



Create Your World

Cardiff West Community High School

Learning and Teaching Policy

Updated July 2021 – K. Duggan
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1. RATIONALE

Learning and teaching are the core purposes of our school. The essence of our approach towards learning and teaching is that the role of the teacher is to facilitate the learning of the student in order for students to become ambitious and resilient learners. As reflective practitioners, we expect our teachers to engage individually and collectively in constant review and enhancement of pedagogy which continually advances the quality of learning and teaching at Cardiff West Community High School.

2. AIMS

1. To create a common philosophy of learning and teaching for all students, regardless of ability.
2. To use the DRICE principles in the planning and review of all lessons, namely:

Deepening Thinking: Lessons should provide students with opportunities to deepen their thinking beyond the shallow and towards deep and profound; questioning should probe and deepen knowledge and understanding.

Role-modelling: Teachers should role-model appropriate subject-specific language and expositions should be clear; students should be presented with exemplar work and helpful success criteria; students should be given the opportunity to role-model their work in lessons and to demonstrate for the class.

Impact – visible progress in lessons: Visual progress should be evident in all lessons. Lesson objectives should be clear and should be met; students should demonstrate progress in their learning; effective assessment for learning strategies should be used to gauge progress and to ensure further progress is made; self-reflection should be encouraged.

Challenge for all: Teachers should have high expectations of all students; lessons should provide challenge for all learners of all abilities so that they are stretched appropriately; students should be supported in their learning so that they are capable of meeting challenging learning outcomes; students should be challenged to engage in healthy struggle.

Engagement: Students should be engaged in challenging learning episodes which make them think for themselves; variety should be used over a series of lessons to ensure engagement; activities should be designed to actively engage all students in learning; pace should be appropriate so that the learning episodes move at the pace of the students' understanding; students should have opportunities to work in groups and independently, supporting and assessing one another; teachers should develop strategies that engage and stimulate boys to equate their achievement with girls.

3. Principles of Instruction are evidence-based approaches proven to support student progress. Where appropriate these principles should be incorporated into lesson planning:

These principles come from three sources:

- A) **Research in cognitive science:** This research focuses on how our brains acquire and use information. This cognitive research also provides suggestions on how we might overcome the limitations of our working memory (i.e., the mental "space" in which thinking occurs) when learning new material.
- B) **Research on the classroom practices of master teachers:** Master teachers are those teachers whose classrooms made the highest gains on achievement tests. In a series of

studies, a wide range of teachers were observed as they taught, and the investigators coded how they presented new material, how and whether they checked for student understanding, the types of support they provided to their students, and a number of other instructional activities. By also gathering student achievement data, researchers were able to identify the ways in which the more and less effective teachers differed.

C) **Research on cognitive supports to help students learn complex tasks:** findings from studies that taught learning strategies to students

1. Daily Review



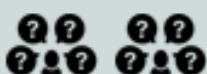
Begin a lesson with a short review of previous learning. Daily review can strengthen previous learning and lead to fluent recall. Automatic recall frees working memory for building complexity.

2. New Material in Small Steps



Our working memory is small, only handling a few bits of information at once. Avoid its overload – present new material in small steps and proceed only when first steps are mastered.

3. Ask Questions



Ask a large number of questions and check the responses of all students: Questions help students practice new information and connect new material to their prior learning.

4. Provide Models



Students need cognitive support to help them learn how to solve problems. Modelling, worked examples and teacher explaining thinking out loud help clarify the specific steps involved.

5. Guide Student Practice



Students need additional time to rephrase, elaborate and summarise new material in order to store it in their long-term memory. Most successful teachers build in more time for this.

6. Check Student Understanding



All teachers need to frequently check to see if all the students are learning the new material. CFU provides students with opportunities to move new learning into long-term memory and lets the teacher know if students have developed misconceptions.

7. Obtain High Success Rate



Teachers should strive to obtain a high success rate in questioning and practise exercises with students. A success rate of around 80% has been found to be optimal, showing students are learning the material, and showing that the students are challenged.

8. Scaffolds for Difficult Tasks



Scaffolds are temporary supports to assist learning. They can include modelling teacher thinking aloud, cue cards and checklists. Scaffolding is effective after pupils have developed the knowledge they need to complete a task and when they are ready to be supported in thinking about their approach.

9. Independent Practice



Independent practice produces 'overlearning' – a necessary process for new material to be recalled automatically. Students need extensive, successful independent practice (pupils working alone and practicing new material) in order for skills and knowledge to become automatic.

10. Weekly and Monthly Review




Students need to be involved in extensive practice in order to develop well-connected and automatic knowledge. Overtime interleaved content helps to maintain practice.

4. CWCHS Literacy and Numeracy Keys and appropriate elements of the DCF should be skilfully incorporated into lessons to enhance the learning experiences of students and allow regular opportunities for all students to make continued progress in these areas.
5. New technologies should be used to engage learners and promote independence and collaborative learning experiences.
6. Every teacher should ensure all pupils are aware of targets and goals for progression through clear, diagnostic feedback, both verbal and written.
7. The conditions for good learning should be established through good working relationships with pupils' behaviour effectively managed in line with the schools BFL policy.
8. Every lesson should be prepared in the context of a well-written scheme of learning which is appropriately planned to build towards essential GCSE skills.

3. 'OUR CONSISTENCIES'

All staff were involved in creating six core 'consistencies' (Summer 2018). These should be common practice in all lessons. The purpose of these consistencies is to ensure there are clear routines and common approaches across all lessons. As we believe this consistent approach is fundamental to the success of lessons at Cardiff West CHS we have included the consistencies into our lesson observation paperwork (Summer 2019).



Our Consistencies

- ### 1. Threshold

Be on the door, inside and out. Establish a personal connection with your students. Create the culture of high expectations before they even enter.
- ### 2. Strong start

Efficient and established routines for seating plan/equipment/books/uniform/phones/CWCHS slides/Do Now starter. Pupils independently begin their learning promptly.
- ### 3. Objectives and Success Criteria - Begin with the end

What will my students be able to do by the end of the lesson? Share objectives, revisit.
- ### 4. Positive focus remains on the learning

Maximise teaching time and minimise distractions by using the least invasive tactic to correct off-task students.
- ### 5. Circulate

Maximise the benefits of moving strategically around the room during all parts of the lesson.
- ### 6. Strong finish

Explicit assessment of your objective to evaluate success. Every minute matters. Ordered, smooth routines for pack up. Calm and orderly teacher dismissal.

4. SHARING GOOD PRACTICE

Sharing good practice is crucial to ensuring that ideas and strategies are communicated and disseminated across the school. The school acknowledges (formally through its CPD programme and informally on a day to day basis) the importance of pooling the wealth of expertise across the school.

Effective practice is shared in a number of ways, which include:

- ALP Learning and teaching groups
- ALP CPD training sessions.
- Departmental exemplar portfolios
- Departmental teaching and learning meetings
- Observations – formal (observations) and informal (coaching)
- Professional dialogue including action research sessions.
- Transition projects with primary feeder schools
- Creative Briefing

5. SCHEMES OF LEARNING

At CWCHS planning begins with the end in mind.

We focus on this concept in two ways:

1. Teach the skills and knowledge necessary for success at GCSE and beyond.

Learners need to be prepared for the highest academic success. The skills needed at GCSE must be taught from Year 7 onwards.

2. Assessment is necessary to gauge progress and learning of what has been taught over a certain period of time. It is necessary that assessment criteria has been agreed before teaching of a given unit commences.

The results of the assessment will be used to measure the success of learning and teaching during that unit of work.

6. QUALITY ASSURANCE OF TEACHING AND LEARNING

At CWCHS we will monitor and evaluate the effective implementation of this policy using the following methods:

- Subject leader monitoring
- Lesson observations
- Departmental reviews
- Pupil voice interviews
- Department and Area reviews and self-evaluation
- Work sampling
- SOW/Exemplar portfolios/Assessment portfolio scrutiny
- Standardisation and moderation activities
- Data analysis
- Raising standards meetings
- Performance Management

7. LESSON PLANNING

The primary purpose of lesson planning is to ensure teachers plan highly effective lessons as part of an overall sequence of lessons. It is not a requirement to use the CWCHS lesson plan template for every lesson. It is however, essential that planning is evident for all lessons. Use of the CWCHS lesson plan template will be required for formal observations and at the direction of the SLT.

All lesson planning should begin with high expectations.

At CWCHS we expect all teachers to plan every lesson. Each lesson should include:

1. A **seating plan** with a clear rationale behind it that **considers pupil data**.
2. A **'Do now' starter activity** that pupils can work on independently as they enter the classroom. The starter should connect students to previous learning. It should have a literacy or numeracy basis.
3. **Clear and measurable learning objectives**. Learning objectives reflect what students will learn not just describe what students do. Lesson objectives and success criteria should follow the CWCHS format. "Today I will... I am successful when...." It is important that every learning activity supports the student in achieving their learning objective. Blooms taxonomy should be used when planning the objectives and success criteria. Objectives should be made explicit to all students and reviewed during the lesson.
4. A range of **engaging and challenging learning activities** planned to deepen thinking and build knowledge and skills. These should be planned to ensure they stretch and challenge all pupils. These are the processes that enable students to meet their learning objectives.
5. Regular opportunities to **measure progress** towards learning objectives throughout the lesson.
6. A **plenary** at the end of the lesson reviewing progress.
7. **Differentiation** should be used in a range of ways to ensure all students are challenged to achieve highly.
8. **Extension** and scaffolding work ready and planned for each lesson.
9. Specific opportunities to develop **literacy** within every lesson. This should include a focus on either oracy, reading, writing or a combination.

8. LESSON OBSERVATIONS AND FOLLOW UP PROCEDURES

At Cardiff West Community High School, we are constantly evaluating the quality of teaching and learning so that we can ensure that all students make the best progress they possibly can. As part of this process we regularly monitor the quality of classroom practice to ensure that it is consistent with whole school priorities and identifies good practice.

At Cardiff West CHS we aim for all teaching to be good or excellent and use the results of classroom observations to evaluate our success in fulfilling this aim, provide professional development, identify good practice, and develop learning targets within a department and throughout the whole school.

Our CPD regularly relates to DRICE and all paperwork; lesson observation grids, lesson planning form, lesson observation form all relate to our school priorities of DRICE and Skills. Exemplar materials have been provided for all in relation to completing paperwork appropriately and training given to all colleagues who observe lessons.

Our lesson observations are non-judgemental. We observe in order to:

- Support staff as they develop their knowledge and skills in striving for professional excellence;
- Allow for the sharing and dissemination of good practice;
- Play a vital role in assessing the impact of teaching and learning on students' attainment.
- Inform and facilitate the monitoring of the School/Department Development Plan;
- Inform the ongoing development of the curriculum;
- Help to identify priorities for staff development.
- Provide information for the self-evaluation process.

- Inform the performance management process.
- Know strengths and areas for development of teaching.
- Support agreed consistency through the school/area/department.

Feedback and reflection

Effective feedback is a professional dialogue between observer and teacher and is a critical element of the process of observation.

- Oral feedback from observations will be given at the earliest opportunity.
- CWCHS standardised paperwork, centred around the elements of DRICE, are used in all observations to ensure consistency.
- An appropriate time should be organised between reviewer and reviewee to enable quality discussion on the outcomes of the observation.
- When writing the feedback, the observer should write up the key points of the observation in the boxes provided for D, R, I, C and E and summarise key points within 'areas of excellence' and, when necessary, 'areas in need of significant support'.

Where areas of excellence are identified these approaches can be shared with staff via our ongoing ALP CPD. Where areas in need of significant support are identified, the Lead Coach will devise a bespoke programme of support. This will include; mentoring, joint planning, peer observations, individualised training.

9. RESPONSIBILITIES

The Student

- To engage in, and take responsibility for, their own learning by participating fully in learning activities in the classroom and beyond.
- To take ownership of their own learning by shaping and reviewing their own learning through reflection.
- To reflect upon their own progress towards attainment targets and set interim steps towards achieving these.
- To contribute to purposeful peer assessment and moderation activities.
- Students should value and respect the views of others involved in the learning process.

The Subject Teacher

- To plan lessons which take into account prior attainment, specific learning needs and different learning styles in order to allow all students to access the curriculum.
- To provide reflective opportunities (DIRT time) within the lesson in order to allow students to consolidate their learning and to reflect upon the cognitive process.
- To ensure that students make progress during lessons using accurate and appropriate assessment techniques.
- To use high quality, higher order questions which provide stretch and challenge to all learners
- To be committed to learning themselves as reflective practitioners who strive to keep up to date with knowledge and pedagogy.
- To manage behaviour to ensure that the learning environment is safe and conducive for learning.
- Have high expectations of all students.
- To undertake small action research linked to teaching and learning in line with CPD guidance (ALP).

The Department

- To identify the teaching and learning strategies which would be best suited to delivery of curriculum content and material.
- To plan schemes of learning which incorporate opportunities for learners to access the curriculum in line with the policy recommendations.
- To contribute to the department resource and assessment portfolios and relevant website sections.
- To contribute to area data collection, moderation and standardisation processes.

Area Leads

- To ensure consistent processes and teaching methodologies are implemented across the Area.
- To ensure that the school/area policy is in operation through lesson observations, work sampling and pupil voice interviews and that whole school priorities are shared through subject plans.
- To ensure there are appropriate departmental resources and portfolios available for all team members.
- To ensure there are appropriate schemes of learning and that the content and impact is regularly evaluated and updated. To ensure these are available for all team members.
- To ensure the relevant website sections are populated and updates.
- To monitor the progress of all pupils within their area, considering a range of information including assessment outcomes and quality of work produced.
- To encourage and make time for necessary training and facilitate appropriate CPD ensuring the ongoing development of all team members.
- To encourage the sharing of good practice and professional dialogue.

The Leadership Team

- To provide and evaluate the provision of staff training through a planned comprehensive CPD programme (ALP) within the school to enhance their knowledge of and practice in employing appropriate and effective teaching and learning strategies.
- To encourage the sharing and dissemination of resources and good practice across different curriculum areas.
- To support liaison between partner primary schools to allow progression in learning from year 6 to year 7.

Teaching and Learning Coaches (TLCs)

- To research, trial and develop good practice and innovation using varied strategies for learning and teaching.
- To disseminate good practice amongst colleagues both formally and informally on an individual basis, at area meetings and through delivery of staff training as part of the CPD programme.

The role of the parents in learning and teaching

At Cardiff West CHS we believe that parents and carers have a fundamental role in helping students to learn and progress. We will ensure that parents are informed of their child's learning progress using the following methods:

- Sending annual, diagnostic reports that inform parents on how best to support their child with their learning.
- Sending interim data reports on a termly basis.
- Publishing an annual report to parents.
- Publishing a school newsletter.
- Holding parental workshops and target intervention evenings.
- Maintaining the school website up to date with learning outcomes.

Role of the Governors

Our governors determine, support monitor and review our school policies on teaching and learning. In particular they:

- Support the use of appropriate teaching strategies by allocating resources effectively.
- Monitor the effectiveness of teaching and learning strategies through the analysis of student data.
- Monitor the effectiveness of the school's teaching and learning policy through the school self-evaluation processes.