the lesson and be an opportunity for you to note any implications for your own classroom practice.

At the back of these guidelines are some key observation areas which cover aspects of the *standards*. It is advised that you choose an area to observe in the different lessons through your block placements.

In addition there are three instruments for observation for you to use –

1. a post-hoc lesson plan – use this after your observation to construct the plan of a lesson you have observed
2. a lesson observation proforma which contains a clear box for your observation focus
3. a lesson outline which will make you focus on the structure of a lesson, how it is timed and how teacher and pupil activities are balanced, noting the impact upon pupil learning.

Shadowing a pupil over a number of lessons

When you focus on an individual pupil or group of pupils this should be carried out discreetly. You might ask yourself the following questions –

- How well does the pupil respond in the different lessons?
- Does the pupil actively participate?
- Does the pupil ask or answer questions?
- How well does the pupil cope with tasks given?
- Does he/she stay at a task? How often is the pupil off-task? What off-task activities are they engaged in?
- How does the pupil interact with different teachers?
- Does the pupil collaborate with other pupils?

Observation Areas

A. Make a **post-hoc lesson plan** on the pro forma supplied (page 15)

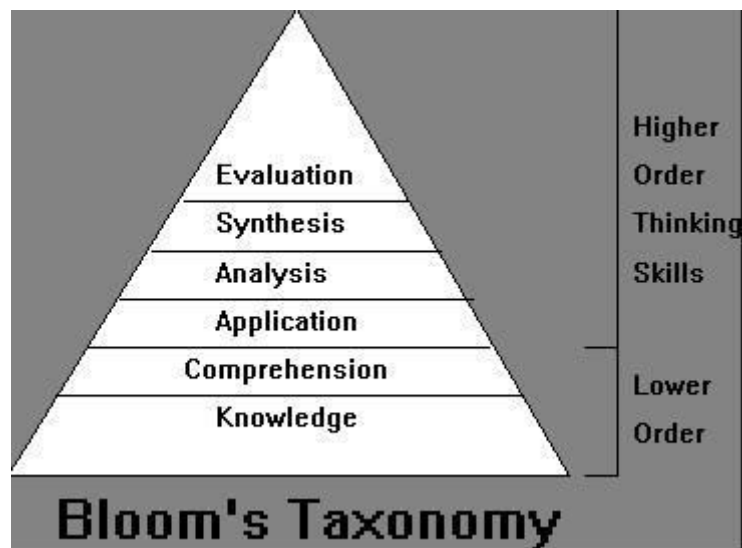
B. **Structure of the lesson** (page 16)

- How do the Teachers' decisions on structuring contribute to the effectiveness of the lesson?
- What different activities make up the lesson and how long is spent on each?
- How are the pupils grouped for each phase of the lesson (whole class, individuals, pairs, groups)? If pupils work in groups, how are these groups decided on?
- How does the teacher manage transitions from one part of the lesson to another? How are resources managed?
- How is learning tracked through the lesson?
- How is the furniture laid out?

C. **Behaviour Management** (page 19) "Controlling and Directing"

- How do the Teachers' actions communicate expectations about standards of behaviour?
- How does the teacher manage pupils' entry into and exit from the room?
- What other norms of classroom behaviour are established and how are they communicated e.g. removing coats, apologising for late arrival, raising hands for attention?
- What use is made of praise? How often? In what form? Of whom?
- How are reprimands delivered? How often? In what form? To whom?
- How is humour used?
- How are pupils addressed? How does knowing pupils' names help the teacher?
- How does the teacher anticipate problems e.g. by starting questions with 'put your hand up if ...', by having spare equipment ready?
- How are unexpected events dealt with e.g. a pupil arrives late, a pupil comes from another class with a message, a pupil asks to go to the medical room?
- How does the teacher position himself/herself around the class at different stages of the lesson?
- How does the teacher avoid having pupils left with nothing to do or unable to progress?

D. Questioning and Interaction (page 21 and 22) “Questioning” “Communication”



In 1956, Benjamin Bloom headed a group of educational psychologists who developed a classification of levels of intellectual behaviour important in learning. Bloom found that over 95% of the test questions students encounters require them to think only at the lowest possible levelto recall information.

Bloom identified six levels within the cognitive domain, from the simple recall or recognition of facts, as the lowest level, through increasingly more complex and abstract mental levels, to the highest order which is classified as evaluation. Verb examples that represent intellectual activity on each level are listed here.

1. Knowledge: arrange, define, duplicate, label, list, memorise, name, order, recognise, relate, recall, repeat, reproduce, state.
2. Comprehension: classify, describe, discuss, explain, express, identify, indicate, locate, recognise, report, restate, review, select, translate.
3. Application: apply, choose, demonstrate, dramatise, employ, illustrate, interpret, operate, practice, schedule, sketch, solve, use, write.
4. Analysis: analyse, appraise, calculate, categorise, compare, contrast, criticise, differentiate, discriminate, distinguish, examine, experiment, question, test.
5. Synthesis: arrange, assemble, collect, compose, construct, create, design, develop, formulate, manage, organise, plan, prepare, propose, set up, write,
6. Evaluation: appraise, argue, assess, attach, choose, compare, defend, estimate, judge, predict, rate, core, select, support, value, evaluate.

- How are the questioning styles and nature of interaction designed to suit the class and the topic? ('questions' proforma are available)
- What questions does the teacher ask which are open/closed? Higher order/factual?
- How does the teacher respond to pupils' answers? How does s/he make use of them to develop teaching?

- How do individual pupils respond to questioning? How often do they offer to answer? How often are they chosen to answer (a) when they have offered (b) when they have not offered?
- In reference to Bloom's Taxonomy – how often are higher order questions used?

E. Differentiation (page 24) “modes of working”

- How is the lesson designed to cater for the needs of individual pupils?
- How are the tasks set varied for individual pupils?
- What evidence is there of the Teachers' knowledge of individuals' characters and abilities?
- How does the teacher mediate between pupils and resources in different ways for different pupils?
- How are question and answer or discussion sessions differentiated?
- What role is played in the lesson by pupils helping each other?

F. Lesson Delivery (page 26) “objectives V outcomes”

- How is the purpose and main ideas of the lesson communicated to the pupils?
- How is the topic introduced? What explanation is offered of the purpose, objective and relevance of the lesson?
- How does the teacher mediate between pupils and the teaching resources e.g. how does s/he introduce a textbook exercise?
- By what means are the main ideas of the lesson communicated e.g. by teacher exposition, by reading from a text, by practical demonstration?
- How does the teacher suit their language to the age and ability of the pupils?
- How does the teacher make sure that instructions are understood by all?

G. Assessment using “structure of lesson” (Page 16)

- What does the teacher do during the lesson to help them to know what pupils understand and can do?
- What methods of assessment are used? – in reference to Assessment for Learning
- How many pupils does the teacher get information about by each means?
- What written work is produced by pupils? What assessment of their capability and understanding can be made from it?
- Observe a small group closely throughout the lesson and make an assessment for each individual, based on this lesson, of what they know and can do.

Post-hoc Lesson Plan

School	Teacher	
Class	Day	Date
Room	Subject	
No. of Pupils	Lesson time	

Topic of lesson and place in series	
Observation Focus	
Time	Teaching and Learning Activities (identify organisational aspects including the use of support staff, key questions, misconceptions, differentiation strategies)
	Starter Activity
	Main Activities(including differentiation) Extensions Role of other adults
	Plenary Homework

Structure of a Lesson

School	Teacher	
Class	Day	Date
Room	Subject	
No. of Pupils	Lesson time	

Topic of lesson and place in series
Observation Focus

Observation Notes

Time Line (if appropriate)	
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Key Question: What was learned and how do you know?

Lesson Outline

Time	Teacher Activity	Pupil Activity

Peer Lesson Observation Pro forma

School	Teacher	
Class	Day	Date
Room	Subject	
No. of Pupils	Lesson time	

Topic of lesson and place in series
Observation Focus

Observation Notes

Time Line (if appropriate)	
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Key Question: What was learned and how do you know? What will you feedback?

Observation Focus 1: Controlling and Directing

Class..... Time..... Group Size

1. Start of lesson

How promptly did the lessons start?

How many latecomers were there?

What did the teacher do to deal with them?

2. Settling the group

How did the teacher establish a working atmosphere? (Notice hats, coats, bags, planners, books, equipment, chewing gum, noise level, seating, centre of attention etc.)

How did the teacher communicate the lesson objectives?

3. Direction Transitions

Was there a starter and how long did this take?

How many changes of activity were there?

How did the teacher communicate that a transition would occur?

How did the change of activity affect the students? (attention, motivation etc.)

How were plenaries used during the lesson?

4. End of Lesson

Did the teacher review or discuss their achievement of the lesson objectives?

Yes/No

Did the teacher set homework?

Yes/No

If yes to either or both say how long it took and explain how it was done (e.g. OHP, board, handout, orally etc.)

If equipment was returned say how it was organised and checked in.

How did the teacher dismiss the class?

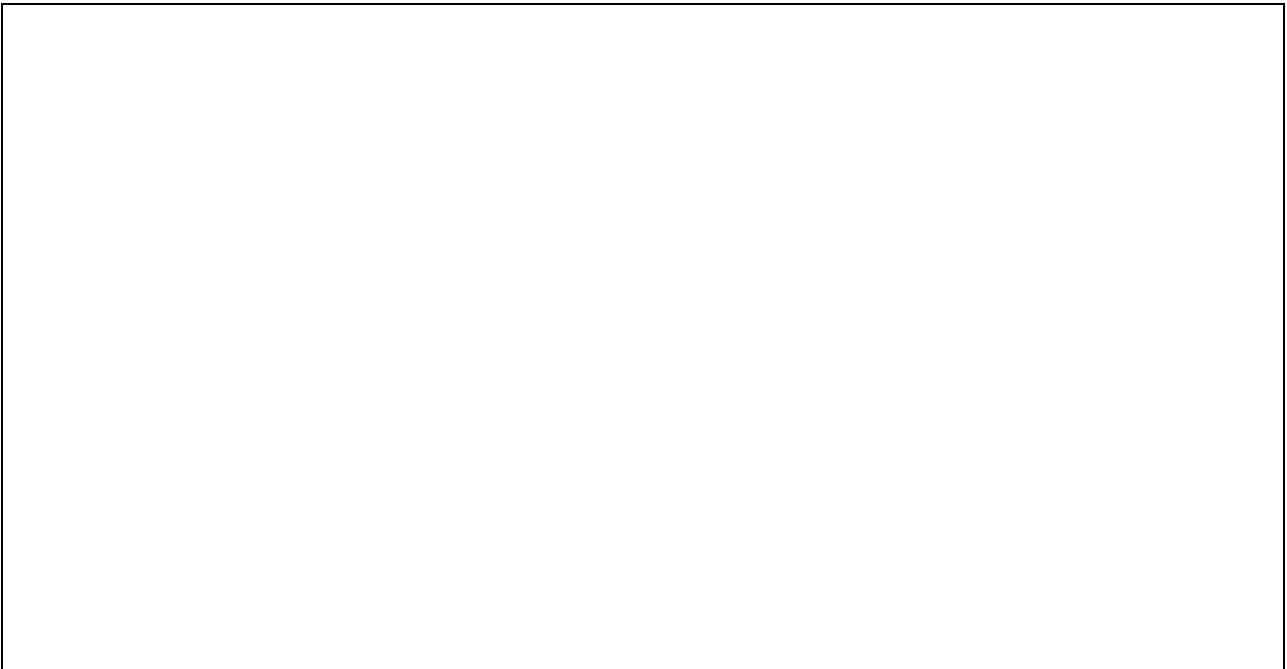
This sheet has been found useful for:	I have also found it useful for:
• How the start affects the lesson
• The value of ritualised routines
• Finding out rules of the classroom
• How long it takes a settle a class
• Teacher approaches to individual need

Key Question: What was learnt and how do you know?

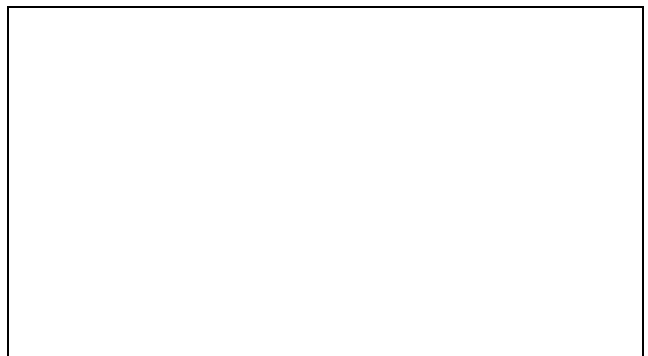
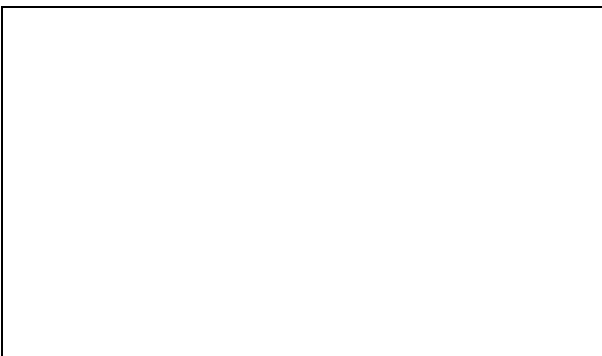
Observation Focus 2: Questioning

Class..... Time..... Group Size

1. Draw a plan of the classroom
2. Mark the seating positions with M and F to represent male and female pupils
3. Try and add names as they occur
4. Use arrow and number to show where teacher directs questions and the order of asking
5. In practical lessons, indicate movement of an identified pupil.



6. Keep a tally of **closed** (i.e. yes/no answers) and **open** (e.g. leading to discussion) questions.



Consider the questioning techniques for “open”.

- How does the teacher get extended questions?
- Do the pupils confer in small groups before answering a question?
- Do pupils initiate questions?

Observation Focus 3: Communication

Class..... Time Group Size

This sheet asks you to focus on the relationships and communication between the teachers and the pupils. Take the first 15 minutes to look over the types of communication in the first column.

Watch & listen for the following	Note suitable examples from the lesson
Language Teacher to class	
Language Teacher to individual	
Body Language Teacher	
Reaction Teacher to student	
Verbal & body language Student to teacher	
Verbal & body language Student to student	

For the last 15 minutes try and answer the following questions:

Are there differences in the way the teacher relates to the pupils in different situations in the lesson? *Try to account for this.*

Are the relationships you discern in this class different from those you have observed in other classes? *Try to account for these differences.*

This sheet has been found useful for:	I have also found it useful for:
• What improves communication
• What creates a good atmosphere
• How teachers inject pace
• Collecting examples of:
➤ Humour
➤ Motivating language
➤ Body language
➤ Patience with individuals

Observation Focus 4: Modes of Working

Class..... Time Group Size

What is the range and timing of activities in the lesson? Fill in this table for the whole lesson:

Activity	Teacher-directed or student-based	Time allocated	Time too much? about right? too little?	Well received	Comment
e.g. questioning	T	5	Right	Yes	Revision of last lesson – scope for debate

Timing

Were pupils told how long they had for each activity?

If the teacher reminded the pupils of the time limit, how and when was it done?

During the lesson, find time to complete these 5-minute observations on individual pupils:

Time		Observation	You may find the following codes useful
Min	Seconds		
0:	30	.....	W = Writing
1:	00	.....	R = Reading
1:	30	.....	L = Listening
2:	00	.....	O = Watching/Observing
2:	30	.....	D = Distracting others
3:	00	.....	G = Gazing around
3:	30	.....	F = Fiddling with things
4:	00	.....	=
4:	30	.....	=
5:	00	.....	=
Could you tell if she/he was 'on task'?			(Please as your own as necessary)

Are they on or off task?
 Watch another pupil working for 5 minutes. Tick on or off task – make activity comment if you think he/she is *off* task.

Time	Observation		Comment 'off task' only
	Min	Seconds	
		On Off	
0:	30	..... / .....	.....
1:	00	..... / .....	.....
1:	30	..... / .....	.....
2:	00	..... / .....	.....
2:	30	..... / .....	.....
3:	00	..... / .....	.....
3:	30	..... / .....	.....
4:	00	..... / .....	.....
4:	30	..... / .....	.....
5:	00	..... / .....	.....

Which of these three methods of observing was best for this lesson?

This sheet has been found useful for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How long tasks really take • How busy pupils are • Whether activity changes re-motivate • The effect of time limits • Levels of talking during different activities • Attention given to different groups/individuals 	I have also found it useful for: <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>
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Observation Focus 5: Outcomes V Objectives

Class..... Time Group Size

Remember:

- The question which prompts objectives is: What do you want the pupils in the class to learn?
- The question which prompts outcomes is: How do you expect pupils of differing abilities and with different needs to demonstrate what they have learned?

e.g.

Objectives	Outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify the main points of an argument • Evaluate the strength of an argument 	<p>All will: text mark in different colours to show the two sides of the argument</p> <p>Most will: write a commentary on the points found strongest and weakest</p> <p>Some will: begin to construct their own argument</p>

What are the lesson objectives?

To what extent are they SMART?

Specific and clear	
Measurable and Manageable	
Appropriate, agreed and achievable	
Realistic and relevant, and recorded	
Time related	

Use the space below to record interactions between the teacher and pupils.

Indicate the flow with arrows.

Pupil questions	The → Way It ← flows	The Teacher Set task/questions/responds	The → Way It ← flows	Pupil Responses/actions

What are the outcomes of the lesson? (was each objective achieved)	What is the evidence?	Which SMART feature contributed to success or failure to meet each objective?
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Did the teacher check pupils learning outcomes or state an intention to do so in future lessons?

YES / NO

How was it/ will it be done?

This sheet has been found useful for:	I have also found it useful for:
• The level of the objective
• Teachers checking understanding/progress
• Pupils asking for help/clarification
• If pupils know the point of the lesson
• Identification of 'problems'
• When teachers make adjustment	
• The value of the plenary	

Learning Walk

A learning walk is a way of gathering information about an institution. It should only be carried out by negotiation and may take place on short bursts over several days.

You will need to agree protocols with the staff before the walk can take place. Reflect on your Newman University sessions to date. What have you heard about in theory and can see reflected in practice.

Look for similarities and differences in Foundation Stage, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2.

You will need to decide;

- How will you select the classrooms to visit?
- What are the timing implications before, during and after the walk?
- How will teachers be notified?
- What aspect will you investigate with your learning walk? (year group/ subject/)
- How will you capture the data you collect? (You can use the record sheet or design one of your own)
- How will you reflect on what you have observed?
 - Can you tell why things were happening?
 - Can you relate theory to practice?
- How will you feedback your findings to the school?

Learning Walk: Record Sheet

Your record sheet may look like this:

As you record your observation, use phrases such as: I noticed...I saw...I heard...

What is my learning focus?
What can I see?
On displays?
In classroom organisation?
In books and work?
In classroom management and behaviour?
What do I hear?
When I talk to children?
When I talk to teachers?
When I talk to support staff?
When I observe a whole class?

Learning Walk: Reflection Sheet

Focus:
I have learnt: (Show what you have learnt by referring to your observations)
Any questions for the staff?
How will your learning walk impact on your own practice?