

# PGCE University Assignment 1: Guidance for Mentors

In this assignment, the student-teacher will observe and analyse pupil learning during a short segment of a lesson taught by an experienced colleague (most likely you).

Importantly, the student-teacher is **not** observing the teacher. The focus should be entirely on a small number of pupils – no more than 4.

Your role in this process comprises four stages:

1. **Before the lesson:** helping the student-teacher select an appropriate segment to observe.
2. **During the lesson:** facilitating the observation process;
3. **After the lesson,** discussing the student's observations and reflections. We have specified one of your weekly meetings to include this discussion;
4. Providing a **very brief written report** on the process, using the format provided.

## Choosing a segment:

We call this segment a 'learning event'. It should last between 15 and 20 minutes, and have a clear beginning, middle and end. The student-teacher will need clear opportunities to look for 'live' evidence of learning taking place. Focussed activities involving pupil talk tend to work best. If possible, we recommend a group or paired task.

## The post-lesson discussion:

The student-teacher will give you a copy of the observation notes, which should form the basis for a discussion about:

- What the student found interesting about what happened
- What was notable about the learning
- How these observations might be understood in terms of the two learning theories the student has been asked to consider

In this discussion, you are not acting as a mentor but as an interested colleague. You should not seek to guide or to correct.

We want this to be a professional dialogue. Encourage your student to talk as freely and openly as possible. Ask questions, and encourage the student to ask questions of you. While it may be tempting to introduce your own interpretation of the events, please refrain from doing so.

You can draw the student's attention to anything you think they missed, and they can note this in the 'Reflections' column. They must not add anything to the 'Observations' column after the event.

### **Your written report:**

After the discussion, please supply a short commentary in the space provided. In addition to confirming that the student's notes are a fair reflection of what actually happened, your comments can cover:

- The accuracy and detail of the student's verbal account
- The depth of thought and insight demonstrated
- Responsiveness to your questions/willingness to ask questions
- Any other element of the discussion on which you would like to comment.

You are not assessing the student directly, but providing evidence for the assessor, who will draw on:

- The student's observation notes
- Your comments on this discussion
- The student's written critical reflection

## **FAQs**

- **Do I need to read and understand the full brief for this assignment?**

*No. Everything you need is included in this document. However, if you are interested in knowing more, the student-teacher can share the full documentation with you.*

- **How well do I need to know the learning theories underlying this work?**

*You do not need to understand them at all! The student-teacher should be able to articulate them clearly in the post-lesson discussion. You are not required to assess what they say for accuracy.*

*If you **are** fluent in theory, it is important that you do not try to lead the student-teacher's thinking. If you are interested in the theoretical element of the assignment, you are welcome to read the material in the guidance and appendices.*

- **What else should the student-teacher do during the lesson?**

*Nothing! The student teacher should only observe. Once the observation is over, they should withdraw from the lesson.*

- **How will my written report contribute to the mark? Can what I say cause the student-teacher to fail?**

*All marks come from the reflective written assignment, but the documentation you provide is essential. Your report and the observation notes form a record of the learning event, observation and discussion. You are not assessing the student but providing evidence – it is then up to the student-teacher to ensure that their assignment is consistent with the evidence you provide.*