

Les Quennevais School

Teaching For Learning Policy

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Introduction

In excellent schools, all teachers are committed to improving their own practice and take action to continually reflect and develop. Good teaching generates effective learning. This Teaching for Learning Policy supports effective learning whatever the curriculum area.

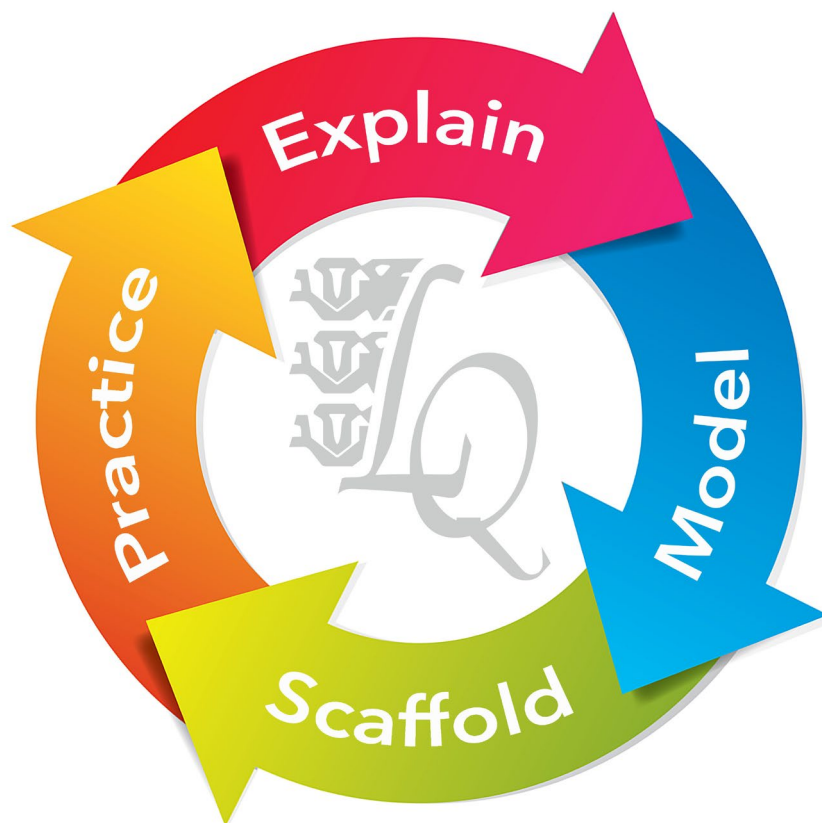
In his 2013 paper called “Improving Education: A Triumph of Hope Over Experience”, Professor Robert Coe defines the secret of learning:

“Learning happens when people have to think hard”

In other words, we are far more likely to remember what we think hard about. The trouble is our brains, and particularly those brains inhabited by teenagers are not that keen on or adept at thinking hard. To think hard, students need to focus and be suitably challenged and supported at each stage of the learning process. The learning cycle provides a framework which ensures that learners can make progress; whatever their starting point.

The Learning Cycle

For learning to take place, there must be a cyclical approach to teaching. Each phase of this cycle enables essential knowledge and skills to be learnt and retained. It may be completed in one or over a series of lessons, depending on the content. Teaching the skills and knowledge of any subject curriculum should be planned using this cycle.

**Explain**

We start by explaining a new concept, its subject specific vocabulary and how it connects to what students have already learned and how it fits into the 'big picture'. The explanation which is shared with students should be carefully crafted to ensure all students develop a secure understanding which can be built upon.

Without an effective explanation, learners will be confused.

Model

When students' basic understanding of a concept or skill is secure, we can move onto demonstrating- a model of how this concept or skill may be applied and deconstructing how it was put together. Demonstrating what is needed to be successful through exemplar work and through sharing the metacognitive strategies needed for success.

Without effective modelling, the application of knowledge remains a mystery.

Scaffold

Once the processes are clear, we can provide a scaffold for students to apply the knowledge they have learned. When students have met the standard required and have some control and confidence over their application of knowledge, they can begin to work with greater independence.

Without scaffolding tasks, learners may 'sink before they can swim'.

Practice

With clear guidance and informed, timely feedback, students are now ready to practice all they have learned with increasing complexity and greater independence.

Without independent practice, learners can never strengthen understanding.

It should be clear that for effective learning to take place, no part of this cycle can be omitted. The expert support and guidance offered by a competent teacher provide a much-needed feeling of safety and equip students with the ability to take risks within a safe environment. Not allowing students to practice means that they would never really

encode the knowledge they have encountered and will miss the opportunity to transfer concepts from working to long-term memory.

Effective Teacher Practices



At each stage of this cycle, teachers must plan the most appropriate activities, imparting the essential knowledge and skills for their subject using published departmental Schemes of Learning, ensuring they are meeting the objectives set out in the national curriculum or exam specification. Underpinning the Learning Cycle are practices which all teachers must demonstrate to ensure learning is effective within any classroom.

Knowing Your Students

Above all else, knowing the students in your class allows you to be responsive to their needs. Through directed, strategic questioning, assessment and using the data available, we can build a useful picture of each student in our class. Knowing your students also means knowing them as individuals. The relationships you build with each student in your class can have a significant impact on learning. The confidence for students to take risks, ask and answer questions, the ability to deal with

setbacks and how your students actively respond to feedback are all affected by the relationships you build and the knowledge you have of the students in your class.

Teachers should plan for students of all abilities to make progress within lessons. We have a moral obligation to ensure that we are aware of each child's needs in our class, and where appropriate provide support or further challenge. Without this, we cannot expect all students to make progress. ClassCharts should be used to get an understanding of the learning needs within a class, but it is only through assessing the progress of learning that your planning may alter to ensure that progress can be made by every student.

High Expectations

The success of each class you teach is determined by the expectations we have for our students and the students have for themselves. Whatever our expectations are, the class will more than likely follow them. This is known as 'The Pygmalion Effect'. Expectations for learning should ideally be planned to be just in reach of all learners. Too low and there is apathy and boredom. Too high and there is stress and an expectation of incapacity.

High expectations have to underpin our teaching; our exam system demands it. Lessons should always be cognitively demanding. Written and oral tasks should reflect the high levels of literacy needed for success in exams. Questioning should involve opportunities for extended thinking for all students as well as retrieval practice/low stakes questioning to help strengthen memory. Opportunities for extended writing have to be prevalent in all relevant subjects and these expectations must start in Year 7 for students to be competent enough to write successfully in examination conditions.

High expectations can only be realised through high quality teaching. Progress only happens through students being successful; managing to effectively complete tasks and being able to build and connect prior and future knowledge. Excellent behaviour, presentation of work, instilling pride and consistently expecting excellent effort are also key factors in instilling high expectations.

Classroom Management

Resources (including other adults), seating, general organisation and class routines all promote order and an environment where effective learning can take place. The more efficient our classroom runs, the more likely it is that our teaching will have the time and focus students will require to learn effectively. Displays, exercise books and resources should reflect the ambitions you have for learning in your class and should be there to aid learning as well as inspire the excellence we want to see.

Assessment

Assessment can take many forms; from terminal exams to marking books, to informal questioning; each method needs to provide accurate evidence to inform responsive teaching. Testing is the number one way for knowledge to be transmitted into long term memory. We should never shy away from assessing the learning of our students. It is the backbone of effective teaching and provides us with all the information we need to ensure that learning has taken place. It provides us with the common (or individual) misconceptions of our classes and gives us the opportunity to consider how to address misconceptions so that progress can be assured.

For more detail, please watch our Teaching for Learning Policy video.