



T Level Technical Qualification in Education and Childcare

Occupational specialism assessment (OSA)

Assisting Teaching

Assignment 3 - Distinction

Guide standard exemplification materials

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Introduction

The material within this document relates to the Assisting Teaching Occupational Specialism sample assessment. These exemplification materials are designed to give providers and students an indication of what would be expected for the lowest level of attainment required to achieve a Pass or Distinction grade.

The Examiner commentary is provided to detail the judgements Examiners will undertake when examining the student work. This is not intended to replace the information within the Qualification Specification and providers must refer to this for the content.

Assignment 3 consists of 2 case studies. These outline real-world challenging scenarios, based in the classroom context, which the student must read before producing a rationale for how they would respond to the situation. The student evidence is written work produced under supervised conditions.

After each live assessment series, authentic student evidence will be published with Examiner commentary across the range of achievement.

Case Study 1: Safeguarding and wellbeing

Read the case study below.

Discuss how you would respond to the situation in your role as a Teaching Assistant.

In your response, you should refer to all relevant aspects of the Teaching Assistant role.

In particular you should:

- identify the safeguarding concerns that you may have about Jessica and explain the reasons for your concerns
- explain and justify the actions that you must take to support Jessica's safety and wellbeing
- identify environmental factors in Jessica's life that may be affecting her and analyse how these factors may be contributing to changes in Jessica's behaviour
- describe strategies, activities and types of resources, including any adaptations to activities and resources, you could use to meet Jessica's academic and pastoral needs and justify your reasons for selecting them
- consider ways in which you might work with the Teacher to support Jessica's learning.

Performance outcome 1: 5 marks
Performance outcome 2: 5 marks
Performance outcome 3: 25 marks
Performance outcome 4: 15 marks

[50 marks]

You are a Teaching Assistant working in a secondary school with Year 10 pupils. You have been supporting the same small group of pupils with maths for the past term, providing targeted interventions given by the class Teacher on a range of different topics. The group are currently learning how to construct and interpret bar, pie and vertical line charts. This is a topic that the small group of pupils have been enjoying and showing good progress in.

You have noticed that one of the girls in the group, Jessica, has missed several lessons and is often late when she does attend. During the first few weeks of the term, Jessica had always been on time and participated well in lessons. Recently, she has become increasingly withdrawn, is much quieter within the group and is not interacting with her peers. Jessica has not completed the homework tasks that have been set this half-term. She is less engaged in the lessons, which is having an impact on her learning and achievement.

You have also noticed that Jessica is more isolated outside of the classroom and is spending break and lunchtimes alone, rather than eating with the other pupils in the canteen. The other pupils have tried to include Jessica during school break times and in social activities outside of school, but Jessica refuses to socialise or attend any organised activities.

Student evidence

Safeguarding concerns about Jessica explaining the reasons for concern

Jessica is in year 10 and this means that she will probably be 14 years of age. It is important to be mindful of any personal circumstances that may impact Jessica and information can be given by the class Teacher. The class Teacher will need to safeguard Jessica and there may be sensitive information that has been shared with parents/carers and other colleagues.

I will also be able to learn by watching Jessica with her classmates in social situations and be able to watch for any significant changes. Of course at this life stage there may be biological and environmental factors impacting her disposition to teaching and learning, for example her changing physical development during the life stage.

Puberty may be impacting how she is feeling and this may contribute to a low self-esteem as she struggles to take some control over her life, this will likely be further impacted if Jessica is struggling with confidence, self-esteem and self-worth. This may be impacted by abuse/bullying and social media misuse.

Jessica is vulnerable at this life stage and there may be some deviance and also emerging mental health concerns such as self-harming or eating disorders. The changes that are occurring biologically and hormonal changes may also impact how Jessica interacts with her environment. Jessica may well have additional needs that require further discussion with the class Teacher. It is important to be aware of the effects from biological and external factors on a young person's development.

Environmental factors identified and analysed

Social relationships:

- Her relationships with her immediate and extended family members: any changes to family dynamics can affect Jessica and she may not be able to cope with any changes that are happening in her family life. Peer relationships are incredibly significant at this age. I would need to consider peer pressure and also think about how Jessica is interacting with her peers.
- Marital issues for parents/carers including breakdown in relationships will result in changes of family dynamics or changes to housing, caring responsibilities and financial security. This could all mean Jessica may be overwhelmed, frightened or confused. Jessica will find the transition of puberty difficult to cope with as well as any concerns that arise from unplanned transition which may well become overwhelming for her.

Transition is a challenging event and this will need careful and skillful support to ensure that Jessica is given all the support she needs to feel in control of what is happening and that she is surrounded by people she can trust and communicate openly with about how she may be feeling and the choices that she may have. It is important to recognise that Jessica may be feeling left out of peer groups or even worse not being included and this will make Jessica feel lonely, isolated and vulnerable.

Explain and justify the actions you must take to safeguard Jessica in this situation, including ways you could work with the Teacher to support Jessica's learning

This may also of course be a serious safeguarding issue (Working Together to Safeguard Children, 2019) and there will be a safeguarding policy and procedures as well as members of staff specifically trained to act upon concerns in relation to the welfare of pupils at the school and any concerns should be shared appropriately with this person. As a Teaching Assistant I know from induction what action I would take, the boundaries and limits of my role and ways I can keep myself safe too. For example I must not use social media to communicate or share any information about school, I must not share any information about children and their families outside of the setting but I must report any concerns to my class Teacher and never work alone with the children.

There is a lot to remember but keeping children and young people safe is an essential aspect of the work of a Teaching Assistant. Being aware of developmental stages and expectations is also crucial when working with children. It is then that you can think of reasons why behaviour might be challenging at certain times, why children may feel overwhelmed, frustrated or even become uncharacteristically shy. Respecting these difficult challenges helps me to appreciate the role of the class Teacher and the difficulties associated with engagement too. If Jessica needed skillful intervention from external support there are Mental Health First Aiders at the school who would support her there is also a Pastoral Head who will work hard to build professional relationships with each child.

The first thing to do is to make sure that the class Teacher is aware of the situation and my findings regarding Jessica. There are steps that need to be taken and these may include:

Monitor Jessica's behaviour and track attendance looking for a pattern. However do not allow this to go on without intervention as I have a legal duty to keep Jessica safe, healthy and well, (Working Together to Safeguard Children, 2019).

There will be a safeguarding policy at the school and this must be followed to keep children safe, healthy and well. Jessica may need to be seen by the Safeguarding and Welfare Representative or the Mental Health First Aider at the school. Jessica should be able to talk to her class Teacher. Making an appointment to calmly discuss her academic situation and that she may start to fall behind is also very important here and may encourage Jessica to open up about why she is not able to complete her work or why she is often late arriving to class. It will be important not to make any promises and to be mindful of the significance of confidentiality, records and reports. Depending on the situation other professionals may become involved and partnership working initiated.

Suggest strategies you could implement to meet Jessica's academic and pastoral needs

Make sure that all records and reports from across the curriculum staff are up to date so that a full student profile can be produced for Jessica. Then, as already discussed, arrange for a one to one tutorial. Calmly explain the situation Jessica is in with her studies and how falling behind at the beginning of her Key Stage 4 year may seriously impact her achievements at GCSE.

Talk to Jessica about her future aspirations and develop strategies, action plans and next step recommendations to support her to get back on track. It may be useful to involve other professionals as appropriate, such as a Counsellor, Social Worker, Mental Health First Aider or Doctor/Nurse, Learning Support Coach.

Agree to meet with Jessica at least once a week, making action plans manageable, straightforward and realistic. Other professionals involved should meet with staff at the school to ensure consistency and best practice for positive outcomes.

It may not be appropriate to involve parents/carers depending on any disclosures, but wherever possible parental engagement should be initiated, this may require professional support depending on the situation. Jessica's voice must be central to any conversations held and she must be included in any decision making as appropriate, supporting Jessica to have all the information she needs to be able to make informed choice, both from a pastoral and academic point of view.

Jessica would benefit from ongoing support, perhaps a mentoring system or encouragement to contribute to a mentoring/buddy system herself. It is important to build self-esteem and self-worth for Jessica so that she does not fall behind in her learning.

Recognising the effects on holistic development is needed and also being aware of strategies that Jessica can use to support herself. Teaching and learning should be monitored and adapted in the short term, perhaps with careful consideration by the class Teacher to ensure Jessica stays on track with her learning.

Communication is key to maintaining such a connection here. The professionals that support Jessica will be able to help her to apply self-help strategies and cope with any overwhelming feelings and experiences. Dealing with safeguarding issues is unfortunately something that may be experienced when working in a teaching and learning environment and as such it is important that the staff are also able to seek support from others, including supervision.

Case Study 2: Learning and development

Read the case study below, and the practitioner observations in the insert.

Discuss how you would respond to the situation in your role as a Teaching Assistant.

In your response, you should refer to all relevant aspects of the Teaching Assistant role.

In particular you should:

- discuss and explain the possible contributing reasons for Josh's behaviour, taking into account his age and stage of development
- explain and justify approaches you might take to manage Josh's behaviour, considering inclusive practice and meeting his individual needs
- discuss how you might work with parents and other professionals and analyse the benefits of working with others.
- evaluate a range of activities and resources, including any adaptations to those activities and resources, you could use in your teaching and learning to support Josh to effectively access the curriculum.

Performance outcome 2: 20 marks
Performance outcome 3: 10 marks
Performance outcome 4: 20 marks

[50 marks]

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You are working as a Teaching Assistant in a primary school at the start of the Autumn term within a Year 1 class.

In your school, the Reception Teachers and Teaching Assistants work closely with those in Year 1 to support the pupils' transition between the EYFS and Key Stage 1. You have been asked to work with one of the Year 1 boys, Josh, on a one-to-one basis. To support you in your role, you have been given his EYFS learner profile and the practitioner observations that were undertaken at the end of the previous term when Josh was in Reception.

You have observed that in class Josh does not manage change well and can become easily upset if regular classroom routines are disrupted. He has difficulty separating from his childminder in the mornings and will often go and put his coat on in the middle of the day.

The Teacher has asked you to prepare for a meeting with the SENDCo and Josh's parents. The aim of the meeting is to plan how to meet Josh's individual needs and minimise potential barriers to his learning going forward.

Your meeting preparation should be based on the information you have available.

Student evidence

Discuss and explain the possible contributing reasons for Josh's behaviour, taking into account his age and stage of development

Discuss how you might work with parents and other professionals and analyse the benefits of working with others

The possible reasons for Josh's current behaviours: Josh may be struggling with the transition. For example Josh deals with leaving his parents to be with a childminder at the start of the day and now he has moved from the familiarity of Reception to Key Stage 1. The transition is difficult and the play based learning of Reception is replaced with a more formal pedagogy.

There may have been changes to family dynamics such as a new baby and this can lead to developmental regression, including behavioural. Josh may be unhappy in the class, it is difficult to develop new relationships quickly and Josh maybe missing the comfort of his Reception Teacher. Josh may not be coping with the requirements of Key Stage 1 learning and missing the child directed play based pedagogy of the early years.

Josh may have more serious needs beyond this and careful observation will support any thoughts here, early intervention is essential to minimise the disruption to Josh's holistic health and wellbeing. Josh may have underlying concerns that I, as the Teaching Assistant would need to seek advice about. By speaking to the class Teacher and with their permission, to parents/carers and reading through a profile from his previous setting may help, as well as reflecting on how the Josh has been prepared for school and how procedures in the school may be improved through closer collaboration with parents/carers and other professionals, especially his previous setting and his childminder too.

Having an understanding of developmental stages and expectations is important, it could be that we expect too much from Josh too soon and he may just need time and skilled intervention to support his transition. He may be experiencing multiple transitions and to support his mental health both now and for the future, (adverse childhood experiences) it is important to give him the care he needs. If there are things that would help Josh to settle they may be easy to put into place. Also it may be appropriate to encourage parental involvement to support transition.

It is also relevant to find out about Josh's age and personal circumstance. Josh may be a young pupil in Key Stage 1 and research tells us that pupils may typically struggle to cope with transition to school. The quality of the nursery experiences may also be relevant. The meeting with the SENDCo will initiate closer scrutiny of Josh and his learning needs and by working with the parents Josh's support will be consistent. Early intervention will help to determine Josh's needs early on and through a graduated approach Josh will receive any additional support he requires through a carefully monitored action plan. There will be policies and processes for special educational needs and teaching and learning that can be followed to ensure Josh is educated according to his needs.

Explain and justify approaches you might take to manage Josh's behaviour

As a Teaching Assistant I could work with Josh one to one. This would give me the opportunity to offer reassurance, observe, monitor and support as well as build a positive relationship with him, providing the attachment he may be seeking during this transition and/or as a result of any additional need he may have. At the early years setting children are required to have a key person and they are typically working with a small group of young children.

The work of Bowlby in the 1950s reminds us about the importance of attachment and the need to feel secure. Rutter, building on the work of Bowlby, was keen to stress complexities of multiple attachments and how this can be confusing for children as there are different rules and social situations and children can quickly become overwhelmed. It would be useful for the class Teacher to liaise with parents/carers and other professionals, including the Health Visitor, Reception Teacher and childminder to learn more about Josh and if there are any underlying concerns-are they concerned at all? Is Josh seeing any other professionals? Is Josh behaving out of character at home? Are there signs of regression in other areas such as bed time routines?

If the class Teacher can share this type of information, it will be helpful in supporting him more effectively in the classroom. The close one to one with the Teaching Assistant should help to support positive behaviour that is less disruptive to the teaching and learning environment. Policies and procedures involving behaviour will be available in the school, it is important though to manage policies for Special Educational Needs with Behaviour policies to ensure the child's stage of development and level of understanding is being appreciated. Josh may not be able to manage his feelings easily and this may be associated with his own health, development and wellbeing.

Consistency in expectations around behaviour both at home and amongst staff in the school is important to support Josh. Action plans and rewards systems must be monitored regularly and reviewed accordingly to ensure they are effective. Positive reinforcement, such as that discussed by Skinner, uses praise and encouragement to motivate and inspire children. Whilst this may require time and commitment to consistency, as well as being prepared to review and find strategies that work, it is the most influential strategy to support child-centered approaches.

Evaluate a range of activities and resources you could use in order to support Josh to effectively access the curriculum

Discuss how you might work with parents and other professionals and analyse the benefits of working with others

The Teaching Assistant could work one to one to build a relationship with Josh and help him to settle. Activities should be arranged in small groups so that Josh can contribute and participate, being actively encouraged by his Teaching Assistant. Josh's interests should be sought and strategies developed to include these interests in experiences planned. Josh will be best supported if all of those involved in his care are working together so that he enjoys stability from consistent approaches to education and care, this may be especially relevant in relation to behaviour.

Share thoughts with the class Teacher and other staff members across the curriculum as appropriate. Josh may find practical resources made available during activities will help to engage and motivate him, for example introducing small cubes for maths or props to inspire at story time will all help to stimulate Josh's curiosity and motivation.

I would look carefully at the observations and the profile records that Josh has received at his previous setting and these coupled with new observations taken at different times of the school day will help me to identify any interests that Josh has and the different experiences that have been enjoyed by Josh. Whilst settling in is not without challenges and transition is accepted as a difficult time that can interrupt holistic development, it is equally important to support the child as effectively as possible so that he can engage with the curriculum with his peers and contribute to learning.

If there is no improvement in how Josh is settling and other personal circumstances do not cause concern the SENDCo may well be able to suggest strategies through a graduated approach. Through a graduated approach Josh would be supported by a range of professionals such as an Educational Psychologist who may be able to work with the child, the school and the family to help Josh. Other professionals such as a Health Visitor may also be able to work as part of a multi-disciplinary team and in particular as a liaison with the family should this become necessary.

Any activities should be built on Josh's interests and offer process led experiences such as practical activities and experiences that Josh will find familiar. In this way he may begin to make friends and express his feelings. Play has been an important element of his day and it is important that children feel able to engage with learning through first hands on experiences.

Examiner commentary

Case Study 1

The evidence offers a precise, logical and detailed informative response to the demands of the brief. The student makes extensive use of relevant knowledge of the practices of the sector and demonstrates an in-depth understanding of the ways to work effectively with others for the best outcome for the pupil as identified in this situation. The student makes decisive use of facts, approaches and concepts, demonstrating extensive breadth and depth of knowledge and understanding, and selects highly appropriate skill and technique in context. The student makes well-founded judgements, offers well-reasoned appropriate action and is able to use that to reflect on real life situations in the sector using their knowledge to analyse and find suitable solutions to the concerns raised.

For example, the response begins with a useful summary of Jessica's situation and builds from this when analysing potential factors relevant to this situation. The response demonstrates an in-depth, well-informed understanding of potential biological and environmental influence, such as the physical effect of puberty and the environmental impact of transition to holistic health and wellbeing, applying knowledge and understanding to explain how such factors may add to Jessica's vulnerability. Deeper engagement with safeguarding is demonstrated with clear recognition of the importance of relevant and timely intervention and partnership working. In the student's response, it is also good to read about the student's recognition of the impact of safeguarding related concerns on the practitioner, as demonstrated through the acknowledgement of supervision.

This is a very well written piece of work, which looks at the pupil's needs from a wide range of relevant and appropriate perspectives. The student is able to comprehensively identify information from a range of suitable sources, including guidance to support well-informed, coherent decision making in appreciation of the case study.

Case Study 2

The evidence is presented in a logical and coherent way to provide a detailed and informative response to the demands of the brief.

The student makes decisive use of theories, approaches and concepts, demonstrating extensive breadth and depth of knowledge and understanding. For example, there is an appreciation of the impact of transition with in-depth, well-informed analysis of Bowlby and Rutter in context.

The response makes use of well-founded judgement to reflect on real life situations in the sector, for example to draw conclusions, problem-solve and analyse information to find suitable solutions to the concerns identified in the case study. This is evidenced through solutions based reasoning and action planning; including liaising with Josh's previous setting to share observational records, as well as his parents/carers and childminder.

The student makes well-founded judgements to make coherent decisions and is able to use that to reflect on real life situations in the sector. The response demonstrates an extensive understanding of how intervention can promote Josh's wellbeing, including effective and consistent approaches, the significance of building professional relationships and guidance that can be sought from the SENDCo.

Overall grade descriptors

The performance outcomes form the basis of the overall grade descriptors for Pass and Distinction grades.

These grade descriptors have been developed to reflect the appropriate level of demand for students of other level 3 qualifications, the threshold competence requirements of the role and validated with employers within the sector to describe achievement appropriate to the role.

Occupational Specialism overall grade descriptors:

Pass

The evidence is logical, but displays baseline knowledge in response to the demands of the brief.

The student makes some use of relevant knowledge and understanding of how it informs practices of the sector and demonstrates a baseline understanding of perspectives or approaches.

The student makes acceptable use of facts/theories/approaches/concepts and attempts to demonstrate breadth and depth of knowledge and understanding.

The student is able to identify information from appropriate sources and makes use of appropriate information/appraises relevancy of information and can combine information to make decisions.

The student makes judgements/takes appropriate action/seek clarification with guidance and is able to make progress towards solving non-routine problems in real life situations.

The student demonstrates skills and knowledge of the relevant concepts and techniques reflected in the sector and generally applies across different contexts.

The student shows adequate understanding of unstructured problems that have not been seen before, using limited knowledge to find solutions to problems and make justification for strategies for solving problems, explaining their reasoning.

EYE only – demonstrates achievement of all EYE criteria.

Distinction

The evidence is precise, logical and provides a detailed and informative response to the demands of the brief.

The student makes extensive use of relevant knowledge, has extensive understanding of the practices of the sector and demonstrates an understanding of the different perspectives/approaches.

The student makes decisive use of facts/theories/approaches/concepts, demonstrating extensive breadth and depth of knowledge and understanding, and selects highly appropriate skills/techniques/methods.

The student is able to comprehensively identify information from a range of suitable sources and makes exceptional use of appropriate information/appraises relevancy of information and can combine information to make coherent decisions.

The student makes well-founded judgements/takes appropriate action/seek clarification and guidance and is able to use that to reflect on real life situations in the sector.

The student demonstrates extensive knowledge of relevant concepts and techniques reflected in the sector, precisely applies this across a variety of contexts and tackles unstructured problems that have not been seen before, using their knowledge to analyse and find suitable solutions to the problems.

Document information

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Owner: Head of Assessment Design

Change History Record

Version	Description of change	Approval	Date of Issue
v3.1	Published draft version		August 2020
v4.0	Published final version		01 September 2020
v5.0	T Level branding updated		December 2020
v5.1	Version, branding and formatting final updates		March 2021
v5.2	NCFE rebrand.		September 2021
v5.3	Changes made to align with sample materials	January 2022	February 2022