



**Central Lancaster
High School**

TEACHING AND LEARNING POLICY

Date: 18 January 2018

Review date: January 2019

SLT Review: KSH

Governors review: Learning and Standards

Scope

This policy applies to all Governors, school leaders and all members of the teaching and support staff community at Central Lancaster High School. This policy is a statement of the aims, principles and strategies for teaching and learning at CLHS and should be read in conjunction with the Assessment Policy, Marking and Feedback Policy and Monitoring and Evaluation Policy.

The policy is in place to develop the highest quality of teaching and learning and to ensure that students are given the best opportunity to make progress.

Principles

The aim of teaching for learning at CLHS is to develop successful learners who:

- enjoy learning and are motivated to achieve the best they can
- are challenged and stretched to achieve their potential
- are curious, creative, resourceful and able to identify and solve problems
- can think for themselves to process information, reason, question and evaluate
- can recall and apply precise and relevant information
- communicate well in a range of ways
- understand how they learn and learn from their mistakes
- are able to learn independently and to work cooperatively with others
- are resilient, can overcome setbacks and will persevere

School Approach to Teaching and Learning

High quality teaching and learning is a result of effective planning. It should reflect students' prior learning and should be differentiated to take groups and individuals to the next step.

There should be high expectations of all students. Lessons should be consistently challenging and engaging. Consistent behaviour management will help to create a positive climate for learning.

The teacher should have excellent subject knowledge, skilfully using student answers as teaching points, to model learning and to tackle misconceptions.

Individual needs should be met with well-judged teaching strategies with sharply focused support and intervention. Success criteria of strategies or evidence needed to make progress should be shared and modelled and provide a framework for dialogue and feedback.

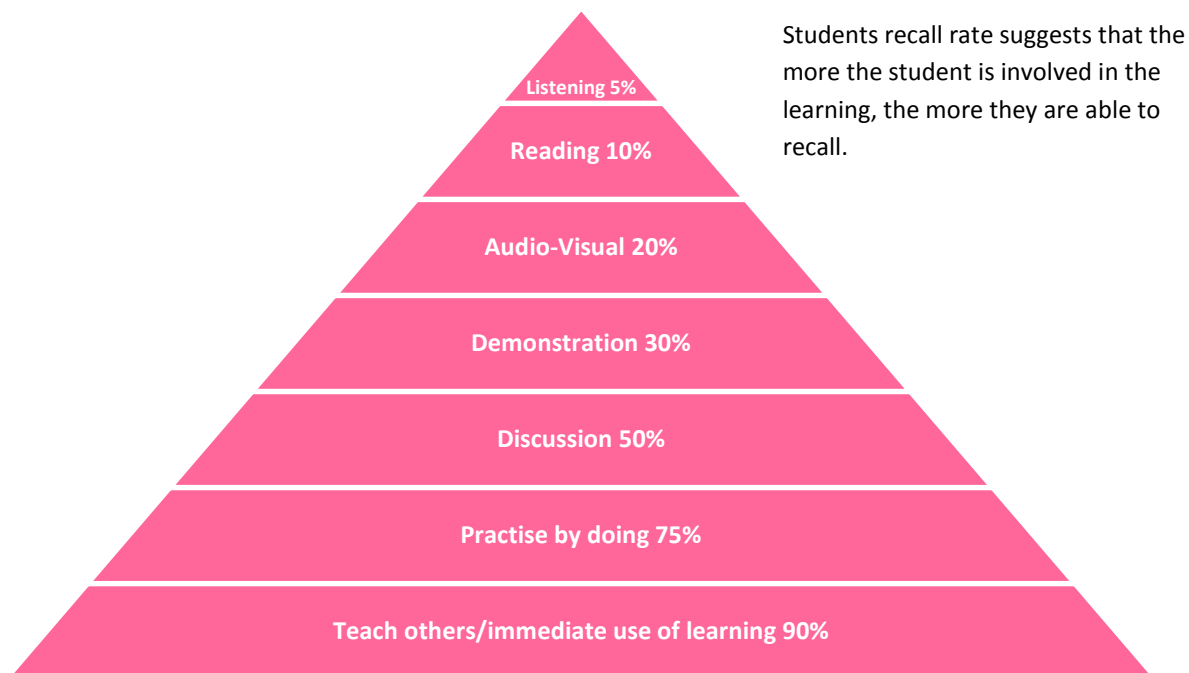
Skilful questioning challenges students to think more deeply and should be used, along with other assessment strategies, to systematically check understanding and to measure progress. Questions should be differentiated to reflect the needs of every student. Teachers should challenge students to justify reasoning and suggest alternatives when offering answers or accounts.¹

¹ See *Effective Questioning in the Classroom*

Breaking Barriers: the recall of knowledge

A key learning issue, particularly for students preparing for tests or exams is recall of precise knowledge. Research suggests that students make more progress in recall when they are engaged in discussion or when they practise by doing or have an immediate opportunity to use the learning. Teachers are encouraged to utilise strategies that incorporate these elements in lessons.

Figure 1 Effectiveness of different methods of teaching for retention of information²



Breaking Barriers: early introduction, development and refinement of skills

Preparation for key stage 4 exams should begin in Year 7. In essence, GCSEs and other courses should be taught over 5 years. This should not necessarily be in terms of content but in the development and refining of key stage 4 skills so that students are 'GCSE ready' by the time they start their courses.

The school assessment model facilitates this as it targets these skills and their incremental development across the curriculum. Teachers should keep a record of progress: of skills that have been repeatedly demonstrated and of those that need to be revisited until improvement is made.

During key stage 3 there may also be opportunities to target content from key stage 4 that can be built further developed in later years.

² E. Dale, *Audiovisual Methods in Teaching*, 1969

Breaking Barriers: challenge and differentiation

Principles

Differentiation is the process by which differences between learners are accommodated so that all students in a group have the best possible chance of learning. It is a key element of lesson planning and delivery in both set and mixed ability classes. Students should be consistently given opportunities to fulfil their potential and should be challenged to do their best. This means that they should all be required to think hard. Differentiation does not mean easy work; a fundamental approach of teaching to the top should be the norm.

Differentiation Strategies

Differentiation by task, involves setting different tasks for students of different prior attainment. One way to achieve this may be to produce different sets of activities depending on students' abilities. An alternative method is to design tasks which get progressively harder. The more advanced students will quickly progress to the later questions whilst the less able can focus on the basics.

Differentiation by resources allows some students to work with more advanced resources than others; it is also possible to use multiple materials in order to approach a topic from different angles. This means that while some students may require quite basic texts, others are capable of working with more advanced vocabulary and complex ideas. Differentiation of this kind allows a wide spectrum of materials to be used to attain a single learning outcome.

Differentiation by pace allows lesson time flexibly in order to meet all students' needs. Students who quickly grasp core activities need not be held back because others need to spend more time on a particular piece of learning. They can instead be allocated more challenging extension tasks in order to develop a more rounded understanding of the subject matter or even to progress through the set course more quickly.

Differentiation by outcome is a technique whereby all students undertake the same task but a variety of results is expected and acceptable. For example, the teacher sets a task but instead of working towards a single 'right' answer, the students arrive at a personalised outcome depending on their level of ability.

Differentiation by dialogue means the teacher identifies which students need detailed explanations in simple language and which students can engage in dialogue at a more sophisticated level. The teacher may also employ targeted questioning to produce a range of responses and to challenge the more able students.

Differentiation through feedback should reflect the ability and prior attainment of the student. For more able students marking should be thought-provoking with questions, prompts or suggestions designed to help students think things through for themselves. For less able students marking may provide scaffolding to support next-steps and questions should be precise and advice specific to extend their understanding.³

³ See *Marking and Feedback Policy*

Breaking Barriers: structured and extended writing

Every teacher has the responsibility for improving literacy within their own subject so that students will view it as a skill that matters across the curriculum. Students should be taught the technical and specialist vocabulary of subjects and how to use and spell these words. They should also be taught to use the patterns of language vital to understanding and expression in different subjects. These include the construction of sentences, paragraphs and texts that are often used in a subject.

The ability to write time-constrained, coherent prose is fundamental to examination success. Students need to be given guidance on how to write using different kinds of frameworks and then opportunities for practice until extended writing is no longer seen as an insurmountable barrier for some students.

An explicit focus on subject-specific language development is a key component of academic success. The aim is for students to be able to read, speak and write like subject specialists; to be able to express their knowledge and understanding in appropriate language. In practice this means: developing pupils' knowledge of technical, subject-specific vocabulary, followed by marking and correction.

Breaking Barriers: high expectations and resilience

Some students may tend to give up on challenging tasks easily, or avoid tasks they've failed at before. They tend to believe that being 'good' at a particular activity is a fixed state, and is something they can't control – a fixed mindset. According to someone with a fixed mindset, if you fail at something, make a mistake, or even have to put effort in, it must be because 'you're just not good enough'. Because of that belief, these students tend to avoid challenges and choose activities that they find easy and are helpless in the face of difficulties and setbacks. They develop a sense that there is 'no point' in trying.

To counteract this view is the belief that intelligence and abilities can be developed through effort, persistence, trying different strategies and learning from mistakes. This way of thinking is called a 'growth mindset'⁴, and developing it can help make students more resilient.

Students with a growth mindset believe that they can get better at something by practising, so when they're faced with a challenge, they become more and more determined to succeed, wanting to persevere and overcome setbacks. They feel in control, and are not threatened by hard work or failure.

Researchers have found that building a growth mindset helps children at school; making them more motivated, more engaged in the classroom and more likely to achieve.

Teachers can help by praising the degree of effort, which helps to develop student's resilience to failure as it teaches them what to do when they are challenged or fail – try again, try harder or try a different way, all things that are within their own control.

This type of praise is sometimes called 'process praise'; research suggests that students are more motivated when praise of this kind is used.

⁴ *Mindset: changing the way you think to fulfil your potential*, Dr Carol Dweck

Professional and Personal Development

This school is committed to the continual professional development of teachers. The CPD framework offers opportunities to develop new learning strategies based on educational research and experiences in other schools. There are also opportunities for teachers to share, discuss and review strategies at timetabled points in the calendar. The school's Appraisal policy includes a compulsory teaching target.

Figure 2 Professional and personal development opportunities at CLHS



Further research

Making Every Lesson Count: Six Principles to Support Great Teaching and Learning, Shaun Allison and Andy Thorby

Teacher Toolkit, Ross Morrison McGill

Mark, Plan, Teach, Ross Morrison McGill

What does this look like in the classroom? Carl Hendrick

Mindset: changing the way you think to fulfil your potential, Dr Carol Dweck