

Delivering a micro-teach session

This handout will cover:

- What is a micro-teach session?
- Questions to ask in advance
- Planning
- Preparing
- Delivering (*the beginning, middle and ending*)
- What makes a good session?
- Evaluating your session
- Reading list
- Website list

What is a micro-teach session?

A micro-teach session enables you to demonstrate your skills, knowledge and understanding as a teacher, and to put your new found theory into practice for your chosen subject. This involves planning, preparing, delivering and evaluating a short session which you will deliver to your peer group. If you are currently teaching, it might be possible to deliver a session to your own learners.

The length of your session, date, time, place and topic should be agreed in advance. You will be observed by a teacher or an assessor who will make notes, and who will probably use an observation checklist.

You might be visually recorded, don't be too concerned about this, in fact try and ignore the camera. Viewing the recording in your own time afterwards will help the evaluation process. For example, seeing yourself saying "erm", using a lot of hand gestures, or not using enough eye contact with your learners.

Questions to ask in advance

- How long will my session be?
- When and where will it take place, and at what time?
- Who will observe me and will they (or can I) make a visual recording?
- Will you need to see my session plan in advance?
- What if I change my mind about what I'm going to deliver?
- How should I dress?
- What equipment and resources are available for me to use?
- How many people will I be delivering to?
- Do I need to know their learning preferences or any individual needs?
- Can I find out in advance what prior knowledge and/or experience my learners have of my topic?
- Can I show a video clip? If so, how long can it last?
- What will I need to bring with me, e.g. board markers, clock, pens and paper?
- Will I have time beforehand to set up the area, e.g. move tables, check my resources and equipment?
- Will I have internet access if I need it?

- If I use an electronic presentation, should I email it to you or bring it on a memory stick or card?
- Is there somewhere I can get handouts photocopied in advance?
- Should I start with an icebreaker and ground rules?
- Do I have to explain the housekeeping information, e.g. fire exits and toilets?
- What kind of assessment activities should I use?
- How will I receive feedback afterwards?

You might like to add a few questions of your own.

Planning

You will need to create a session plan in advance with a clear aim (*what you want your learners to achieve*). You should then have SMART objectives (*how your learners will achieve your aim*), for example: describe, explain, list, demonstrate etc.

Specific - are they clearly defined?

Measurable - can they be met by each learner?

Achievable - are they possible?

Relevant – do they relate to the aim?

Time bound - can they be met in the time?

Your plan should show what you expect your learners to achieve and be expressed in a way that will enable you to assess that learning has taken place.

Your plan should have a beginning (*the introduction*), a middle section (*the development*) and an ending (*the summary/conclusion*). These should show a logical progression of learning and assessment. Timings should be allocated to each of the activities you plan to use during each section.

You will be delivering to a group of your peers who will become your *learners* for the session. This might be the first time you have taught a group of people and your peers will probably be very encouraging and supportive.

If you have chosen to deliver a subject you know well, your knowledge should help your confidence. If you are due to deliver after someone else, you will probably be thinking about your own micro-teach session rather than focusing upon theirs. Try not to do this as it may make you more nervous.

Being well prepared and having self-confidence and knowledge of your subject should help alleviate any worries.

Preparing

Once you have your session plan, you will need to design all the activities, handouts, resources, presentations and assessment materials you intend to use. It would help to know in advance something about your learners e.g. any particular needs they may have. You also need to be aware of health and safety aspects, and equality and diversity.

Practise your session in front of friends and family to check your timings. You might find that what you planned to cover in 30 minutes only takes 20. Time will go quickly during your micro-teach session, particularly if you are asked lots of questions. Make sure you have all the necessary equipment, resources and stationery.

You may need to learn how to use something in advance, for example, if you wish to use a computerised presentation during your session and are not familiar with it. You should check all documents for spelling, grammar and punctuation errors, and ensure text and pictures represent all aspects regarding equality and diversity.

If you are delivering a 30 minute session and you plan to show a video for 10 minutes, this will not demonstrate how teaching and learning is taking place. Videos are good for visual learners, but if used, keep them short (if you are able to use them) or you may lose the attention of other learners. All resources used should be fit for purpose.

A clock or a watch in a visible place will help you keep track of time. Try and have a contingency plan in case anything goes wrong, for example, a printed copy of an electronic presentation.

If possible check in advance and/or arrive early to see that everything is available and is working in the room you will be in. You may want to rearrange the area beforehand to suit your subject and to enable everyone to see and hear you.

Time for setting up and clearing away afterwards should be outside of your observed time. You may need two copies of your session plan, one for yourself and one for your observer.

Delivering

Your session should flow logically through the beginning, middle and ending sections. You need to be in control of what is happening and engage your learners throughout. Remember to assess that learning is taking place by referring to the objectives, e.g. by asking your learners to: *describe, explain, list, demonstrate* etc.

You may feel nervous, however, try and imagine you are *playing a role* and this should help your confidence. You are *the teacher* in this situation, you need to be in control and not let any personal issues affect you.

Communication should be appropriate i.e. at a level to suit the topic and learners, not include too much jargon, be at a suitable pace and conveyed in a suitable tone and manner. Non-verbal and body language should be taken into consideration.

If you are organised and have checked the room and equipment in advance, hopefully you won't encounter any problems. Try and relax, but stay focussed and above all enjoy yourself.

What makes a good session?

- Teacher's knowledge, confidence and professionalism
- Passion and enthusiasm to convey the subject
- Setting realistic SMART objectives
- Inclusion of learners e.g. discussing their experiences, involving them in relevant and varied activities, asking questions, giving relevant support and feedback
- Treating learners as individuals

You might like to think of sessions you have attended in the past and what made them good, or not so good.

Beginning

This is the introduction to your session i.e. introduce yourself, your topic and your aim. Before you speak, take a few deep breaths, smile at your learners and use eye contact, this should help you to relax.

Begin by introducing yourself, your aim and the objectives. Don't tell your learners that you are nervous as it probably won't show. Speak a little louder and slower than normal, as being anxious or nervous may make you speak faster. If you feel you are shaking, it is highly likely no one will notice. If your mind suddenly goes blank, take a couple of deep breaths for a few seconds and look at your session plan to help you refocus, it might seem a long time to you but it won't to your learners.

You will need to establish a rapport with your learners and engage and interact with them from the start. Asking the question '*what experience do you have, if any?*' is a good way of involving your learners regarding your topic and helps you to check prior learning.

You might like to carry out a short icebreaker depending upon how much time you have, however, you might not have time to agree any ground rules but you could state that you expect electronic devices to be switched off.

You might like to encourage your learners to ask questions at any time. Try and keep your session plan handy as a prompt, ticking off aspects as you progress.

If you feel you might forget something, use a highlight pen beforehand to mark key words which you can quickly look at.

Use eye contact with all your learners, standing rather than sitting will help your confidence and voice projection.

Keep things simple, don't try to deliver too much material, or expect too much from your learners – your topic may be very new to them.

Middle

This is the development section of your session where teaching and learning takes place. Use a variety of approaches to include and involve all learners and retain motivation. Recap regularly to reinforce points.

Check learning has taken place by using an appropriate assessment method e.g. open questions (who, what, when, where, why and how) or the PPP approach **p**ose a question, **p**ause a little, **p**ick a learner's name. This way, all learners are thinking of the answer before you nominate a name. If you use a learner's name first, everyone else may switch off. Use eye contact with everyone, don't give it away by just looking at the person you want to give an answer. If you have time, have a bank of questions prepared in advance that you can use, one for each member of the group. This ensures everyone is included.

Try and use names when talking to your learners, and if possible ask a question to everyone in the group; don't just focus on a particular learner whom you know can give you the correct answers.

The timing of activities needs to be followed carefully, particularly if you are using group activities. If you do set activities, think what you will be doing whilst your learners are working; moving around the room and observing or asking questions shows you are in control. Do keep an eye on the time, having a clock or watch handy is useful.

If you are running out of time, you need to know what you can cut down on or remove.

Always give feedback when assessing to confirm achievement (or otherwise).

End

This is the summary or conclusion to your session. You need to recap your aim and check your learners have achieved the objectives. A short quiz is a good way to check knowledge if you have time. Ask your learners if they have any questions, however, keep track of time. If your topic was really interesting to your learners, they may have lots of questions. You could tell them that you will continue the discussion at another time, outside of the session.

If you find you have covered everything and have spare time, you could ask each member of the group to state *one significant thing* they feel they have learnt from the session. This is a good way of filling in spare time if necessary, and shows you what each learner has learnt.

You could prepare a handout in advance which summarises your session, and this could be given at the end. If you issue it during the session your learners will look at it and not you. It could include details of relevant text books and websites for further information.

If you are unsure of how to end your session, simply say '*thank you*', this will indicate to your group you have finished. Make sure you leave the area tidy afterwards.

Don't panic!

If you prepare well, your subject knowledge should help your confidence.

It's a learning experience, if you make a mistake, move on and don't draw attention to it, your learners might not know any different, however, don't bluff your way out of anything.

Do get in touch with your observer if you have any questions or concerns.

Evaluating your session

Evaluating your delivery is an important aspect of your learning and development. You should receive verbal feedback from your observer and you might also receive feedback from your peers.

This, plus your own reflections should be used to inform your self-evaluation process. Once you have finished your micro-teach session, you might be so relieved or busy packing away that you don't fully take on board what is being said to you. Listen carefully and ask questions to clarify any points you are unsure of. Try not to interrupt or become defensive when receiving feedback, and don't take anything personally, the feedback will be given to help you improve.

You might think you have done really well, but you may have received some helpful advice during the feedback process which could help you improve further.

Consider all the feedback and accept that it is from the perspective of your observer and the learners in your group. You might think differently, however, your learners were on the receiving end and are best able to comment.

When evaluating yourself, consider your strengths, areas for development and any action and improvements required. This should be about both your *teaching* and *subject* knowledge and skills.

If you have been visually recorded, watch the playback in your own time. You may see things you didn't realise you did which can help your evaluation process.

Hopefully, you enjoyed your micro-teach session and it has confirmed you do want to have a career as a teacher. However, there may be some action points you could set yourself regarding areas for improvement.

Reading list

Duckworth et al (2010) *Successful Teaching Practice in the Lifelong Learning Sector*
Exeter Learning Matters

Duckworth V (2014) *How to be a Brilliant FE Teacher* Oxon Routledge

Gravells A (2014) *The Award in Education and Training (Revised)* London Learning Matters SAGE

Gravells A (2013) *Passing Assessments for the Award in Education and Training* London Learning Matters.

Rogers A & Horrocks N (2010) *Teaching Adults* 4th Edn Maidenhead OU Press

Wallace S (2011) *Teaching, Tutoring and Training in the Lifelong Learning Sector* (4th Edn) Exeter Learning Matters

Wilson L (2014) *Practical Teaching: A Guide to Teaching in the Educational and Training Sector* Andover Cengage Learning

Website list

Giving and receiving feedback -

<http://managementhelp.org/communicationsskills/feedback.htm>

YouTube micro teach video by Ann Gravells -

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hFNkBsJca0c>

The following are websites with software to create fun assessment activities:

www.crossword-compiler.com

<http://hotpot.uvic.ca>

www.mathsnet.net