

SPEECH, LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION NEEDS

UNIT 17

OBSERVING OTHERS TEACHING

Learning outcomes

The learning outcomes meet the criteria for the TDA specialist standards (E) and the SLCF specialist level. (S)

Participants will be able to:

- provide teachers with timely, accurate and constructive feedback on learners' attainment, progress and areas for development that promote the progress of pupils with SLCN(E11)
- contribute to the professional development of colleagues using a broad range of techniques and skills appropriate to their needs so that they demonstrate enhanced and effective practice in the teaching of pupils with SLCN(E14)
- make well-founded appraisals of situations upon which they are asked to advise, applying high-level skills in classroom observation to evaluate and advise colleagues on their work (E15)
- provide guidance and support to colleagues to set specific targets and choose appropriate strategies for pupils with SLCN (S4)
- provide guidance and support to colleagues to differentiate lessons appropriately for pupils with SLCN (S7)
- identify factors which are currently preventing pupils with SLCN from gaining access to the lesson and provide advice and support to colleagues to take appropriate steps to remove or reduce these barriers

Online Resources

The content and tasks throughout these PDFs are supported by online resources that are designed to facilitate and supplement your training experience.

Links to these are signposted where appropriate. The resources use graphics and interactive elements to:

- Highlight salient points
- Provide at-a-glance content summaries
- Introduce further points of interest
- Offer visual context
- Break down and clearly present the different stages and elements of processes, tasks, practices, and theories

The online resources offer great benefits, both for concurrent use alongside the PDFs, or as post-reading revision and planning aids.

Please note that the resources cannot be used in isolation without referencing the PDFs.

Their purpose is to complement and support your training process, rather than lead it.

You should complete any learning or teaching tasks and additional reading detailed in this

PDF to make full use of the Advanced training materials for autism; dyslexia; speech, language and communication; emotional, social and behavioural difficulties; moderate learning difficulties.

To find out more about the resources, how they work, and how they can enhance your training, visit the homepage at: www.education.gov.uk/lamb

The first resource for this unit can be found here:

www.education.gov.uk/lamb/slc/observing/intro

Preparation for Evaluation

You should maintain a record of your activities in your learning log during the completion of this assignment. The log should focus on providing evidence relevant to the following:

- how you used the assignment to help another practitioner set targets and choose appropriate strategies and how you explained how these may be put in place, either as specific activities or built into existing everyday activities.
- how you support another person to differentiate specific areas of the curriculum or their approach.
- how you identify any relevant barriers in the workplace studied and describe the steps you would take to remove them.
- how you and a colleague you supported made judgements about the learning and participation of a pupil with SLCN and how you advised on the assessment of that pupil's progress over time

Briefing notes

You will already have knowledge of the impact of specific areas of difficulty for pupils with SLCN and strategies, approaches and activities to support their access to learning.

In order to provide guidance and support to colleagues you will need to have understanding and knowledge of research evidence to inform your advice. The following notes refer to research and publications relevant to some key areas of inclusive classroom practice.

Attention and listening

The development of integrated attention is crucial to listening and learning and may be an area of difficulty for pupils with SLCN.

You may want to revisit the levels of attention development as described by Cooper, J., Moodley, M., & Reynell, J. (1978). Helping language development: A developmental programme for children with early language handicaps.

The level descriptors are available here:

<http://www.cumbria.gov.uk/elibrary/Content/Internet/537/705/1109/1111/1114/37965143848.pdf>

Maggie Johnson identifies the factors that contribute to the level of attention we give to

specific tasks at any one time as:

The environment and what we bring to the situation

- comfort
 - focus
 - distractions
 - troubles
-
- The task
 - organisation
 - understanding
-
- The end product
 - motivation
 - success factor

See online resource:

www.education.gov.uk/lamb/slc/observing/attention

She asks teachers to consider whether their own behaviour makes listening and attending easier or more difficult and suggests strategies and approaches to help pupils develop skills to monitor and control their own attention and listening.

(Johnson, M. and Gallow, R. Helping Children Hang on to Your Every Word, 2007)

Adult language

You will be aware of the strategies adults can use to ensure that what they say is within the pupil's level of understanding and auditory memory capacity. You may wish to think about using examples of Blank levels of questioning to support colleagues in differentiating their questions and instructions. A summary can be found here:

askaspeechie.com.au/_literature_72624/Blank_Handout

The exemplar questions are aimed at younger children but the principles can be applied to age appropriate topics. Understanding at level 3 and 4 of Blank is necessary for the higher level skills described in Bloom's taxonomy, which teachers may use in their planning.

Group work in the classroom

Group work is often cited as being helpful to learning, providing opportunities to pupils to explore, exchange and rehearse ideas and develop social communication skills. As part of The Cambridge Review of Primary Education, Christine Howe and Neil Mercer published an interim report with a valuable summary of the current research position.

http://arrts.gtcni.org.uk/gtcni/bitstream/2428/26692/1/Primary_Review_2-1b_report_Social_development_learning_071214.pdf,

Two points from the summary worth thinking about here are:

...observations in primary classrooms suggest that children commonly interact unproductively. It seems that group- and pair-based activity is rarely organised in ways that will best achieve productive interaction. For collaborative activity to be useful (and to be recognised as such by pupils), teachers need to do more than provide opportunities for children to work and talk together. They need to help children develop the necessary communicative skills for engaging intellectually

...Research has helped identify some key qualities of successful collaboration and dialogue during problem-solving and similar activities. Research has also shown that children can be helped to interact more productively, and that this leads to more inclusive activity and to individual learning gains. This information could be used by teachers, to a greater extent than is presently common, to develop children's awareness of how they can use talk effectively as a tool for learning.

Formative assessment of a pupil's developing speech, language and communication skills is an important element of assessment generally and informs inclusive teaching. In 2005 The European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education began a project to examine assessment that supports inclusion in mainstream settings. They have published a summary paper which concludes that Assessment for Learning:

...can and should be applied to all pupils providing that the relevant and necessary changes and modifications are made to ensure the pupil's full participation in the assessment process.

– We suggest you read this short publication.

http://www.european-agency.org/publications/flyers/assessment-in-inclusive-settings/assessmentflyer_entext.pdf

Make some notes in your learning log about ways in which assessment for learning/formative assessment can be incorporated into lessons in order to provide support and guidance to colleagues and about how you will draw colleagues' attention to the idea that the strategies and approaches used by the teacher in order to support the inclusion of pupils with SLCN build on and enhance the teaching of all children in the class.

Task

Your task is to support a teacher working in a class that includes a pupil with SLCN.

It is suggested you do this in one of two ways:

- By observing the teacher in class using a planned observation schedule such as the one included in this unit
- By supporting the teacher in using an observation schedule to audit their own work

The lesson observation/self-audit tool provided is a development of the Pillars of Inclusion

developed for the TDA toolkit on training new teachers on SEN and disability. This unit assumes you are familiar with the resource which can be found here:
http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20111218081624/http://www.tda.gov.uk/teacher/developing-career/sen-and-disability/sen-training-resources/nqt-itt-resources/~media/resources/teacher/sen/induction/e5_nqt_pillars.pdf

It can be used:

- to focus on particular aspects of inclusive practice at particular times
- to focus on a specific area of practice in relation to SLCN that a teacher would benefit from developing, and
- to support discussion between a teacher and a colleague about the next steps in learning for a pupil and interventions that may be used to help them

To begin, view the video clip “SLCN-An Intervention” .Use the above checklist as you watch the clip for a second time.

See this clip:

www.education.gov.uk/lamb/slc/observing/intervention-video

You may like to share this activity with the person you have agreed to observe as this will help you to focus on the relevant areas in the checklist before you begin the observation.

The following steps may help you decide how to plan. You may wish to change the order of activities, for example checking 3 and 4 before sitting down for the discussion.

1. Sit down with your colleague and explain that you are working in partnership to consider issues of concern about the pupil with SLCN’s learning and participation in class.
2. Work with the teacher to set down a brief statement of their perspective on the issues, clarifying where necessary and always seeking to reflect their views rather than proposing any instant solutions.
3. Make sure that s/he is aware of any information the school has about the student’s learning and communication including centrally held files, IEPs, reports from SLTs etc. as well as any specific recommendations about how to remove barriers for the individual’s communication in the classroom.
4. Check the planning approach the teacher is using, including their preparation of questioning for any pupils with SLCN and the joint approaches they are using with any additional adults in the classroom.

5. Agree objectives for the observation/self audit. These are likely to include observations of the levels of pupil attention and engagement and the teacher's communication approach.
6. Decide which sections of the observation/self audit tool you will use. You can of course use all of them. If you do, or agree your colleague will do so, keep the notes on each one short. You will certainly end with a sketch of how overall communication-friendly the classroom is, but it may be less helpful to the individual's situation.
7. If you decide to choose fewer sections, for example concentrating on the issues related to the pupil with SLCN that cause concern, notes in the evidence sections can be more substantial. You could design a "tally" sheet to audit frequency and type of strategies used, similar to the example here, based on the lesson plan and the focus you have agreed.
http://thinkingtogether.educ.cam.ac.uk/resources/Teacher_techniques_checklist.pdf
8. If your colleague wishes to audit their own teaching, encourage them to use a range of ways to collect evidence. A TA might help, or another pupil, without being given details of why the audit is taking place, might be briefed to watch for one or two points in the teacher's communication and report back. You might also pass on a useful tip for a teacher's self-audit of vocal communication in their classroom: have a mini audio recorder in a pocket during the lesson. The recording can be played back later and discussed.
9. Agree how the observation will take place, including your introduction to the class and the need to avoid concentrating on any individual pupil. The expectation is that you or the teacher will, by shortly after the end of the lesson, have completed the Evidence from self-audit/observation column.

After the lesson

You may be able to meet with your colleague immediately after the lesson or may prefer to allow some time to elapse so that they can reflect on what took place and begin filling in the fourth column of the chart below. Whenever and wherever this discussion takes place, make sure you have both time and privacy to complete it without interruption.

The discussion has 4 aims:

- To make appropriate notes, particularly including strengths in the teacher's approach to the pupil in the class.
- To make any appropriate notes on the areas covered in the discussion which allow teachers to reflect on their practice.
- To reflect jointly on the objectives of the observation/self audit and consider if they have been achieved.
- To set in place an action plan for the teacher to improve the pupil's learning and

participation in class.

See online resource:

www.education.gov.uk/lamb/slc/observing/post-observation-discussion

The action plan

Whatever form of action plan is used, the following questions should be answered in some way in the plan.

- What do I want to do next to develop my practice with this pupil?
- How will I do this?
- What is my timescale for this to happen?
- How will I know if I have been successful?
- Do I need to involve anyone else in enabling this to happen?
- What will be the date of review [to be agreed between you and your colleague]

Encourage your colleague to pay careful attention to the last two questions

How will I know if I have been successful?

An appropriate response will include setting some at baseline, probably based on the findings of the observation/self-audit and a defined approach to judging the pupil's progress in communication and involvement after a specified time. Perhaps you or another observer could go back into the classroom after a time, to see how things are going. Stress that professional observation over time, whether or not supported by more formal assessments, is likely to be the best approach.

Do I need to involve anyone else in enabling this to happen?

You will probably be in a good position to advise on this. You may feel that:

- the observation suggests that professional advice from outside the school needs to be called upon, for example in the form of an educational psychologist or speech and language therapist
- discussion with parents/ carers is called for, or
- that your colleague needs to broaden their reading or study on SLCN in some way.

Evaluating learning from the Unit

Look back over your learning log and write up your findings and conclusions.

The best time to do this will be when your colleague has completed the action plan and second assessment. You can then include in your write up of the work, any results and thoughts that emerge from your discussions with colleagues and/or the pupil about progress

and note any further actions you need to take with regard to your own professional development to meet the relevant TDA and SLCF criteria specified in the learning outcomes of this unit.