

Chapter 6

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Key points

- Talk to whoever will be able to give you advice and guidance on ‘the basics’ during the pre-placement preparation. This could be a teacher at the setting or a student or teacher who has been to the setting previously.
- Find out as much detail as possible about what you will be teaching.
- Focus on what children will learn, rather than what they will do.
- Gather sufficient and relevant resources to make your lessons interesting.
- Make sure you understand the behaviour management policy and other relevant policies, and know what strategies and requirements are expected, and strategies you will use.
- Include in your planning how you will assess the children and how this will inform future planning and practice.

Chapter 6

Case Study

Case Study: David – Traditional

The planning process began every Wednesday during PPA time. We would discuss the topic (if new), areas already covered, areas to be covered and activities that would be suitable. Planning was done as a team, with everybody providing some input and several focus activities were planned for the week. The main focus and independent activities were fed back to the teaching assistants for them to adapt and add their ideas. The teaching assistants then helped to plan for the outdoor activities, as well as the table top activities that would be rotated every two days for two weeks.

All teachers and teaching assistants were very supportive of each other's ideas but also realistic. Often we had a wealth of activities that we could not cover in the proposed week. Once I had been allocated or suggested an activity, I would go away and plan this in further detail. For the activity I would plan an introduction, main and plenary. Sometimes the introduction and plenary was a whole group or whole class process. I would differentiate to three levels, including an SEN section as appropriate. If support staff were involved I would detail what they would be doing and explain this to them before the lesson. For the activity I was expected to cover all sixty children so this would usually take me three days, but sometimes four, to teach. I worked with around six children in a group and after each group I would annotate the activity plan to show different ideas or approaches that evolved during the activity.

Consider:

- What are some of the key factors in planning as part of a team?
- How did David seek to address the needs of all the children?

Case Study: Sally – Special school

Planning within the Special setting was quite scary at first! I felt overwhelmed by the amount of things I had to consider when planning, including the children's Individual Education Plan (IEP) targets, the Pivot or National Curriculum Level they were working at, advice and recommendations from outside agencies such as educational psychologists, physiotherapists, speech and language therapists, the topic being covered within the school at the time and the children's very varied ages and interests.

Prior to planning any activities for the children I decided it was important to meet them and develop an understanding of their specific interests. Although there were significantly fewer children in this setting than in previous mainstream classes I had taught the interests were much more diverse, possibly on account of the range of ages present.

Throughout the placement I was supported by all of the staff. Many of the children's key workers took the time to tell me more about their individual children and some of the teachers discussed things they had tried in the past when covering the same/similar objectives to me. The staff really helped me to consider my objectives and the learning steps I was expecting the children to make, they encouraged me to take one objective and break it down to list all of the things you had to be able to do in order to achieve it.

This was quite an eye opening experience as it made me realise that often there are many small parts to achieving one learning objective. While it was important to have realistic expectations and to ensure that the learning objectives were attainable it was also important that we continued to have high expectations and to challenge the children. Having been through the process of breaking down the learning objective it enabled me to see that although all of the pupils may not always have achieved the end goal they had often made progress towards it which, instead of celebrating, I would have previously overlooked.

Consider:

- How could the learning objective 'to be able to retell a story' be broken down into 'smaller steps'?
- Can you make a list of all the things a child or student would need to be able to do, before they could achieve this objective?

Case Study: David – Traditional

The school had a wide range of resources that were readily accessible. I found that a key part of the planning was to discuss what resources were available. Although this may seem quite basic, planning as a group gave all people the chance to share their ideas, as well as knowledge of the available resources. This proved especially key in locating the resources! The most valuable resource, however, was the ratio of adults to children. This enabled staff to work with smaller groups of children for either support or extension activities.

Consider:

- How will you find out what resources are available in a particular school or setting?
- More specifically, how would you confirm which resources are available for you to use, and which may not be?

Case Study: Sally – Special school

Once I understood the content my lessons were to have I started to formulate ideas for activities and collect resources. Many of the resources were available from the school although some were borrowed from other local 'Special Settings' and, much to my surprise, from mainstream environments. This was an interesting discovery as previously I had viewed 'Special Settings' in isolation and perceived there would be very few similarities between them and mainstream settings. Subsequently I realised that there was actually much common ground between the educational settings and as such mutually beneficial relationships could be formed.

During my time at the Unit I also realised that many things could constitute resources and work well without being expensive or specialised. This was a revelation and made me realise that the pupils I was teaching, despite the diagnostic labels, were essentially just like any other set of children I had taught.

Consider:

- Can you produce a list of resources that would be useful for you when you are preparing for a placement?
- Are there resources that you already have that you could utilize on your placement?

Case Study: David – Traditional

Generally the children were very well behaved although, as can be expected, there were times when certain procedures had to be followed. As I was working in a Unit, the response and expectations of all staff had to be constant. There was a 'time out' chair that was used on the third warning. Children would be asked to think about a question given to them by the teacher. Once they were ready to participate appropriately they could rejoin the group/activity. Afterwards the teacher would ask about their response to the question. This worked very well and was very effective with the majority of the children.

When dealing with any issues I learnt to remain calm but assertive. I often asked the children to talk through what had happened and what did they think I should do. This was a useful way to encourage the children to take responsibility for their own actions. It generally worked well unless a child refused to admit the truth; this then led to consideration of 'telling the truth', and the perception of this for a five year old.

Consider:

- What types of behaviour management strategies could you use on your placement?
- Are there strategies that might be more appropriate in certain settings or situations, compared to others?

Case Study: Carolyn – Art Gallery

I quickly realised that the gallery itself was a key player in managing behaviour. The surroundings so captured the children's interest that they rarely misbehaved at all. In the workshop, free from the confines and restrictions that a classroom desk and chair normally place on a child, they were able to fully engage in the activities. Children appeared to enjoy being able to sprawl out in a space to paint, draw or sculpt in a way that was more comfortable for them, rather than being stuck in the more formal sitting position. The most important thing I learnt about behaviour management during my time at the gallery is that a child who feels both comfortable and interested in the task they are doing does not tend to misbehave. Accompanying teachers often commented how a child who usually misbehaved in school had been surprisingly well-behaved, focused and on task during their trip to the gallery. To me, this confirms that making children comfortable and interested in what they are doing is a superb strategy for managing behaviour.

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Consider:

- Why do you think that Carolyn had few behaviour management issues during her placement?
- Could you apply these factors to other settings and situations?

Case Study: Adelle – America

During my time in both schools in Holland, Michigan the behaviour of the children was excellent. When talking with other students out there on placement the consensus of opinion was one that the majority of the children in school were very well behaved. Through observations there were many factors that contributed to this. The classroom sizes were huge; the children all had plenty of space to work and so weren't cramped on top of each other. The classes were very structured and although lacked the much needed creativity they did give the children a sense of routine and the children were able to expect what was coming next in their curriculum.

The children were also allowed to be children outside on the playground and were given the most fabulous resources I have ever seen in a school playground. Jungle gyms and swing sets as far as the eye could see; the outdoor area was immense. What was refreshing to see was that the children were swinging and jumping without a worried teacher flinching as each child moved, just in case they fell. This enabled the children to really let off steam and challenge their bodies physically when on their playtime. In turn the children came back into class ready to sit down and focus on the task. The staff and children offered each other lots of praise and were proud to highlight their achievements; in turn this contributed to the children's feeling of self worth and so affected their behaviour in a positive way. Through these observations the most important thing I learnt from my time in America was that to gain good behaviour you need to provide the children with structure and challenge, both in the classroom and outside.

Consider:

- Why do you think that Adelle had few behaviour management issues during her placement?
- Could you apply these factors to other settings and situations?

Case Study: Carolyn – Art Gallery

After initially observing and examining what the gallery already had in place, I began to see the potential for using my own teaching expertise to adapt some of the existing workshops. I planned my own re-vamped sessions using the same resources in different ways. I gained the permission of the education officer to deliver these re-vamped sessions to visiting school groups. The first session I planned and delivered was called the Portraits session, aimed at a group of Key Stage 1 children.

The main learning objective for the session was to understand how artists reproduce the face in portrait work. The session was based around the visual stimulus of a sculpture and paintings of portraits displayed in the gallery. First the children would look closely at portrait work produced by artists before having a go at sketching and copying some of the facial features they could see in the artists' work. The children then went into the workshop area where they worked in small groups using their sense of touch to physically explore the size and orientation of their own faces.

This practical approach really helped the children to understand the relative size of facial features in comparison to one another. After exploring their faces kinaesthetically, I then directed the children to create self portraits out of clay. The previous activity meant they could use their finger-thumb measurements of their facial features to get more accurate size and orientation in their clay work. The results were very successful and the children went away with a much broader understanding of portrait work than when they arrived.

Soon after the success of adapting and delivering the Portraits session, a local school contacted the gallery enquiring if they had a workshop suitable for their Year 2 class, focused on the topic 'People Who Help Us' which they were studying in school. At the time the gallery didn't have any such workshops so I volunteered to do a new session which would be more suitable.

Again I focused the session on a visual resource already present in the gallery – a huge landscape painting of Lake Windermere by eighteenth century artist Philippe Jacques De Loutherbourg. The painting is titled 'Windermere in a storm' as it depicts a stormy Lake Windermere with a small boat and its passengers in trouble. The painting shows some figures reaching out to help the passengers to safety. I entitled the session 'Helping Hands' and prompted a discussion with the children about people who might help in such a situation as depicted in the painting. Afterwards the children went to the workshop area where they could choose from a variety of practical, cross-curricular activities relating to the topic Helping Hands. The practical activities covered a range of National Curriculum objectives relating to different subjects including; literacy (speaking, listening and

drama), art (painting, drawing, colour), PSHE (working together) and science (light using the light box and projector). This shows how a single painting can be used to promote a variety of learning experiences across the curriculum.

Consider:

- How did Carolyn's reflection and analysis help to prepare further lessons and activities?
- What impact did this have on learning and teaching?

Case Study: Sally – Special school

During this placement I was expected to assess and record formatively and set targets for pupil learning. Assessment would occur against the learning objectives of the sessions, which often included IEP targets, speech and language therapy targets and other more 'holistic' targets, alongside the more traditional 'academic' targets. The deeper understanding of progression I had developed from breaking down the learning objectives for planning purposes had a huge impact on the way I undertook this assessment. I found that 'objective achieved' or 'not achieved' was no longer sufficient. Instead I found that I was writing more about what the pupils' did and looking for the small steps. Although this was beneficial it was hard to see at a glance where the children were. A member of staff suggested highlighting the children's names on my assessment sheet – green for achieved and exceeded objective, yellow for objective achieved and red for objective not achieved – this gave it immediate visual impact but I also had the smaller steps that children had achieved noted down too.

Before commencing this placement pupils' written work had always formed much of my assessment evidence. However, for some children in this setting, and with hindsight for some children I have taught in mainstream settings, this was not a fair reflection of their progress nor did it sit well with the more practical approach to learning I tried to implement. As such I was a little unsure how I was going to provide evidence of the children's learning. I approached the staff at the unit about it and they were fantastic. They encouraged me to take photographs of the children undertaking the activities, print them off, write the date and the learning objective on them and place them in the pupil's file. Originally I was a little sceptical about my photographic skills and my ability to get round all of the children with the camera and thus the standard of evidence I was collecting but with the support of the other adults in the classroom this method worked really well. The evidence collected also provided something for the children and parents to look at, at a later date.

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I have since applied all of these techniques to my teaching in mainstream and have definitely found assessment easier to manage as a result. Assessment does not have to mean copious amounts of paper work; it is about finding a method that works for you in your setting.

Consider:

- How did Sally collect evidence of the children's and student's learning?
- How did she use this evidence to inform her planning and practice?

Case Study: Carolyn – Art Gallery

Assessment was an element of the placement that I wasn't initially sure how to handle. I was used to assessing children on paper with numbers, percentages and levels. The art gallery didn't really have a place for this kind of assessment. Through observing and participating in workshops I realised that assessment still played a big part in the learning experiences of the children, it just took a less formal form. Questioning and discussion were used to a great extent within the gallery itself. In particular, the use of open questions about pieces of artwork enabled children to give differentiated responses.

It was clear through listening to children's responses that there were a range of levels in their observation, analytical and reflective skills. Open questions allowed children to answer and perform at an appropriate level for them as individuals, while also remaining accessible to all abilities. During practical activities, it was easy to assess children through observation – such as assessing the level of their fine motor control, grasp of colour or sculpting techniques. As the children were always engaged in practical activities it meant there was always a tangible outcome which also helped in terms of assessment. If anything, assessment wasn't made harder in the non-school setting, it was actually made simpler and was appropriate to the type of learning experiences going on. The most important thing I learnt about assessment during the placement is that the form it takes should be appropriate to the task being completed and that questioning, discussion, observation and outcome are all valid forms of assessment.

Consider:

- What strategies did Carolyn use to assess the children's and student's learning?
- Are there alternative strategies that she could also have used during the placement?

Case Study: David – Traditional

Learning through play is an underlying principle of the Early Years Foundation Stage and this was most easily evidenced through summative assessment in the form of observations and photographs. I learnt that a key part of assessment in the Early Years was being able to recognise the skills that are being used and then placing these in the appropriate area of learning. Every term the number of profile points a child had gained in the appropriate area was then entered into a tracking system that collated all of the levels for every child across the school.

It was through assessment that gaps in the curriculum were also identified. For example, if there were very few observations for Physical Development then this would be highlighted and fed back into the next planning meeting. Planning meetings also gave the teachers chance to raise any concerns they might have over the progress of certain children. The main concern was usually that certain children only accessed certain areas available. Ideas and activities were then usually brainstormed that would either engage with the child in a different aspect in their preferred area or entice them away to a different area. If these options failed then a play partner would focus on aiding and encouraging children to do different activities.

Consider:

- How can you keep written records to inform you of the children's progress?
- How would you try to ensure each child accessed all the areas?

Chapter 6

Equipment Checklist

- Appropriate clothing, depending on the weather, climate, conditions, and nature of the placement, which could include:
- Fabric walking boots
- Light clothing (including some with long sleeves as evenings may be cool/cold and insects prevalent)
- Warm clothing (including snow wear), if appropriate
- Waterproof clothing
- Clothes for working in a school or setting
- Casual wear
- Towel and swim wear, as appropriate
- Teaching resources – paper, crayons, pencils, laminated work and pictures, for display or to use as a stimulus
- Journal/notebook and pens
- Deet insect repellent/insect bite cream/spray
- Anti-malarial tablets (as appropriate)
- Sufficient medication (that you normally take)
- Painkillers
- Stomach upset medication
- Basic first aid kit – plasters, bandage, wipes, antiseptic cream etc.
- High factor sun screen/ sun block/ lip sun block/salve
- Sun hat/ sunglasses
- Wet wipes and wash kit
- Toothbrush, toothpaste etc.
- Camera
- Water bottle
- Money/travellers cheques (keep a separate record of numbers)
- Passport and visa (if required)
- Inoculation record
- Proof and details of holiday insurance cover

Chapter 6

Planning Checklist

- Were the learning outcomes appropriate?
- Was there sufficient differentiation?
- Were the resources appropriate?
- Did you allow enough time for the different parts of the lesson?
- Did the children and students gain new knowledge and understanding, or develop a skill, as a result of your planned lesson?
- Did the children enjoy the lesson?
- Did the children achieve the learning outcomes?