

Unit 1: Personal Review

INTRODUCTION

The aim of this unit is to enable new inspectors to reflect on their professional experience and to consider their own professional needs in order to fully develop their role as inspectors.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this unit, inspectors will be able to:

- identify their professional strengths and weaknesses
- reflect on their past experience in order to inform future action
- proceed with confidence into the next unit

PERSONAL LEARNING JOURNEY

If you are using the self study guide you will probably be a newly appointed inspector, or one with only a short time in post. You will, undoubtedly, have held a number of posts in your life, and done a number of jobs. Your success as an inspector will depend, partly, on your ability to recognize your own strengths and weaknesses.

Activity 1a

List the jobs you have had and determine the professional skills that you acquired or developed whilst doing each job.

COMMENT

Did you take into account the jobs you have done outside your educational experience? Perhaps, as a student, you worked in a shop or a factory - what did you learn there? Perhaps you are a member of your local church council or other community group - what skills have you developed there?

SELF REVIEW

On different occasions we are often asked what we do, why we do it, how we feel about our work.

At various points in our career paths we may formally be asked such questions. Giving an articulate and honest response can provide you with a greater insight into your own motivation, needs and learning patterns.

The following exercise might best be done orally.

Can you ask a colleague or family member to listen to you talking through the starter statements? If not, then write a short response to each.

Activity 1b

- I became an inspector because ...
- I believe I am / will be an effective inspector because ...
- My objectives as an inspector are ...
- Some negative things about the job are ...
- The way I deal with professional problems is ...
- I would like more experience in the area of ...
- Some evidence of my success includes ...
- Some educational ideas that I would like to know more about are ...
- Ways in which I could help schools improve are ...
- Ways in which I could help myself improve are ...
- An idea I have about inspection which I would like to share with others is ...
- I came into education as a career because ...

COMMENT

Your answers will tell you a lot about yourself and the way you approach this exciting and demanding job. You can be completely honest because no-one will report what you have said. (Ensure, if you are working with another person, that he/she respects the confidential nature of the exercise.)

Activity 1c

As a newly appointed inspector what do you think are your current professional needs?

COMMENT

The following list was generated by an inspector in the writing group who had been an inspector for one year. Check your list against this one and look for similarities and differences.

- Training in the education and training of adults
- Refining computer skills
- Research methods and techniques
- Inspection data gathering techniques
- Report writing
- Field survival skills
- Educational law and statutes
- Counselling skills
- Resource management
- Primary school curriculum management

It is to be expected that your learning curve will be very high in your first year in post. You will, most probably, be expected to absorb a great deal of information, adapt to new systems, adopt a wider perspective and communicate effectively with a large number of new colleagues. Quite a challenge!

The following information was supplied by the new inspector whose list we looked at previously. This time the knowledge and skills acquired (or in some cases developed and refined) during the first year in post are identified.

KNOWLEDGE	SKILLS
National policy acts/laws/statutes	Reading a lot of information quickly
National development plan	Gaining an overview
Protocol (who is senior to whom) and accepted practice	Taking care not to offend
Modes of communication	Communicating with fellow professionals
The role and function of inspectors	Supervision skills refined Resource management e.g. government transport, requisitions time management
Headteachers' views on the role and function of inspectors	Organizational skills
Knowledge of the country, location of schools, culture etc.	Finding my way around

COMMENT

No one likes to admit to mistakes. But the likelihood is that we learn more when we make a few mistakes (and ask ourselves why) than we do when we assume that what we do is perfect and any mistakes are the fault of someone else!

Activity 1d

Think of a time when your work did not go as well as you would have liked:

What would you do differently if you could do that work again?

SKILLS CHECK-LIST FOR INSPECTORS

Key Information

The identification of one's skills early on in a job (self audit) can be used later on to identify development. The following activity is a simple check-list.

Activity 1d Put a tick in the appropriate box for yourself. Save the chart for review at the end of the units in this book.				
SKILLS	FULLY COMPETENT	NEED TO PRACTISE	LEARNING/ ACQUIRING	UNSKILLED AS YET
evaluation				
management				
conflict resolution				
computer literacy				
note taking				
report writing				
classroom observation				
planning				
interviewing				
record keeping				
financial				
training				
project management				
research				
guidance				
counselling				

SUMMARY

The preceding activities will have given you the opportunity to reflect on your previous experience and current practice. Before embarking on the following units, you might begin a Personal Action Plan which can act as a record of needs and achievements throughout the course. It need not be a time consuming exercise. Simply note down any areas of interest to you or issues that you need to know more about, or areas where you would like some professional development as you work your way through this self study guide.

The writers know that you are not an empty vessel waiting to be filled. It is hoped that this guide will inform and direct you and help you to hold up a mirror to your own practice.