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KOSOVAN PEER LED QUALITY ASSURANCE MODEL

# A PRACTICAL GUIDE TO IMPROVING PEDAGOGICAL PRACTICE IN THE CLASSROOM

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"Support to basic and upper secondary education" Project



# Introduction

This booklet is designed to help educational professionals identify poor pedagogical practice and give practical advice on how to improve it.

The advice in this booklet is based on proven academic research. However, as this is a practical guide it will not quote academic sources.

The bibliography at the end of the booklet contains the academic sources that underpin the advice in this booklet.

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# Glossary

**Acknowledgement Marking** is when a teacher uses ticks, simple marks or corrections (10/10), a stamp and/or brief attainment-based comments.

**Differentiating content** means using various delivery formats such as video, texts, lectures, or audio.

**Differentiating by product** means teachers assess the same knowledge or skill for each student but they offer their students a variety of ways to demonstrate their knowledge (e.g., video, written report).

**Differentiating by process**, means teachers teach the same concept or skill to each student but they vary the manner in which it is taught. Students might work in pairs or groups, use technology, use objects to help them understand a concept.

**Differentiating the learning environment** means the teacher makes changes to either the physical environment or the atmosphere the students work in.

**Feedback** can be written or oral. It is information given by the teacher to the learner about their performance. (Giving students a grade e.g., 1,2,3,4,5 is not feedback).

**Formative assessments:** are used to inform the teaching and learning process. They identify misconceptions, and gaps in learning, and they improve teaching as well as the learning. *For example: quizzes, in class reflections, use of hinge question, surveys, low stakes group work.*

**Long-cycle formative assessment:** Student attainment is monitored across teaching units. The cycle might be 4 weeks to 1 year. Data is used to align the curriculum, monitor teaching of the curriculum and monitor student achievement over a longer period of time. *For Example: An end of term assessment. An end of year assessment.*

**Medium-cycle formative assessment:** This takes place at the end of a phase of learning. This takes place every 1 to 4 weeks. *For example: An assessed piece of writing which is the culmination of three weeks of work. A mathematics test after two weeks of teaching about fractions.*

**Short cycle formative assessment:** Another word for this is 'responsive teaching.' This takes place within and between lessons. The teacher responds to data gathered in the lesson and adjusts the teaching accordingly. For example: Hinge questioning, Teacher observation, Quizzes, Answering a question on individual whiteboards or scrap paper.

**A Hinge Question** is a key check for understanding at a point of a lesson that is critical for students to understand. Every student must respond to the question within two minutes. The teacher must be able to collect and interpret the responses from all students in 30 seconds and decide how to proceed with the lesson.

**Metacognition** is about the ways learners monitor and purposefully direct their learning.

**Peer assessment** is when students take responsibility for assessing the work of their peers against set assessment criteria.

**Responsive teaching:** is another way of saying short-cycle formative assessment.

**A rubric** is a guide used to evaluate performance, a product, or a project. It usually includes performance criteria; and a rating scale (Excellent, Good, Satisfactory, Unsatisfactory or 1,2,3,4,5 or A,B,C,D,E)

5	4	3	2	1
Showed a thorough understanding of the task	Showed a comprehensive understanding of the task	Showed a basic understanding of the task	Showed a limited understanding of the task	Did not understand the task.

**Self-assessment:** is when students assess or evaluate themselves. They might assess their actions, their attitude, or their performance.

**Self-regulated learners:** understand and control their learning environment. Self-regulation abilities include goal setting, self-monitoring, and self-instruction.

**Student council:** is a group of students elected by their peers to address issues of concerning student well-being, student interests. It should be part of the decision-making body of a school.

**Success criteria:** is a list of features that a teacher wants the students to include in their work during the course of a lesson. They help students to independently monitor their progress.

## Outstanding professional practice

	Outstanding
Planning	<p>Lesson objectives are clear and related to the topic. The plan clearly evidences individualised learning through the use of activities, differentiation, and assessment strategies.</p> <p>Proposed resources are clearly aligned with lesson objectives.</p> <p>Students are appropriately challenged</p>
Subject Knowledge	<p>Excellent subject knowledge. The teacher adapts academic knowledge to the age and ability of the students. The teacher skillfully connects the subject with practical real life situations.</p>
Students' behaviour and attitude to learning	<p>Very high level of engagement, courtesy, collaboration and cooperation among all students. There is a productive climate for learning in which students feel valued and secure.</p>
	<p>Lesson proceeds without interruption. Behavior management strategies contribute to a consistently positive climate for learning. Students' attitude towards their own learning and the attitude of others' learning is exemplary.</p>



## Outstanding professional practice

	Outstanding
Formative assessment and Feedback	<p>Prior learning is assessed accurately through diagnostic assessments such as hinge questioning and other short cycle formative assessment.</p> <p>Diagnostic assessments are used appropriately. The teacher responds effectively to diagnostic assessments within the lesson and adjusts lesson accordingly.</p>
Teaching strategies	<p>Lesson includes imaginative strategies that challenge students. They encourage critical thinking and creativity. Teaching strategies individualise learning through the differentiation of process content, product and learning environment.</p>
	<p>Questioning systematically probes understanding, identifies misconceptions and anticipates interventions. The teacher response to questioning has a noticeable impact on student learning.</p>
	<p>The teacher manages the lesson excellently. Pace is used appropriately to extend knowledge appropriately and challenge students.</p>
Learning progress	<p>All students show high levels of enthusiasm and interest. They are confident and engaged in the lesson. Students lead the learning and understand the next steps in the learning process.</p>

## Unsatisfactory professional practice

	Unsatisfactory
Planning	Planning and preparation is inadequate, unclear or absent.
Subject Knowledge	Limited knowledge of subject. Or the subject knowledge is inappropriate for the age and ability of the students The teacher makes frequent mistakes about the subject matter being taught.
Students' behaviour and attitude to learning	There is no evidence to demonstrate that there is a positive climate for learning.
Formative assessment and Feedback	Assessment takes little account of prior learning. There is no evidence of diagnostic formative assessment such as hinge questions within the lesson. The teacher does not make any adjustments to teaching and learning.
	Students are given a grade 1,2,3,4,5 without written or oral feedback.
	Students do not self-assess any of their work. They are given a grade 1,2,3,4,5 without feedback

## Unsatisfactory professional practice

	Unsatisfactory
Teaching strategies	No evidence of learning objectives or differentiation. Students all do the same task at the same pace. Activities do not meet individual student needs.
	Teaching is characterised by closed questions to a few students. Diagnostic/ formative assessment questions are not used.
	The lesson lacks pace and results in little student engagement. Students appear to be doing the same task at the same pace.
Learning progress	Students are passive. Teaching fails to engage, enthuse or motivate students.

# Assessment

## Poor assessment practice

Teachers do not respond to what is happening in the class and adapt their teaching.

Teachers deliver presentations without the use of short cycle formative assessment strategies. This results in teachers presenting content that is not presented at the correct level for the students.

## Suggestions to improve assessment practices

Plan **hinge questions** and other **responsive teaching strategies** into lessons.

By doing this the lesson can be adapted in real time to better meet individual student needs.

## Poor assessment practice

Teachers record formative assessment data but do not respond to the data and adjust the lesson as a result.

## Suggestions to improve assessment practice

Respond to the class.

- If the class are not engaged, use an active learning strategy to engage them. (Think pair share is an underused strategy by many teachers.)
- If the lesson is too easy adjust it.
- If the lesson is too difficult adjust it.
- Make sure there are activities in the classroom to challenge students or support them as necessary.

## Poor assessment practice

Teachers do not share **success criteria** with students.

Teachers do not use **rubrics** as a normal part of their professional practice.

Teachers do not regularly ask students to self-assess their work based on clear success criteria or assessment criteria in rubrics.

## Suggestions to improve assessment practices

Student self assessment should be a systemic part of professional practice. Students should regularly assess their own learning based on clear success criteria.

Students should regularly assess assignments and their overall progress through the use of rubrics which clearly describe the next steps in learning.

# Successful assessment practices

Student self-assessment is **systemic**.

Students self-assess **every** assessed piece of work at the end of a phase of learning. Example: Test, Essay, Presentations etc.

Rubrics can help students self-assess more accurately for some subjects.

**All important work is**

- Self assessed
- Peer assessed
- Teacher assessed

# Feedback

## Poor feedback practice

Teachers giving student grades 1,2,3,4,5 without written or oral feedback about what they did well and what they need to do to improve.

Students being given a grade based on teacher opinion instead of clear success criteria.

Labelling students in this way can be humiliating and does not help them identify areas they need to improve.

## Suggestions to improve feedback practice

Never give a student a grade without feedback.

- Devote lesson time to giving oral and written feedback. Oral and written feedback should identify where students need to improve and what the next steps are in the learning journey.
- Use rubrics to make grading more transparent between student and teacher.
- Ask students to self-assess all significant work first. Then ask students to peer assess each others work. Then assess the work as their teacher.

## Poor feedback practice

Teachers give students feedback about every mistake in their work. This can be demotivating to students and takes focus away from their key targets.

## Suggestions to improve feedback practice

Target feedback to key areas based on success criteria and/or students own personal goals.

## Successful feedback practices

Use of rubrics

Rubrics help students:

- Understand expectations and components of an assignment.
- Become self-regulated learners. They become more aware of how they learn and how they can improve.
- Improve their work through targeted and specific feedback

1	2	3	4	5
Showed a thorough understanding of the task	Showed a comprehensive understanding of the task	Showed a basic understanding of the task	Showed a limited understanding of the task	Did not understand the task.

# Planning

## Poor planning practice

Teachers do **not** plan lessons.

Lesson plans narrate the lesson but do not contain learning objectives or references to proven pedagogical practice.

## Suggestions to Improve planning practice

Lesson plans **do not** need to be detailed but they **must** include:

- A clear learning objective and success criteria.
- A variety of pedagogical strategies (over time).
- Short cycle formative assessment strategies. (e.g Hinge questions, diagnostic assessments using mini whiteboards)
- Individualised learning. Lessons should be differentiated by content, process, product and/or learning environment.
- Challenge. Teachers should try to plan a challenge for students in every lesson.

## Poor planning practice

Teachers over plan. Teachers write extremely detailed weekly and daily lesson plans. Plans do not evidence the reality of what is delivered in the classroom. Plans might be copied from a lesson resource without any adaptation.

## Suggestions to improve planning practice

Planning documentation should be practical and easy to use. It should not just be a tick box exercise. The delivery of the lesson plan is more important than the physical document.

Lesson plans from teacher's books or other sources of planning should be adjusted to meet the individual needs of the class. (Written annotation of lesson plan can evidence adaptation.)

## Successful planning practices

Teachers can save time by developing practical plans for a longer period. (For example: a scheme of work that lasts 2 months)

Some lessons might require an individual lesson plan but other lessons may have the same objectives for multiple lessons.

Lesson/s (1 lesson or series of lessons)	Learning objectives /intentions	Possible Teaching and Learning Activities Activities should be adjusted based on formative assessment within lessons. Teachers must respond to the formative assessment data and adapt their lesson to meet the needs of the students.	Success Criteria (How do the students know what they have achieved? Rubrics etc.)	Assessment /Feedback Opportunities (Student self-assessment /Peer assessment/Or al teacher feedback as necessary)
1 Lesson		Starter (warm up activity- not just homework)  Activity (Range of student led and teacher led activities)  Differentiation by content, process, or learning environment  Extra Challenge for students  Learning Check (Formative assessment questions (Hinge questions)? Formative assessment strategies)		
2-5 Lessons		Starter (warm up activity- not just homework)  Activity (Range of student led and teacher led activities)  Differentiation by content, process, or learning environment  Extra Challenge for students  Learning Check (Formative assessment questions (Hinge questions)? Formative assessment strategies)		



# Teaching strategies

## Poor teaching strategies

The whole class doing an activity where the *level of difficulty is the same for each student*.

## Suggestions to improve teaching strategies

Try to individualise the learning. Differentiate lessons by content, product, process or learning environment. (See glossary for descriptions.)

For example:

A maths lesson has 4 tiered exercises which become progressively more difficult (**differentiation by content**.)

Peer tutoring is used within a Maths lesson (**differentiation by process**.)

Some Maths students apply their maths to evaluate a real-life problem. (**Differentiation by product**).

## Poor teaching strategies

Teachers who only ask questions to the three or four students in the class who put their hand up.

## Suggestions to improve teaching strategies

- Use **Think pair share/ Turn to your partner** active learning strategies regularly. Give all students a chance to answer the question before you pick on one student to answer publicly.
- Use whole class **hinge questions** or responsive learning strategies to assess whole class knowledge and give all students an opportunity to answer questions.

## Poor teaching strategies

Teachers showing the class a video or film without the use of active learning strategies or short-cycle formative assessment.

Watching a video is a passive activity.

### Suggestions to improve teaching strategies

- Ask students to take notes which they then compare with a partner.
- Jigsaw notetaking: Ask students to take notes about different parts of the video. The students then come together in a group to make notes about the whole video.
- Turn off the video so students have to listen first without pictures. Then let them watch it with pictures as well.
- Stop the video to ask questions but do not ask 1 or 2 students.

Use **think pair share strategy** to involve all the class.

Ask whole class **hinge questions** to check understanding.

### Poor teaching strategies

Teachers ask students to research a subject using the internet without any guidance or preparation.

- Lesson time is wasted.
- Students access sites which are not accessible due to language barriers.
- This is a passive activity.

### Poor teaching strategies

Teachers use collaborative and active learning strategies which are not related to the learning objective.

### Suggestions to improve teaching strategies

It is important for teachers to use active learning strategies in every lesson. However, if the active and collaborative learning strategies are not linked to a clear lesson objective they are less likely to raise student attainment.

### Suggestions to improve teaching strategies

- Teachers need to search for appropriate sites to be shared with students.
- The research activity should have a clear objective and clear success criteria.
- Teachers should pause research activity at intervals to encourage reflection about the learning and formatively assess how students are progressing.
- Teachers can break up the lesson with active learning strategies like think pair share.
- Teachers can ask students to reflect on their work at different intervals.
- Teachers give students a rubric that assesses their research and notetaking ability.

### Successful teaching strategies

- Students are given meaningful choices about what they learn and how they learn.
  - Alone, in a pair, in a group.
  - Some students do not work well collaboratively and might prefer to work alone.
- Students regularly carry out collaborative investigations and problem-solving exercises based on clear success criteria.
  - This success criteria is frequently referred to by the teacher to ensure focus on the learning objective.
- Students are given opportunities to record and present their learning in a variety of ways.
  - Students help each other research the same topic but present their findings in different ways.
- Teachers ensure active learning strategies are used in every lesson.
  - These active learning strategies are linked to clear lesson objectives. (They are not used simply to fill lesson time or to impress lesson observers)
  - The teacher should share the lesson objective with students and if possible they should also explain why they are using the specific teaching strategy.

*For example:*

You are working in groups because.....

The aim of the quiz is to teach you .....

The purpose of this roleplay is.....

I want you to self assess your work so you can...

# Active Learning Strategies

## Think-Pair-Share / Turn to your partner

Teacher poses a question to the group, and each student has a minute or two to think about the question. Then, they turn and discuss with someone sitting next to them before sharing with the whole class.

## Pause procedure

When teachers lecture, share videos, present information, they should 'pause' for two to five minutes.

During the pause teachers encourage students to share their notes in pairs.

Teachers give students a chance to talk about what they have learnt.

Teachers allow students to rework their notes or ask any questions they may have

## Peer tutoring

Peer tutoring includes a range of approaches in which learners work in pairs or small groups to provide each other with teaching support, such as:

Fixed role, cross-ability tutoring in which one learner takes the tutoring role and is paired with a tutee or tutees, who are often younger.

Reciprocal role tutoring, in which learners alternate between the role of tutor and tutee.

The learners take on responsibility for aspects of teaching and for evaluating their success.

## Group Share

Similar to think pair share but students are in groups of four. They discuss with someone sitting next to them before sharing with the whole class.

## Roleplays

Students take on roles which they act out.

This activity differentiates learning by process.

This activity can give less confident students the opportunity to express themselves as they are pretending to be another character.

## Problem-based learning

Students are engaged in solving a problematic situation.

The problem should be part of their world and feel authentic for them.

First students identify a problematic scenario.

Then students look for a solution

Then students present their solutions.

Then students are assessed and reflect upon their assessment.

### Self-assessment activities

Students should be taught to self-assess all their work based on clear criteria before being assessed by the teacher.

There is overwhelming evidence that teaching students self regulated learning strategies has a significant impact on student outcomes.

Giving students a grade (1,2,3,4,5) without enabling a process of self-assessment and target setting is poor pedagogical practice.

### Jigsaw method

Jigsaw is a cooperative learning strategy that enables each student of a "home" group to specialize in one aspect of a topic

Students meet with members from other groups who are assigned the same topic.

After mastering the topic, they return to the "home" group and teach the material to their group members.

# Behaviour Management

## Poor behavior management practices

Students are poorly behaved. They lack enthusiasm for the lesson. Most of the students are not engaged.

Teachers manage classes with negative reinforcement.

Individual students are labelled and only receive negative reinforcement.

Suggestions to improve behaviour management practices:

Use responsive teaching strategies to adjust the teaching and learning to better suit student needs.

Use more student centred learning strategies. Give students more choices in their learning.

Use **positive behaviour management strategies**.

## Successful positive behaviour management strategies

### Behaviour specific praise

Behaviour-specific praise includes a clear reference to the desired behaviour. It is specific to the individual, and it is **positively** phrased.

For example, a teacher who affirms a student's ability to work despite distraction from others, can offer the following affirming comment:

*"Well done, Valbona for staying completely focused on your work."*

### Silent signals (hand gestures etc.)

Teach students to respond to silent signals such as hand gestures and facial expressions.

### Quiet corrections (not public corrections)

Try not to correct students publicly. Spare them from embarrassment by correcting them in a more personal way.

### Signposting expected behaviour

Remind students before activities what behaviour is expected from them. This is particularly important if they are being introduced to an activity they have not done before or if they are in a new environment.

### Establishing clear routines

Routines help students feel secure. It is good practice to establish routines for when students enter the class and routines for when they have finished their work so that no lesson time is wasted.

### Catch students being good

When students are in danger of a negative spiral of behaviour encourage all staff to look for opportunities to praise the student when they have done something positive.

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