

How to support trainees with workload

Manage time during placements

When trainees are on professional placement they will need to manage their time both in school and outside it efficiently. During an early mentor meeting help your trainee to plan where they will complete university tasks and agree a teaching timetable, a regular mentor meeting time and where to complete PPA. We also recommend that student teachers spend a percentage of the week undertaking professional development activities that are different from teaching their base class. So, if possible set out a range of opportunities for them to gain wider experience across the school in advance.

We help to organise trainees before placement by advising them about time management and asking them to consider;

Time management when you're on your placement

- Organise your time and commitments at home in advance of the placement
- Organise your employment ensuring you notify your employer about placement dates.
- Plan your time in school to make the most of opportunities
- Eat properly
- Get enough sleep
- Organise opportunities to meet family and friends over the weekend
- Prepare some plans in advance and ask for feedback

Supporting trainees to making the best use of PPA time

Understanding and supporting trainee/teacher wellbeing in schools, and enabling trainee/teachers to support themselves, is essential for a sustained healthy learning environment. As part of training teachers Liverpool Hope is committed to supporting our trainees to develop professional workplace strategies, which will enable them to be proactive, professional and maintain a healthy, positive approach to well being.

Teacher wellbeing has been described as involving three core elements (Humes, 2011):

- o Mental and Emotional
- o Physical
- o Social

Teachers need to be able to manage these elements. Taking care of your mental and emotional wellbeing can be hard in a busy school, where you experience the demands of others (pupils and other teachers/leaders). The physical demands of moving and talking all day can take their toll – as can the social requirement to engage with other teachers, pupils and parents, while remaining professional at all times. These personal demands to wellbeing should not be underestimated for teachers, trainees, NQTs or otherwise.

'... happier, motivated teachers may make pupils feel happier, motivated and more confident. Happier teachers may also be able to concentrate better on the job of teaching.' (Briner and Drewberry, 2007, p. 4)

Below are just a few suggestions that demonstrate ways in which you can help yourself as a trainee teacher on Placement.

Guidance for the effective use of Planning, Preparation and Assessment (PPA) time

All trainee teachers are required to have 20% of their week as focussed and **protected** PPA time. Building this into your weekly timetable before your teaching begins is essential and will ensure this valuable time is appropriately used. You will need to follow respectfully school policy about when and how your PPA time is taken.

Consider these prompts before and during your PPA time in school

Be Ready

- This is not the time for you to be observing other lessons around the school - this is your PROTECTED PPA time.
- Where is the best place for your PPA time to take place?
- What resources do you need? Computer/laptop, a printer and photocopier? Be prepared to use your own laptop but be aware of confidentiality and GDPR.
- Ask permission for access to websites, photocopier log-ins that you will need to use.
- Will your PPA be at the same time as other trainees in the school so you are able to work together?
- Will your PPA be at the same time as your class teacher or staff from your year group? It's good to be able to talk about planning and assessments with your class teacher/year group team, even if it isn't for the full PPA session.
- Agree your PPA time for each week and ensure that you know the lessons you will be teaching the following week.
- Ensure you know your teaching timetable for the following week.

Helpful Hints

- Start by writing a list of what you would like to get done in that session, even just ticking off a couple of things makes you see how much progress you've made.
- Prioritise the important and urgent tasks.
- Prioritise things that you can't do at home or can't take home (such as pupil's work books or data that contains sensitive information such as tracking/assessments).
- Assessing pupil progress - look at your lesson objective, which children met it and who didn't? (You could RedAmberGreen against pupil names or note those who did not meet or who exceeded the expectations in the evaluation section of planning) Why? What can you now implement to bridge that gap in their learning?
- If you are in EYFS, complete any specific observations that need recording. This will help you to build next steps into your planning for the following week/days.
- Write lesson evaluations directly onto the planning in note form.
- Plan your sequence and lessons collaboratively, if possible.
- Use the school's medium term plans or schemes of work to support your understanding of the sequence of learning or expected outcomes for your year group/class.
- Most importantly talk to your teacher/team about your planning or ideas, take advice and act on feedback regarding lessons and resources.
- Write your lesson plans in bullet points, rather than using a long narrative.
- Identify resources needed for the following week and collect resources together in a box.
- Work as a team when creating or collating resources for teaching sessions. Use what is available in school where appropriate. If you do make your own resources, try to create resources that can be re-used, by making them open ended or by laminating so that you can use them again.

Know when to stop working

When do you stop working on developing teaching resources, lesson plans, etc? As trainee teachers, it can be hard to recognise when you need to stop working. It is great to have high expectations of yourself but sometimes this leads to unnecessary pressure and excessive workload. Learning that there are times when 'good is good enough' and that work has to stop is important to your wellbeing. Savage and Fautley suggest that establishing a balanced approach to work is one of the most important things for a teacher to recognise (Savage and Fautley, 2013).

An example of how you might end up working excessively long hours is lesson planning. You may write your lesson plan and then spend hours refining and honing it, concerned that one element may result in your pupils not progressing. You need to remember that if the evidence base suggests that the tasks in your lesson plan will support student progress then that is good enough. Stop there. Bubb and Earley highlighted the negative impact on children, and on learning, when teacher workload becomes impossible to manage (Bubb and Earley, 2004). Seek guidance from your school mentors if you feel that you are spending too long on particular tasks.

You can also do a great deal to help yourself as a trainee teacher. Understanding what you need to do in your role to maintain a work–life balance that sustains your emotional, physical and social well-being is your responsibility, but there is plenty of support out there to help you reach this understanding. You are not on your own; teaching is a social profession and help is just a conversation away. Resilience does not mean struggling to meet unachievable workload expectations; it is about sustaining your effectiveness as a trainee teacher.

Further Advice

<https://www.teachertoolkit.co.uk/2017/04/17/26-workload-tips/>

Managing Workload: Planning

The following are ideas formulated by our trainees and offers guidance on how to support trainees with their planning.

Tip 1: Know the big-picture

Planning sequences of lessons at the start of your training year is difficult and is certainly not expected, but knowing clearly where the lesson you are trying to plan fits within a broader scheme, or where the learning fits within a broader enquiry, will help you determine the focus and outcomes of your lesson. Think of learning like a roadmap and each lesson like a junction. If you set off on a journey without a clear sense of direction, you will hesitate at each junction and probably make a few wrong turns along the way.

Tip 2: Don't reinvent the wheel!

Many trainees are under the impression that they need to spend hours creating beautifully presented resources or intricate card sorts. Not the case! Focus your time on making sure the important aspects of your lessons are carefully and meticulously planned (outcomes / explanations / questions / transitions). You can have the most on-trend, design-forward resources as you like, but if you've forgotten to plan what questions you're going to ask, or you're too tired to deliver the lesson with energy and enthusiasm, things will quickly unravel and you'll be left feeling demoralised and that your efforts have gone to waste. Use that department worksheet, hand out that textbook IF it does the job you need it to do. Draw on the expertise of your colleagues and their Shared Drives.

Tip 3: What's your why?

Many people will try to help you through your training year by giving you resources, ready-made activities, power-points etc, but this help, whilst well-intentioned is often misguided. Peps McCrea, author of 'Lean Lesson Planning' describes two teaching traps that you could fall into as a result of trying to use other people's planning.

Activity-orientated planning is where you start with activity and try to reverse-engineer the learning objectives. Our Deputy Head describes this as 'pointless busy work' as the emphasis is on shoe-horning the activity in, instead of really determining its purpose.

Coverage-orientated planning is where your planning is focussed on a set of pre-determined learning objectives. Here your effort goes into making sure you cover the required content, rather than focussing on the lesson outcomes.

Starting **with your why** means being absolutely crystal clear on exactly what you want the pupils to know and understand by the end of the lesson (i.e the purpose of the lesson). Breaking this down and thinking carefully about route through the learning will ensure that your lesson has clear purpose throughout and will help you determine how you will assess the success of the lesson and what you will ask pupils to do.

Tip 4: How will you know they 'get it'?

Never neglect to plan the most important aspect of any lesson... the bit where pupils actually demonstrate whether or not they actually get it. Deciding when to move a lesson on, or when to spend a little more time on a particular concept or explanation cannot be determined by the clock or a lesson plan. It can only be decided by you, the teacher, guided by the pupils in front of you. Planning how you will monitor and assess their progress towards your learning objectives is an important aspect of your lesson preparation and will ensure you are pitching your lessons appropriately and creating the right 'pace' for your groups. These points in lessons are often described as 'mini-plenaries', but it is useful to consider them using the analogy of a hinge on which the rest of the lesson hangs. The hinge determines whether the 'door' opens to new learning, or remains closed until everyone in the group is ready to move on. For this, you will need to think hard about activities that will provide you with enough information to make this decision. A simple traffic light, or thumbs up/down/side-ways activity won't provide anything like enough feedback on your pupils' learning. A well-planning multiple choice activity, however, can reveal a lot about how much pupils know and understand. It can help you identify misconceptions and judge pupils' confidence in their learning.

Tip 5: Recaps are your friend

Many teachers feel that every lesson must start with a bang and that somehow pupils need to be tricked into learning by some all-singing-all-dancing, kinaesthetic, movement and discussion activity within the first five minutes. Planning for this sort of activity can soak up hours of potential evening telly time as strung out teachers scour TES resources or twitter for an activity that will probably only account for around 5 minutes of lesson time. And to what end?

A good old-fashioned recap on prior learning activity can prove to be a win-win (actually it's a win-win-win-win) in terms of your planning for several good reasons.

1. First, the **BEST** reason is that it is supported by research as an effective tool to improve long-term memory. Retrieval practice (asking pupils to recall information) and spaced practice (recalling learning a long time after the event) are shown to improve both the storage strength of learning and the recall strength, even if they get some of the answers wrong.
2. You will get a much clearer picture of what your pupils know and understand if you regularly revisit and test their prior learning. You will be able to determine what needs revisiting.
3. You will provide your pupils with the chance to experience success early on in your lesson and you will have opportunities to give praise, thus boosting motivation.

You could preserve even more evening telly-time by asking students to generate the questions for their next lesson recap starter. This would be a good plenary activity and you can select the best questions for your recap.

Planning, like driving, gets easier and more efficient with practice as processes become automatic and your 'brain-space' is freed up to be more creative and flexible. Keep these five principles in mind from the start and you will develop the right habits to ensure your planning and your lessons are purposeful. Further guidance for planning can be found on the partnership hub.

Additional Independent Advice and Guidance

The Education Support Partnership: Education Partnership is a charity set up to support education staff. This offer an additional support service to the Trusts wellbeing fully funded support offer. Their vision is to ensure that Educational staff are resilient and empowered to work in their environment. They offer FREE mental health and wellbeing support services to all people working in the education sector. The helpline is available 24/7, 365 days a year. You can learn more at edsupport.org.uk or by calling 0207 697 2750.