

## Planning for challenges: trying something new

### Introduction

As teachers we sometimes think we know the type of activities our learners will enjoy. Sometimes however, we are surprised to discover that techniques we had discounted are actually those best received by learners. During trials of these resources, a teacher was unsure about the suitability of an activity. Despite initial concerns, the teacher used the resource and found that the activity was both highly popular and effective with learners.

A comment from a learner taking part in the trial of the resources:

“I enjoyed the comic strip [storyboard] because I could get involved with it and choose how they acted and what they said.”

**Learner, ISIS Training and Recruitment**

This continuing professional development (CPD) activity can help participants prepare to teach Customer care and use learner activities contained in this resource. It encourages them to reflect on their thoughts, feelings and reactions to teaching Customer care and to identify any potential challenges and explore options to overcome them.

### Learning objectives/outcomes

Participants should be able to:

- identify the benefits of teaching Customer care
- identify any concerns they may have about teaching an aspect of Customer care
- describe options for dealing with identified barriers or challenges
- select a strategy to overcome identified barriers or challenges.

### Resources required

- A copy of **Why is Customer care important?** (included in the **Using the Customer care resources** area)
- Copies of **Sheet 1: Planning for challenges: personal reflections** for each participant
- Copies of **Sheet 2: Continuing professional development (CPD) activity – record and reflections** for each participant
- Copies of **Sheet 3: Supported experiment pro forma** for each participant
- A selection of the Customer care activities
- A whiteboard or flip chart

**Overall indicative timing:** 1 hour 45 minutes.

### **Starting points**

Participants could use this activity as they prepare to teach their first Customer care session, or as a follow on from the first session.

This activity is best used as a facilitated group CPD activity that encourages reflection and discussion. It can also be adapted as a self-study activity. Teachers working alone may find the self-study suggestions at the end of these guidance notes helpful.

### **Suggested approach (facilitated group working)**

#### **Stage 1** (Indicative timing: 15 minutes)

Introduce the session by inviting participants to share their views on the Customer care activities.

Working in groups of four or five, ask participants to discuss:

- why Customer care is important
- the benefits of teaching Customer care
- examples of where Customer care may be successfully applied in their subject or vocational area.

At this stage you are looking for broad responses rather than detailed feedback.

When the discussions appear to be coming to an end, ask each group to share the main points of their discussion with the wider group. Note the responses on the whiteboard or flip chart.

Once you have the responses, review them to see if there are any recurring issues.

- Are the benefits clear?
- Are some aspects of Customer care more or less popular than the others?
- Are there any aspects of Customer care with no examples of how they may be applied in a subject or vocational area?
- Have any common challenges been highlighted?

Close this part of the activity by summarising the feedback and linking it to the information contained in the **Why is Customer care important?** document, which highlights the relevance of the theme.

**Stage 2** (Indicative timing: 15 minutes)

Ask participants to form three groups.

Issue a selection of the Customer care activities to each group. Ask participants to skim-read the descriptions of the activities, then for each group member to select one activity they might be reluctant to use. This could be, for example, an activity involving a technique they are unfamiliar with or have experienced difficulties with in the past.

Remind the group that this activity encourages planning to address teaching challenges, taking calculated risks with new topics, developing confidence with unfamiliar learning activities and exploring different approaches to teaching and learning.

Give each participant a copy of **Sheet 1: Planning for challenges: personal reflections**, and invite them to individually complete the first two boxes of the handout by:

- identifying the Customer care activity
- considering what would need to happen for them to use the activity. (Invite participants to note down any concerns they have regarding using this resource.)

**Stage 3** (Indicative timing: 30 minutes)

Ask participants to form pairs with someone from another group. This will ensure that pairs are exploring different activities.

Tell participants that they will be using learning conversations to support each others' reflection and exploration of issues. In a learning conversation individuals reflect on a given topic, and in this case explore options for overcoming challenges. Their partner uses appropriate questioning techniques to challenge and motivate them, and in this situation, decide on a way forward.

Explain that they will each have time to share their own issues and support their partner with theirs. Allocate 15 minutes per partner, indicating when it is time to exchange roles.

Brief participants as follows.

- Take turns to discuss the selected activity with your partner.
- Partner 1: describe the activity you have selected and why you might be reluctant to use it.
- Partner 2: use active listening skills and open questions to gain further information about why the activity is a concern.
- Both partners explore options to minimise or overcome the concerns.
- After 15 minutes each partner selects one strategy to address their concerns that they will try out at their next Customer care session.

**Stage 4** (Indicative timing: 20 minutes)

In the wider group, ask for volunteers who are willing to share their experience of paired working and give examples of what they have agreed to do. This part of the session will need to be managed carefully so that participants feel confident in sharing their areas of concern with everybody.

You might ask participants the following.

- How did they feel discussing their concerns with colleagues?
- What difficulties did they experience in their respective roles?
- How did it feel when the roles were exchanged?

**Stage 5: Debrief and reflection** (Indicative timing: 10 minutes)

Invite participants to spend some time reflecting on this CPD activity and how they have worked through the issues with colleagues. Prompts to aid reflection might include the following questions.

- Have participants gained a better understanding of the relevance of Customer care?
- Were participants fully able to explore their concerns?
- Did participants have a range of options for dealing with barriers or challenges?
- Did participants select one strategy to try out in their next Customer care session?

Introduce and lead a discussion about the learning approaches used in this session. At this stage you are hoping to draw out the use of learning conversations as an approach to encourage reflection and, in this case, follow-up action.

- Which learning approaches have been modelled in this session?
- How did participants feel during each stage of it?
- What have they learned from their experience?
- How might they use what they have learned with their learners?

**Stage 6: Personal and group action points** (Indicative timing: 15 minutes)

Encourage participants to specify how and when they will follow up on teaching their selected Customer care activity. Ask participants what issues are important for them now? What is the next step towards trying out the Customer care activities with learners?

Participants can reflect on and record what they have learned during the session by completing a CPD record. Your organisation may have its own arrangements for recognising and recording CPD. If it does not, participants can use the form in **Sheet 2: Continuing professional development (CPD) activity – record and reflections**. This can be kept in their professional development portfolios.

Participants may also wish to develop their ideas further by using **Sheet 3: Supported experiment pro forma**. This can be used as the next stage in the planning process and

follow on from **CPD Sheets 1 and 2**. Participants may want to work individually, or continue working in pairs outside of the session.

### **Ideas for extension tasks and for adapting and developing the activity**

This activity could be:

- used to include participants from more than one vocational or departmental group, providing opportunities for teachers to share and listen to different perspectives; for example, the teacher from the Creative arts and media department may offer different solutions to those of the Construction and built environment teacher
- followed up by working with the Subject Learning Coach as part of ongoing and focused teacher support.

#### **Self study**

If you are working on your own, follow the instructions on **CPD Sheet 1.1: Planning for challenges: personal reflections**.

Some suggestions for exploring the issues further are to:

- discuss the issues with a colleague at your next opportunity
- arrange to discuss the issues by telephone with a colleague who does the same job as you in another organisation
- discuss the issues with your organisation's Subject Learning Coach
- write a note in your CPD journal and follow-up after the session.

### **New overarching professional standards for teachers, tutors and trainers in the lifelong learning sector**

You may need to give guidance to participants on how this CPD activity could be used to support development of their skills within the framework of the new overarching professional standards.

The new professional standards can be downloaded from the Lifelong Learning UK (LLUK) website: [www.lifelonglearninguk.org/standards/new\\_prof\\_standards.html](http://www.lifelonglearninguk.org/standards/new_prof_standards.html)

The Institute for Learning website, [www.ifl.ac.uk](http://www.ifl.ac.uk), can provide:

- a description of the CPD process
- a place for teachers to keep a record of their CPD activities and achievements.

The joint Training and Development Agency for Schools/Lifelong Learning UK website, which supports the workforce in delivering Diplomas, can provide an online, interactive training needs analysis for teachers of Diplomas: [www.teach14-19.org](http://www.teach14-19.org)

## **New overarching professional standards for teachers, tutors and trainers in the lifelong learning sector**

Participation in this activity, followed by implementation of new ideas, evaluation of and reflection on the impact of change in teachers' practice, could contribute to a demonstration of the following:

### **BS5 Using a range of learning resources to support learners**

The activity:

- helps participants identify the benefits of teaching cross-curricular themes
- helps participants identify their concerns about teaching cross-curricular themes and using the activities
- helps participants explore options for dealing with identified barriers or challenges
- helps participants select a strategy for overcoming barriers
- provides practice in using new activities for learners
- provides participants with opportunities to evaluate the effectiveness of their own teaching.

## Sheet 1: Planning for challenges: personal reflections

Read through the descriptions of the Customer care activities and identify one that you would have concerns about teaching.

Make a note of the activity title here:

What would need to happen for you to use this activity? Explore all the concerns you have regarding using this resource.

Make a note of your concerns here:

Work with your Subject Learning Coach or other colleagues to consider your concerns and explore some options for overcoming the challenges in using this approach.

Make a note of your options here:

From the options listed above, select one option that you will try. Agree a date with your colleague to reflect on the activity and discuss your findings.

The option I will select is:

I will follow this up with .....on .....

## Sheet 2: Continuing professional development (CPD) activity – record and reflections

**Your name:**

**Date:**

**Title of activity:** CPD Activity 1: Planning for challenges: trying something new

**Learning objectives/outcomes of the activity:**

You will be able to:

- identify the benefits of teaching Customer care
- identify any concerns participants may have about teaching an aspect of Customer care
- describe options for dealing with identified barriers or challenges
- select a strategy to overcome identified barriers or challenges.

### **New overarching professional standards for teachers, tutors and trainers in the lifelong learning sector: Professional value(s) and Domain(s) addressed**

BS5 Using a range of learning resources to support learners

**What I learned from this activity**

**How I will use it to develop my professional practice**

**How I will disseminate/share what I have learned**

**Further, related CPD that I would find useful**

## **Sheet 3: Supported experiment pro forma**

### **Planning**

- What will you try out?
  
- Which group of learners will you try it out with?
  
- What support do you need and from whom?
  
- How will you evaluate your 'experiment' (for example, feedback from learners, self-assessment, peer review and evaluation)?

### **Feedback and evaluation** (based on evidence from Stage 4)

- How did it go?
  
- What have you learned?

### **Next steps**

- What will you do next?