



**University of Brighton**

## KEY SKILLS FOR ITE

### How to set effective targets and actions for trainee teachers

#### Our approach

Our ITE courses all begin with pre-set targets and actions that have been carefully sequenced and designed as part of our SBT curriculum and weekly overviews. This is to ensure that trainees build their knowledge, skills and practice cumulatively. However, as trainees progress through their course the targets become more individualised and created through discussions in mentor meetings. It is expected that trainees will become increasingly autonomous in shaping their own targets prior to the award of QTS and in preparation for their ECT years.

#### Effective targets and actions

Professional developmental targets are central to supporting trainee progress. It is important to regularly evaluate how effective our targets and actions are in supporting trainees to improve the quality of their teaching and consequently pupils' learning. Targets focus on learning in the same way as a learning objective does in a lesson plan. Actions are different to targets in that they focus on the 'how' and act as steps the trainee may take to progress towards the target.

Prompts for checking effectiveness of a **TARGET**:

- Is it focussed on learning or is it an action?
- Does it support the trainee to gain, apply and refine the knowledge and skills related to the ITE curriculum?
- Is it **SMART (ER)? (see guidance below)**
- Can the trainee articulate their understanding of it?

Prompts for checking effectiveness of **ACTIONS**:

- Do they break down **how** the trainee can make progress in the target?
- Are they relevant to the target?
- Are they manageable in the time given?
- Has it been made clear if they are mandatory or are suggestions only?
- Does it support the trainee to gain, apply and refine the knowledge and skills related to the ITE curriculum?
- Can the trainee articulate their understanding of them?

#### What are SMART(ER) targets?

**Specific** - precise, sharp and centred on trainee's learning rather than an action that is to be completed or too broad to be meaningful. Promotes analysis and evaluation of impact.

**Measurable** – can be used to identify concrete evidence of either trainee's learning and/or the impact that trainee's learning has had on pupil progress.

**Attainable** – can be realistically achieved within an allotted time span (usually a week).

**Relevant**- personal and developmental rather than a repeat of the SBT Learning Outcomes used for formal assessment at the end of the module. Relevant to the school context. The right amount of challenge for the

phase of training rather than something that is simple to achieve. Can be directly applied to teaching practice and evaluated on lesson plans. Can be experimental, trying out something unfamiliar.

Time-related – usually weekly.

Evaluated – trainee evaluates and records their learning in the target prior to the mentor meeting.

Reviewed – trainee and mentor review trainees' learning in the target during the mentor meeting.

**How SMART do you think these targets are and what would you do to improve them?**

1. Record questions on the lesson plan
2. Improve written feedback
3. Stretch the higher attainers

Original target	Evaluation	An improved example	Rationale for improvement
1. Record questions on the lesson plan.	This target is an <i>action</i> . It isn't clear what the trainee needs to learn from doing this action.	1. Devise questions that enable the identification of knowledge gaps and misconceptions.	The reworded example focusses on a skill to be learned within the relevant theme of formative assessment.
2. Improve written feedback	This target is too broad and would be difficult to measure.	2. Provide accurate and timely written feedback when marking.	The reworded example is more specific, and accuracy and timeliness can potentially be measured. Where possible this would be evaluated in the light of pupils' response to the marking.
3. Stretch higher attainers	This target is specific in that it has a clear focus group. Also, it could be measured by evaluating the group's learning during the week. However, for this target to be fully effective it would need to be accompanied by actions that show <b>how</b> this might be done.	3. Adapt your planning to ensure higher attainers are challenged effectively.	The reworded example includes the term 'effectively' which can be evaluated in relation to the pupils' learning.

**What actions would you suggest for these targets?**

Actions are as important as targets in supporting trainees to understand how their learning applies to practice. Trainees benefit from having clear guidance on 'how to' make progress towards a target. Once the target has been set there should be time for the trainee to learn and practice applying the skill or knowledge to their teaching. Informal and supportive feedback is essential as they practice and apply this new knowledge. Actions can be specific advice on a teaching strategy, or they can focus on further reading, observations or research to be completed.

**Examples**

Target	Actions (suggested)
1. Devise questions that enable the identification of knowledge gaps and misconceptions.	<p>Use common misconceptions within multiple-choice questions.</p> <p>Increase use of open questioning and explore effectiveness of 'cold calling' strategy.</p> <p>Record targeted questions on your plan for individual pupils/groups.</p> <p>When teaching use hinge questions to pinpoint knowledge gaps and evaluate their effectiveness.</p>

<p>2. Provide accurate and timely written feedback when marking.</p>	<p>Prioritise the highlighting of errors related to misunderstandings, rather than careless mistakes.  Plan 'live marking' to monitor pupils' work within lessons and check for misconceptions.  Give feedback to pupils as soon as possible.  Use post-its for individual feedback as you circulate around the class.  Provide positive feedback too.  Provide time for pupils to respond to feedback.  Revisit reading on formative assessment from taught sessions.  Meet with assessment co-ordinator to discuss school approach to marking and tracking progress.</p>
<p>3. Adapt your planning to ensure higher attainers are challenged effectively.</p>	<p>Find out, prior to the lesson, what the targeted group already know/can do.  Use this to inform planning decisions.  Meet with staff member responsible for inclusion to discuss strategies.  Carry out a focussed observation of a colleague who is strong in this area.  Read recommended theory/ literature.  Consult university subject tutor.</p>