

THE PERFECT LESSON

Revised and Updated

Ofsted

2012
Ofsted
Criteria

Jackie Beere Edited by Ian Gilbert



Praise for *The Perfect Ofsted Lesson*

Wow. What a book! Normally, I put educational reading at the bottom of my to-do list but this held my attention from the front through to the back. I loved the way it was set out in steps, with very useful strategies at each step. The strategies are varied and do work. It has quality educational research behind it but is written in a very accessible style. It is a must for every teacher. The title is such a winner and the content really does deliver what it says on the cover.

**Glen Alexander, Deputy Head Teacher,
Archbishop Ilsley Catholic Technology College**

I found this book to be a super read with practical advice and strategies which all teachers, regardless of where they are in their career, can use in their next lesson.

Jackie demystifies what makes that elusive outstanding lesson for Ofsted into a really positive experience for both students and teachers.

We will certainly be using it as a resource to further develop learning and teaching in our school.

Ranjit Samra, Head of Southam College

A concise practical approach to delivering the perfect Ofsted lesson – the book builds upon the key characteristics of an outstanding lesson, giving practical ideas of how it can be achieved and, more importantly, how this can be demonstrated in a short time to Ofsted inspectors. The format is clear and accessible and gives useful points for debate and discussion amongst teachers. This book is for all teachers whether new to teaching or an experienced practitioner – it acts as an aide memoire for all to reflect on their practice.

Julie Summerfield, Head Teacher of Horndean School

The Perfect Ofsted Lesson picks up all the key Ofsted related points as regards an outstanding lesson. Jackie emphasises right from the off the most important point – it's about the learning! All the other key points are then covered very systematically – the engagement of students, high expectations, higher order questioning, use of assessment to support learning and using resources such as LSAs and lots more. Running through the text is the constant reminder that this can't be pulled out of a hat – it's a process and teachers need to develop and train their students to work in this way.

**Gulshan Kayembe, Education Consultant
and Section 5 Lead School Inspector**

Whether you're being observed or not, you can still aspire to deliver the perfect lesson every time. And *The Perfect Ofsted Lesson* leads teachers through the process of searching for the 'magic ingredient' that will make their lessons outstanding.

The heart of the book comes from the assumption 'that an outstanding lesson isn't marked by what the teacher teaches but what the learner learns'.

Seven simple steps to create the perfect lesson are offered at the start of this guide and are elaborated on in the following chapters. Diagrams, quotes and top tips are featured throughout and make it a useful little book to keep referring back to.

***Leadership Focus* – The magazine of the
Association for all School Leaders**

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Acknowledgements

One day my daughter Carrie asked me to do a workshop at a conference she was producing called 'Facilitating the Perfect Ofsted Lesson'. She couldn't find anyone else who would do it so, of course, I stepped in. I planned a session based on the latest Ofsted criteria that really focused on how to demonstrate progress in learning. I then tried out my idea on my other daughter, who is a teacher in a challenging school, experiencing constant lesson observations. Lucy used this technique with great success. In fact the inspector said, 'You really nailed the progress in learning.' I want to thank my two daughters for their inspiration, love and support.

I also want to thank my publisher Caroline Lenton who had the idea that this could be made into a book, my husband John who has spent many hours checking the book for me and Ian Gilbert who has worked his magic with encouraging and helpful feedback.

I also want to say a special thank you to Bev at Crown House, who is such a pleasure to work with, and Tom for achieving the impossible in a 'little book'.

Introduction

Most of the very best teachers have experienced an unsatisfactory judgement at some time in their careers. Learn from it, and it will work as a positive force in your development. Dwell on it, beat yourself up about it, argue about it, and it could be destructive and very demoralising.

Remember, an observation is only a snapshot of your teaching.

The aim of this book is to make that snapshot look not only outstanding but for it to truly reflect your everyday outstanding teaching.

We all want to do well and impress observers in our lessons. This book is written to help you achieve the very best results you can when an official observer or inspector pays a call. However, the guidance will also help you to develop your teaching techniques and to become the great career teacher you want to be.

The advice is not a prescriptive set of rules, but suggests a model around which you can build your own ideas. Its purpose is to help you deliver a lesson that will demonstrate to any observer that the students in your class are making great

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progress in their learning, under your supervision. ‘Progress’ is the magic ingredient required for ‘outstanding’ lessons.

The advice is easy to apply – no matter what subject you teach or what sort of teacher you are. Many different teachers have successfully implemented the strategies offered here and adapted them to suit their different styles, personalities and classes.

The book begins by offering seven simple steps towards creating the ‘perfect’ lesson. The following chapters then elaborate on these steps, explaining the key ideas within them in more detail. You can read these straightaway or look them up at a later date if needed.

You don’t need the ‘wow’ factor to deliver an excellent lesson but you do need engaged, enthusiastic and determined students who are driven to make progress because they want to learn. You need to be able to nurture this ethos through having very high expectations for all of your students and by using your expertise to enthuse them about new learning.

You also need to be able to accurately measure and respond to the progress they make in your lesson in order to plan the next phase. Your classes have to make a contribution to the value-added results of your school. Therefore your students need to make progress in their lessons. They must move forward with their learning – and *know* they have. And know how they did it – so that they can do it again next time. Equally, if they haven’t made enough progress, they need to know why and how to fix it.

Introduction

In my experience, students and teachers who understand the theory of 'learning to learn' and have nurtured the habits of PLTs (Personal, Learning and Thinking skills) find it is far easier to achieve success. This is because such an understanding requires developing a language with which to discuss and reflect on learning and how it works. With the right vocabulary, students and teachers can talk about how learning has worked and, perhaps more importantly, how it has stalled or floundered and what they have learned from that outcome.

An observer or inspector needs to see a learning environment that is challenging learners to exceed beyond their expectations and feel the tangible excitement of brains making connections to new learning. This will only develop and be evident to observers if the advice offered in this book becomes part of your everyday practice and is demonstrated in the students' books and class discussions and in the classroom dynamics, all of which take time to develop. You will know when you get this right because you will actually wish every day for someone official to walk through the door and see the fantastic learning going on in your classroom!

'When inspectors observe teaching, they observe pupils' learning. Good teaching, which includes high levels of expertise and subject knowledge, with the expectation that pupils will achieve well, enables pupils to acquire knowledge, deepen their understanding, and develop and consolidate skills.'

Ofsted, School inspection handbook (2012a): 33

Chapter 1

The perfect lesson in simple stages: meeting the criteria and delivering progress in learning

‘Schools cannot be judged as ‘outstanding’ for overall effectiveness unless they have ‘outstanding’ teaching’

Ofsted, *The framework for school inspection* (2012b): 5

There is no one, magic formula for the ‘perfect’ lesson but the steps here will give you some ideas on how to develop your own version of the very best learning experiences for your class!

Step 1. Know what they are looking for

How can you make sure that in the brief time an inspector (or other observer) is in your classroom that your lesson ticks enough boxes to impress – and gains that ‘outstanding’ grade?

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Sharing the criteria for success is essential for any learning experience. If you (or your students) do not know what they are expected to strive for, how do you (or they) know they have achieved success? So, with this in mind, the Ofsted 2012 grade descriptors for outstanding teaching are shown below:

Outstanding (1)

- Much of the teaching in all key stages and most subjects is outstanding and never less than consistently good. As a result, almost all pupils currently on roll in the school, including disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs and those for whom the pupil premium provides support, are making rapid and sustained progress.
- All teachers have consistently high expectations of all pupils. They plan and teach lessons that enable pupils to learn exceptionally well across the curriculum.
- Teachers systematically and effectively check pupils' understanding throughout lessons, anticipating where they may need to intervene and doing so with notable impact on the quality of learning.
- The teaching of reading, writing, communication and mathematics is highly effective and cohesively planned and implemented across the curriculum.

- Teachers and other adults generate high levels of engagement and commitment to learning across the whole school.
- Consistently high quality marking and constructive feedback from teachers ensures that pupils make rapid gains.

Teachers use well-judged and often inspirational teaching strategies, including setting appropriate homework that, together with sharply focused and timely support and intervention, match individual needs accurately. Consequently, pupils learn exceptionally well across the curriculum.

Ofsted, *School inspection handbook* (2012a): 35

Inspectors are looking for *typicality* in a school, not the one-off brilliant lesson, so they will check whether what they are seeing is the usual type of learning experience for this teacher, subject, child by looking at books and talking to your students. This is a very good reason to make sure that what you are delivering each and every day is helping children learn ‘exceptionally well’.

5. **Plan your interventions into their group work.** Allow the students themselves, as far as possible, to work through the problems they may have with the task and with group relationships. If you do need to intervene or help, limit the number of questions they can ask you by issuing question cards. Ensure that these questions promote metacognition (thinking about thinking). Encourage the students to find out answers for themselves. Always answer a question with a question. Discuss a solution with one team member and get him or her to teach it to the rest of the group.
6. **Use assessment as learning.** When students complete the tasks assigned they should each:
 - critically appraise the work they have completed;
 - discuss their role in the outcome;
 - say how well they have met the objectives;
 - and, crucially, say what *progress* they have made.

The notes the students make will inform the quality control aspect of the learning outcome. A simple way for students to remember this is that they will need AIMS (Amend, Improve, Measure and Share (peer-assess)). They will need to do this several times during a project before they can become proficient at assessing and demonstrating their learning.

7. **Review and reflection.** When students have been working outside your supervision in a lesson this is your chance to monitor how much they have achieved.

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They can log their skills in independent learning using the first column in the tables above (pages 78–80). How much of this did they do and can they tell you when and where? Can they demonstrate the skill they have acquired or the learning progress they have made? Can they say to each other, on a sticky note or in class discussion, *how* they learned it, motivated themselves, solved problems, worked with others and so on?

This important reflection is in addition to the mini-plenaries or assessment for learning strategies. It is a planned period of metacognition about the whole activity or project that links learning to home, big goals and other subjects. This could entail keeping a learning log or making a presentation to the class about how the learning worked and how their skills in independent learning are developing. Such a performance will enhance their recognition of progress and develop their language for learning. This reflective practice will help them learn from their mistakes and have a critical appreciation of their work, as well as an understanding of what motivates them.

It can take a lifetime to understand how to make the best of our own amazing learning preferences and potential – most of that lifetime journey takes place once we have left school. Why does work teach us so much more about the best way to learn?

Embedding learning skills for life

By using the previous strategies consistently across the curriculum and over time, the students will develop their interpersonal skills, confidence, self-reliance, risk taking and the ability to challenge their own and other's thinking. These are skills which students use without thinking when mastering a new mobile phone, computer game, downloading music, using Facebook or learning a new dance.

The teacher's role is to highlight the *process* of learning in their classrooms and develop a language which describes that process. Teachers must also give students opportunities to own the process for themselves and to reflect on their learning. Independent learning in the classroom, in essence, simply taps into, further reinforces and makes explicit the pre-existing skills and motivation within our students. If we can provide the right stimuli and encourage their commitment to succeed, we will ensure that our students develop real, deep, lasting learning and a set of life skills which will more effectively equip them for the real world. And, oh yes, exam grades will improve too!

'Success in exams is still considered important but is increasingly viewed as the secondary result of excellent learning.'

2010 presentation by Ofsted Inspector Rob Hubbleday
(citing Ofsted 2009)

Chapter 5

Making teamwork work: productive collaborative learning

This chapter focuses on how to ensure that the collaborative work you do with students when being observed is hooked quite firmly into the *progress* in learning that we want to achieve. For many fabulous examples and ideas for group work activity see *The Teacher's Toolkit* by Paul Ginnis.

Use the Personal, Learning and Thinking skills (PLTs) model to ensure that students become aware of the importance of the *explicit* development of thinking skills, subject expertise, subject skills, effective participation in learning conversations, reflective learning and self-managing. These are the employability skills that will create the flexible learners we need in the twenty-first century. Plan your collaborative projects to develop each of the PLTs then use the model in group work to assess how well they have developed the relevant skills.

More Jackie Beere Books ...

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edited by Ian Gilbert ISBN 978-1-78135-000-3

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is designed to help teachers deliver great learning in the classroom, every lesson, every day, whether they are being observed or not.

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Ranjit Samra, Head of Southam College

Jackie Beere is a consultant trainer and School Improvement Partner, having been Headteacher at Champion School, Northants. She spent three years as an Advanced Skills Teacher leading and implementing innovative Teaching and Learning initiatives including KS3 and 4 Learning to Learn and Thinking Skills programmes. In November 2002 Jackie was awarded an OBE for her services to education.

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