



## Melrose Primary Learning, Teaching and Assessment Toolkit

### Version 2.2

Theme	Teaching, Learning and Assessment Elements	
<b>Learning Environment</b>	1. The environment is safe, caring, purposeful and inclusive	
	2. The environment allows learners to attend fully to learning	
<b>Learning to Learn</b>	3. Clarifying, sharing and understanding learning intentions	
	4. Engineering effective classroom discussions, tasks and activities that elicit evidence of learning	
	5. Ask questions, using a range of questioning strategies, to check for learner understanding	
	6. Opportunities to activate prior knowledge through daily, weekly and monthly review	
	7. High quality feedback is used to move learning forward	
	8. Activating learners as owners of their own learning (self-assessment)	
	9. Learners are used as learning resources for one another (peer-assessment & cooperative learning)	
	10. Sequence concepts and model: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Present new material using small steps</li> <li>• Provide models</li> <li>• Provide scaffolds for difficult tasks</li> </ul>	
	11. Stages of practice: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Guide learner practice</li> <li>• Obtain a high success rate (80%)</li> <li>• Independent practice</li> </ul>	

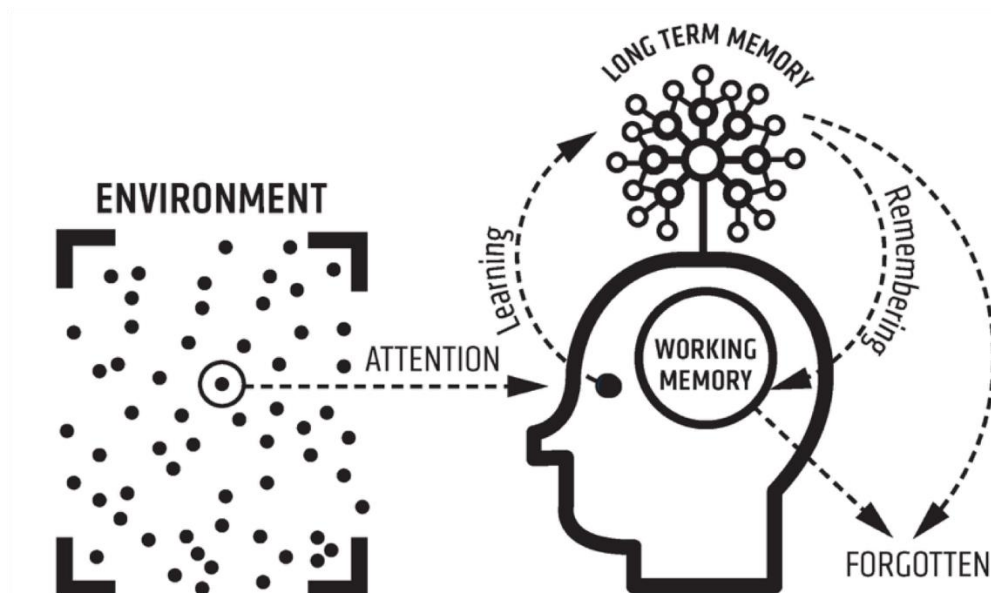
## Learning Environment

1. The environment is safe, caring, purposeful and inclusive
2. The environment allows learners to attend fully to learning

At Melrose Primary School the ethos and culture of our school reflects a commitment to our school values; Respectful; Responsible; Resilient; Reflective; Receptive.

We recognise that for learners and staff to fulfil their potential and 'To be the best we can be', the learning environment needs to be one based on a commitment to kindness and respect; to ourselves; to others and to property.

The relationships that are fostered within the school are critically important to ensuring excellent teaching and learning. Above all, all stakeholders within the school community should have high expectations of themselves and one another.



*Learners need access to the right environment before the learning process can begin*

The learning environment should be safe and appropriate to the needs of all learners –resources should be accessible for all to support various stages of practice. The environment should be stimulating, having a variety of engaging, differentiated and stage appropriate resources.

## **'Learning to Learn' – Metacognition, Self-Regulation and Feedback**

### 3. Clarifying, sharing and understanding learning intentions

Learners are more motivated and task oriented if they know the learning intention. They are also able to make better decisions about how to approach the task.

*'If we want young people to be good learners and to take more responsibility for their own learning, it's not enough just to set them tasks and help them to undertake them. We need to share with them what it is we intend them to learn from these tasks.'* (Smith, Ian 2008)

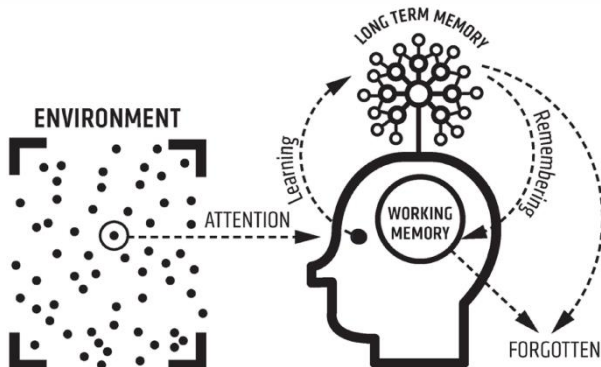
- How well do you communicate the Learning Intention with your pupils?
- Do you have an effective routine for clarifying, sharing, understanding and assessing the Learning Intentions?
- Do your Learning Intentions describe the learning as opposed to the task?
- Can your Learning Intention be applied in different contexts?

4. Engineering effective classroom discussions, tasks and activities that elicit evidence of learning
5. Ask questions, using a range of questioning strategies, to check for learner understanding
6. Opportunities to activate prior knowledge through daily, weekly and monthly review

In order to elicit evidence of learners' achievement, practitioners should understand where their learners are. This will be achieved through activation of prior knowledge, questioning and checking for understanding.

*"The main message I always stress is summarised in the mantra: ask more questions to more students in more depth. Rosenshine gives lots of great examples of the types of questions teachers can ask. He also reinforces the importance of process questions. We need ask how students work things out, not just get answers. He is also really good on stressing that asking questions is about getting feedback to us as teachers about how well we've taught the material and about the need to check understanding to ensure misconceptions are flushed out and tackled."* (Sherrington in Grimes 2020, p16)

Learners will not be able to immediately remember everything. If we are going to introduce new learning we must activate relevant prior learning into the working memory.



1. Conceptual information initially enters from the environment to our working memory.

2. The working memory is finite and can only absorb limited information at once.

3. New information is only stored if we can connect it to knowledge that we already have – prior knowledge is a major factor in our capacity to learn

4. We forget information that we do not initially store successfully or do not retrieve frequently enough.

## 7. High quality feedback is used to move learning forward

The evidence from the 'Scottish Attainment Challenge: Learning and Teaching Toolkit' demonstrates that quality feedback has a high impact on learner progress.

*'Feedback is information given to the learner and/or the teacher about the learner's performance relative to learning goals. It should aim towards (and be capable of producing) improvement in students' learning. Feedback redirects or refocuses either the teacher's or the learner's actions to achieve a goal, by aligning effort and activity with an outcome. It can be about the learning activity itself, about the process of activity, about the student's management of their learning or self-regulation or (the least effective) about them as individuals. This feedback can be verbal, written, or can be given through tests or via digital technology. It can come from a teacher or someone taking a teaching role, or from peers.'* (Scottish Attainment Challenge: Learning & Teaching Toolkit)

- Do you provide feedback that is specific, accurate and clear?

E.g. "It was good because you..." rather than just "correct"; compare what a learner is doing right now with what they have done wrong before e.g. "I can see you were focused on improving X as it is much better than last time's Y..."; encourage and support further effort and give feedback sparingly so that it is meaningful; provide specific guidance on how to improve and not just tell students when they are wrong.

- Do you use feedback to act upon or identify barriers to learning and inform your planning?
- Does your feedback emphasise the importance of effort and perseverance as well as progress towards specific learning goals?
- Do you use a range of feedback to improve learning, including self and peer assessment?

8. Activating learners as owners of their own learning (self-assessment)
9. Learners are used as learning resources for one another (peer-assessment & cooperative learning)



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YtP4X5VIs9Y>

#### Video Transcript:

When we started working on formative assessment, or assessment for learning, as it's sometimes called, we were focusing very much on feedback. So, we started with feedback 'cause that's where the research was most clearly organised. We then realised that in feedback, unless you asked the right question, the answer wasn't very helpful - so questioning and feedback came into the equation together. As we worked with teachers to implement this in classrooms, we discovered you couldn't change what the teacher was doing without changing what the students were doing, and, in particular, the importance of student self-assessment - what we sometimes call *activating students as learners of their own learning...* and peer-assessment, or what we sometimes call *activating students as teaching resources for one another...* assuming a much greater salience.

Now, when we talk about peer-assessment, a lot of people just assume we are talking about having kids marking each other's work so that the teacher doesn't have to do it, and people always get the wrong idea because that's summative peer-assessment. What we've discovered is that formative peer-assessment, where students are helping each other improve their work, has benefits for the person that receives feedback but also has benefits for the person who gives the feedback. Because, in thinking through what it is that this piece of work represents and what needs to happen to improve it, the students are forced to internalise a success criteria and they're able to do it in the context of someone else's work, which is less emotionally charged than your own. So, what we routinely see... we see very, very commonly, is when students have given feedback to others about a piece of work, their own subsequent attempts at that same work are much improved because they're now much clearer about what good work in that task looks like. So, that's been one of the real, I think, breakthroughs... is the real benefit of peer- and self-assessment, is both the person who is doing the assessment, the self-assessment and the person who is giving feedback - the peer-assessment.

We see students being very, very effective commentators on each other's work, giving very, very sound advice. Sometimes a lot harder than the teachers would give - one of the things you would see quite routinely in classrooms is children being much tougher on each other than the teacher would dare to be because of the emotional relationships and the power relationships there, but actually they are generally, and pretty much, spot on.

This video (Dylan Williams), along with reflective questions, invites you to consider the impact of your own approach to develop the use of peer and self-assessment to support the best learning and teaching. You are invited to watch the video and consider:

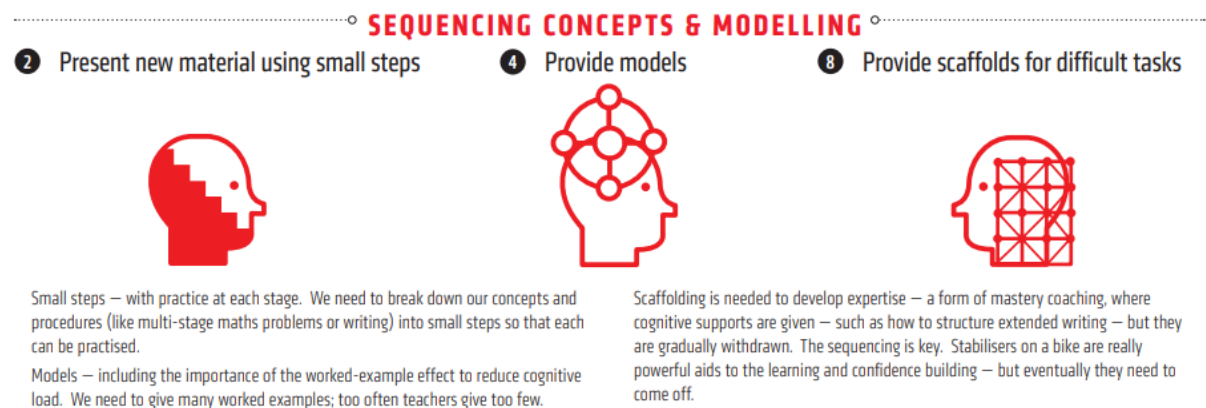
How do you use self and peer assessment at present to support developing best learning and teaching?

What strategies could you use to further develop the use of formative assessment?

What is your understanding of the difference between summative and formative peer assessment?

## 10. Sequence concepts and model:

- Present new material using small steps
- Provide models
- Provide scaffolds for difficult tasks



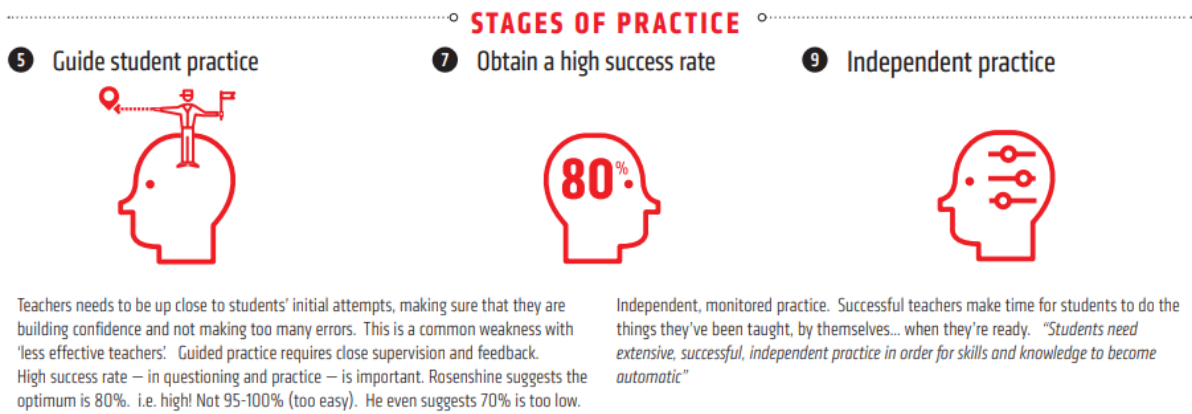
Learners should have a clear understanding of the steps they need to take to achieve a specific goal.

*‘Success Criteria let students know that they are learning....If criteria are to be formative, they must either describe: The strategies or the process pupils need to use to be successful or the evidence of success, or the end product and performances they will need to produce to show that they have been successful learners.’ (Smith, Ian 2008)*

Do	Do Not
<p>Ensure learners are actively involved in developing effective Success Criteria before task commences.</p> <p>Ensure the learners have a shared understanding of the Success Criteria e.g. through exemplars and / or modelling.</p> <p>Ensure Success Criteria are referred to throughout whole lesson and used for group/peer/self-evaluation.</p> <p>Think about strategies and evidence for success.</p>	<p>Repeat the Learning Intention as the Success Criteria.</p> <p>Describe the task in the Success Criteria.</p> <p>Name the end product as the Success Criteria.</p> <p>Allow Success Criteria to limit imaginative work.</p>

## 11. Stages of practice:

- Guide learner practice
- Obtain a high success rate (80%)
- Independent practice





## Appendix 1: Creating the Toolkit

In June 2018 members from the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) met with Bruce Robertson, Depute Head Teacher at Eyemouth High School, to investigate a teaching and learning change project that had resulted in raised attainment for pupils at Eyemouth High School. Some of the key components for the project's success were identified by the SLT:

- Involving all teaching staff in generating the criteria for excellent teaching and learning, based on research and evidence on best practice
- Creating a robust system of peer and SLT observations to monitor teaching and learning
- Creating a robust tracking system to monitor teaching and learning over time – using this to plan for individual/school Professional Learning (PL) activities

At the first INSET of session 2018/2019, class teachers used their professional knowledge and understanding, as well as reading from HGIOS 4, The Standards for Registration and The Scottish Attainment Challenge: Learning & Teaching Toolkit, to exemplify the key components of excellent teaching and learning.

A working group met in August 2018 to organise the components into this toolkit. Staff had organised the components into three main themes; the learning environment, metacognition and self-regulation. The group organised the components into ten elements under two themes; Learning Environment; Learning to Learn (metacognition and self-regulation). The decision was made to add information about each of the elements to assist in professional learning and give an increased understanding around each of the elements.

The toolkit was updated to version 2 in September 2021. Changes to the criteria were made to include researched components of formative assessment as well as the key features exemplified in Rosenshine's Principles of Instruction.

## Appendix 2: Teacher Assessment & Feedback (August 2020)

In August 2020 there was agreement that the Toolkit was fairly well established however the school needed to be clearer about how they could a) assess teaching quality/standards more accurately and b) increase the level of professional engagement with research based teaching and learning strategies.

The Sutton trust identify 3 things that are needed to make effective judgments about teaching quality (Coe et al, 2014, p4):

1. classroom observations by peers, principals or external evaluators
2. 'value-added' models (assessing gains in student achievement)
3. student ratings

The research paper also concluded there a 6 principles of teacher feedback that will sustain a professional learning culture (Coe et al, 2014, p5):

1. the focus is kept clearly on improving student outcomes;
2. feedback is related to clear, specific and challenging goals for the recipient;
3. attention is on the learning rather than to the person or to comparisons with others;
4. teachers are encouraged to be continual independent learners;
5. feedback is mediated by a mentor in an environment of trust and support;
6. an environment of professional learning and support is promoted by the school's leadership.

## Appendix 3: Ineffective classroom practices

The following are examples of practices whose use is not supported by research evidence (Coe et al, 2014, p4):

### **Use praise lavishly**

Praise for students may be seen as affirming and positive, but a number of studies suggest that the wrong kinds of praise can be very harmful to learning. For example, Dweck (1999), Hattie & Timperley (2007).

Stipek (2010) argues that praise that is meant to be encouraging and protective of low attaining students actually conveys a message of the teacher's low expectations. Children whose failure was responded to with sympathy were more likely to attribute their failure to lack of ability than those who were presented with anger.

“Praise for successful performance on an easy task can be interpreted by a student as evidence that the teacher has a low perception of his or her ability. As a consequence, it can actually lower rather than enhance self-confidence. Criticism following poor performance can, under some circumstances, be interpreted as an indication of the teacher's high perception of the student's ability.” (ibid)

### **Allow learners to discover key ideas for themselves**

Enthusiasm for ‘discovery learning’ is not supported by research evidence, which broadly favours direct instruction (Kirschner et al, 2006). Although learners do need to build new understanding on what they already know, if teachers want them to learn new ideas, knowledge or methods they need to teach them directly.

### **Group learners by ability**

Evidence on the effects of grouping by ability, either by allocating students to different classes, or to within-class groups, suggests that it makes very little difference to learning outcomes (Higgins et al, 2014). Although ability grouping can in theory allow teachers to target a narrower range of pace and content of lessons, it can also create an exaggerated sense of within-group homogeneity and between-group heterogeneity in the teacher's mind (Stipek, 2010). This can result in teachers failing to make necessary accommodations for the range of different needs within a supposedly homogeneous ‘ability’ group, and over-doing their accommodations for different groups, going too fast with the high-ability groups and too slow with the low.

### **Encourage re-reading and highlighting to memorise key ideas**

This finding has already been mentioned in summarising the review by Dunlosky et al (2013). Re-reading and highlighting are among the commonest and apparently most obvious ways to memorise or revise material. They also give a satisfying – but deceptive – feeling of fluency and familiarity with the material (Brown et al, 2014). However, a range of studies

have shown that testing yourself, trying to generate answers, and deliberately creating intervals between study to allow forgetting, are all more effective approaches.

### **Address issues of confidence and low aspirations before you try to teach content**

Teachers who are confronted with the poor motivation and confidence of low attaining students may interpret this as the cause of their low attainment and assume that it is both necessary and possible to address their motivation before attempting to teach them new material. In fact, the evidence shows that attempts to enhance motivation in this way are unlikely to achieve that end. Even if they do, the impact on subsequent learning is close to zero (Gorard, See & Davies, 2012). In fact the poor motivation of low attainers is a logical response to repeated failure. Start getting them to succeed and their motivation and confidence should increase.

### **Present information to learners in their preferred learning style**

A belief in the importance of learning styles seems persistent, despite the prominence of critiques of this kind of advice. A recent survey found that over 90% of teachers in several countries (including the UK) agreed with the claim that “Individuals learn better when they receive information in their preferred learning style (for example, visual, auditory or kinaesthetic)” (Howard-Jones, 2014). A number of writers have tried to account for its enduring popularity (see, for example, a clear and accessible debunking of the value of learning styles by Riener and Willingham, 2010), but the psychological evidence is clear that there are no benefits for learning from trying to present information to learners in their preferred learning style (Pashler et al, 2008; Geake, 2008; Riener and Willingham, 2010; Howard-Jones, 2014).

### **Ensure learners are always active, rather than listening passively, if you want them to remember**

This claim is commonly presented in the form of a ‘learning pyramid’ which shows precise percentages of material that will be retained when different levels of activity are employed. These percentages have no empirical basis and are pure fiction. Memory is the residue of thought (Willingham, 2008), so if you want students to remember something you have to get them to think about it. This might be achieved by being ‘active’ or ‘passive’.

## Appendix 4: Rosenshine's Principles

Rosenshine (2010, 2012) has summarised at least 40 years of research on effective instruction with a key set of principles that maximise its impact. The starting point for this evidence base is a set of correlational studies linking particular observed classroom teacher behaviours with higher student outcomes. For each of these principles there is also experimental evidence showing that attempts to train teachers in adopting these behaviours can result in changes in teacher behaviours and improvements in student outcomes.

In outline the ten principles are:

1. Begin a lesson with a short review of previous learning
2. Present new material in small steps, with student practice after each step
3. Ask a large number of questions and check the responses of all students
4. Provide models for problem solving and worked examples
5. Guide student practice
6. Check for student understanding
7. Obtain a high success rate
8. Provide scaffolds for difficult tasks
9. Require and monitor independent practice
10. Engage students in weekly and monthly review

## Reference materials

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- Sharing Learning Intentions (p foreword, p24)
- Promoting Assessment By Pupils
- Asking Better Questions
- Making Feedback Count

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