

DOUGLAS EWART HIGH SCHOOL**LEARNING, TEACHING AND ASSESSMENT POLICY (DRAFT)****1. RATIONALE & AIMS**

This policy details the key principles upon which all learning, teaching and assessment at Douglas Ewart High School is based. Acting upon these principles, we hope to develop successful, confident and responsible learners capable of both engaging in learning and also leading it.

The principles set out also form the basis for future learning and development for staff in the school and create a framework for our professional learning activity.

WHAT IS LEARNING?

The definition of learned is the acquisition of knowledge or skills through study, experience, or being taught. With a focus on the skills, knowledge and experiences they have within the classroom combined with a need to teach pupils how to study and to work towards becoming independent learners.

Sharing this understanding helps us to work together to promote learning. It becomes clear that the short lesson is not enough to consolidate learning and that learning is forgotten over time. The pupils also have a responsibility, such as practicing retrieval, to minimise the natural rate of forgetting to embed knowledge from the classroom.

WHAT IS ASSESSMENT?

Assessment supports learning. All partners use this as a measure of progress and to discuss next steps. The summative assessment (class tests, unit tests) is useful when aligned with formative assessment (questioning, dialogue, classwork and homework). At all times it is important that the learner is aware of their progress and levels.

2. PRINCIPLES OF LEARNING, TEACHING AND ASSESMENT: THE GREAT EIGHT

Drawing from current research, literature and our own self-evaluation and experiences, the following principles create a framework for effective teaching, learning and assessment at Douglas Ewart High School. Accordingly, we encourage teachers to consider and use these in their planning, lessons, self-evaluation, professional review and professional learning.

1. Relationships
2. Explanations, sequencing and modelling
3. Questioning
4. Review
5. Practice
6. Feedback
7. Planning, tracking and monitoring
8. Meeting learner needs

PRINCIPLE 1: RELATIONSHIPS

Our learning environments are built on positive, nurturing and appropriately challenging relationships which lead to high-quality learning outcomes. We promote a culture of respect and responsibility and, within this, our learning environments are purposeful, safe and calm spaces. We recognise these as the prerequisites for effecting teaching and learning and, as such, plan for these in advance making effective use of appropriate strategies interventions. We take pride in knowing our young people and using this knowledge to engage and support appropriately. We take every opportunity to encourage and communicate our relentless desire for all young people to do well and achieve.

PRINCIPLE 2: EXPLANATIONS, SEQUENCING AND MODELLING (TEACHING)

We consistently communicate the purpose of learning and are clear about what successful learning looks like within each lesson, topic or context. New material is set in context and presented using appropriately small steps with frequent opportunities to practice. Our explanations, instructions and support materials are precise, appropriately

detailed, clear and enhanced by modelling and examples. For more difficult tasks, our explanations and modelling form scaffolding that can be steadily removed in time.

Learning is planned over appropriate lengths of time be it days, months and years. Consideration of pace and challenge throughout our planning ensures progression for all is aspirational.

PRINCIPLE 3: QUESTIONING

We recognise the importance of effective questioning to great teaching. Effective questioning helps ensure learning is interactive and engaging. These are carefully planned and focus upon asking students to explain what they have learned. Our teachers are skilled in their questioning technique and, through checking the response of all students, for example, using of Show-me boards, can make regular assessment judgements and provide systematic feedback and corrections. Consideration is given to the important role that questioning plays in promoting interaction and engagement.

PRINCIPLE 4: REVIEW

We recognise that the regular review of learning can have great benefits in ensuring learning is consolidated. Where possible, lessons begin with a daily review of previous learning allowing students to reactivate recently acquired knowledge and allow teachers to make judgements on the necessity to re-teach material. A variety of strategies and techniques, weekly and monthly reviews are used to ensure that previously learned material is not forgotten and to reduce the natural rate of forgetting.

In terms of review as assessment, approaches are matched to the learning needs of learners and are used to support them to demonstrate where they are in their learning. A quality body of evidence is used to support formal assessment judgements and decisions about next steps. Processes for assessment and reporting are manageable and very effective in informing improvements in learning and teaching.

PRINCIPLE 5: STAGES OF PRACTICE

Principle 2 highlights the need for practice to follow explanation and we recognise that this allows students to make sense of, rephrase, elaborate or summarise new material. This begins with guided practice, or practice lead by the teacher and featuring thorough explanations, high-frequency, short-answer questions or simple tasks where teacher and students engage interactively. Thus, opportunities for misconception are minimised.

We recognise effective practice as being key to securing high success rate in student learning, itself key for achieving high levels of motivation and engagement during more independent work. Independent practice is our ultimate goal and supporting our learners to carry out increasingly challenging learning on their own. Meta-skills is central in our consideration and planning to achieve this.

PRINCIPLE 6: FEEDBACK

High quality feedback is designed to make learners think – not to generate an emotional response. It provides learners with an accurate understanding of their progress in learning and what they need to do to improve. Feedback focuses upon learning and shared learning goals, effectively informing and supporting progress in learning. In turn, learners should be able to give effective feedback to their peers and suggest ways in which they can improve. Feedback is complex and problematic so teachers must think carefully about the responses individual learners have to feedback and use this in future planning.

PRINCIPLE 7: PLANNING, TRACKING AND MONITORING

Tracking and monitoring are well-understood and used effectively to secure improved outcomes for all learners, including the most deprived children and young people and those who are looked after. All teachers have well-developed skills of data analysis which are focused on improvement.

Planning is proportionate and manageable and clearly identifies what is to be learned and assessed. We plan appropriately over different timescales to meet the needs of learners across all areas of the curriculum. Learners are involved in planning their learning.

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PRINCIPLE 8: MEETING LEARNER NEEDS

It is crucial that additional needs are met within the classroom to promote inclusion and involvement for all. Understanding the needs of pupils is paramount to supporting progress it is our responsibility to ensure that we understand the need within the classroom and establish routines and practices to support them.

3. MEETING LEARNER NEEDS (ADAPTIVE TEACHING)

Adaptive teaching is being responsive to information about learning, then adjusting teaching to better match learners needs. This can be achieved, for example, by providing opportunity for all pupils to experience success by:

- Adapting lessons, whilst maintaining high expectations for all, so that all pupils have the opportunity to meet expectations.
- Balancing input of new content so that pupils master important concepts.
- Making effective use of learning assistants

Teachers are expected to anticipate barriers, plan how to address these and use the assessment approaches highlighted above to elicit evidence of the impact of their teaching.

4. ENVIRONMENT/CONDITIONS

Learning should take place in calm, purposeful and controlled environments. Routines and structures will underpin this and be communicated to young people at the start and through each academic session. This will include routines for arriving at lessons, carrying out various (routine) activities and leaving lessons. We recognise that consistent routines and structures are central to inclusive practice.

5. DEVELOPING CAPACITY AND ABILITY

We understand, value and embrace the need to continually improve. As research informed practice evolves, the school must keep up to date with all that is considered best in pedagogy. Staff commitment to professional learning underpins our effectiveness as educators.

Reflecting upon and improving learning, teaching and assessment is an ongoing priority for individuals, faculties and the school, it receives prominence in:

- The school Improvement Plan (SIP)
- The school Working Time Agreement (SWTA)
- Professional Review and Development (PRD)
- Collegiate professional learning activity
- The professional learning calendar

6. EVALUATING TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT

It is fully accepted at Douglas Ewart High School that all adults within our school have a responsibility to reflect upon and develop their skills and abilities in working with learners. For teachers in particular, continuing professional development is an essential commitment. This is made clear in the GTCS Professional Standards and in HGIOS 4. The responsibility for improving teaching, learning and assessment practices is shared between individual members of staff and the wider school organisation. Teaching staff are provided with contracted hours in which to carry out CPD and this will include an annual review/PRD process.

Principal Teachers, Deputes and the Headteacher are all involved in providing oversight and guidance for individual staff CPD as well as managing the whole-school learning calendar. This is completed in line with SWTA, GTCS Update and SIP requirements and commitments.

The school also seeks to establish a culture of collegiate mentoring and support which enables staff to learn and to develop their teaching in a supportive and appropriately challenging environment. Staff are encouraged to engage thoroughly with relevant findings from educational research to inform their practice.

A range of strategies are used to evaluate and develop teaching, learning and assessment practices across the school, in line with this policy. Monitoring and evaluation of teaching practice can happen in a wide variety of ways. A list (not exhaustive) of established methods are identified below and these should all be assumed to include an element of discussion and reflection where appropriate and beneficial;

- an 'open-door'/drop-in policy across the school which seeks to avoid teaching becoming an isolated activity
- classroom observations by specialist staff upon request from teachers/PTs
- informal visits to classes by colleagues as part of the ongoing TLC initiative
- scheduled observations of class teaching by principal teachers in line with faculty improvement plans
- a programme of 'Learning Walks' by SMT
- regular faculty meetings to review teaching and learning and assessment, to establish priorities and to share good practice
- review of tracking and monitoring/assessment data at department, faculty and whole school level, including attainment reviews of SQA qualifications and INSIGHT data
- enabling of 'Student Voice' contributions to the ongoing review of teaching, learning and assessment

To facilitate observations and reflections on teaching, learning and assessment, a checklist/toolkit is provided in Appendix 1 of this policy. (This toolkit is not presented as an exclusive method and alternative methods may be used to support effective and constructive observation activities.)

7. MINIMISING BUREAUCRACY

The most valuable resource in the school is teachers' time. As such, we carefully plan our academic sessions in advance to take full cognisance of the challenges that impact upon time. Similarly, we expect our teachers to be critical of the use of their own time. The relationship between time committed and positive impact created should always favour the latter.

8. REVIEW

Next review August 2026

APPENDIX 1A**PRINCIPLE 1****BUILDING POSITIVE, NURTURING AND APPROPRIATELY CHALLENGING RELATIONSHIPS**

Our learning environments are built on positive, nurturing and appropriately challenging relationships which lead to high-quality learning outcomes. We promote a culture of respect and responsibility and, within this, our learning environments are purposeful, safe and calm spaces. We recognise these as the prerequisites for effecting teaching and learning and, as such, plan for these in advance making effective use of appropriate strategies interventions. We take pride in knowing our young people and using this knowledge to engage and support appropriately. We take every opportunity to encourage and communicate our relentless desire for all young people to do well and achieve.

FEATURES OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE RELATIONSHIPS

- Teacher welcomes learners to the lesson.
- Routines are evident and clearly established.
- Learners engage in class routines.
- Lessons begin promptly and with minimal teacher interaction.
- Learners feel safe and secure.
- The learning environment is built on positive, nurturing and appropriately challenging relationships leading to high-quality learning outcomes.
- Learners' achievements in and out of school are recorded and recognised.

USEFUL STRATEGIES

Positive relationships	Getting lessons started
Establishing your expectations	Gather around: Demonstrations and stories
Signal, pause, insist	Keeping on task
Positive framing	Silence is golden
Rehearse routines	Transitions between activities
Choices and consequences	Lesson disruption
Assertiveness	Perspective: The dot in the empty square

USEFUL RESOURCES

- [United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child \(UNCRC\)](#)

APPENDIX 1B**PRINCIPLE 2****EXPLANATIONS, SEQUENCING AND MODELLING**

We consistently communicate the purpose of learning and are clear about what successful learning looks like within each lesson, topic or context. New material is set in context and presented using appropriately small steps with frequent opportunities to practice. Our explanations, instructions and support materials are precise, appropriately detailed, clear and enhanced by modelling and examples. For more difficult tasks, our explanations and modelling form scaffolding that can be steadily removed in time.

Learning is planned over appropriate lengths of time be it days, months and years. Consideration of pace and challenge throughout our planning ensures progression for all is aspirational.

FEATURES OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE EXPLAINING, SEQUENCING & MODELLING

- Present new material in small steps with opportunity for learner practice after each step.
- Limit the amount of material students receive at one time.
- Give clear and detailed instructions and explanations.
- Think aloud and model steps.
- Use more time to provide explanations.
- Provide many examples.
- Re-teach material when necessary.

USEFUL STRATEGIES

Worked example and backward fading	Pre-reading instructions for complex tasks
Deliberate vocabulary development	Developing reading fluency
Abstract models with concrete examples	Giving practical demonstrations
Scaffolding	Analogies
Set the standards	Compare, contrast and categorise
Dual Coding	Whole-class reading material
Big picture, small picture	Summarising academic reading
Live modelling	Dual coding diagrams
Metacognitive talk	SEND: Addressing cognitive difficulties
Head-on misconceptions	Exemplars

USEFUL RESOURCES

APPENDIX 1C**PRINCIPLE 3****QUESTIONING**

We recognise the importance of effective questioning to great teaching. Effective questioning helps ensure learning is interactive and engaging. These are carefully planned and focus upon asking students to explain what they have learned. Our teachers are skilled in their questioning technique and, through checking the response of all students, for example, using of Show-me boards, can make regular assessment judgements and provide systematic feedback and corrections. Consideration is given to the important role that questioning plays in promoting interaction and engagement.

FEATURES OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE QUESTIONING

- Ask a large number of questions and check for understanding.
- Ask students to explain what they have learned.
- Check the response of all students.
- Provide systematic feedback and corrections.

USEFUL STRATEGIES

Cold calling	Process questions
Think, pair, share	No opt out
Show-me boards	Hands up for asking or ideas
Check for understanding	Randomised questioning
Say it again better	Normalise error and uncertainty
Probing questions	

USEFUL RESOURCES

APPENDIX 1D**PRINCIPLE 4****THE DAILY, WEEKLY AND MONTHLY REVIEW OF MATERIAL**

We recognise that the regular review, or assessment, of learning is fundamental and can take many, many forms. Where appropriate and possible, our lessons begin with a daily review of previous learning allowing students to reactivate recently acquired knowledge and for teachers to make judgements on the necessity to re-teach material. A range of strategies are used to deliver this. Weekly and monthly reviews are used to ensure that previously learned material is not forgotten. They reduce the natural rate of forgetting.

Assessment approaches are matched to the learning needs of learners and are used to support them to demonstrate where they are in their learning. A quality body of evidence is used to support assessment judgements and decisions about next steps. Processes for assessment and reporting are manageable and very effective in informing improvements in learning and teaching.

FEATURES OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE REVIEW

- Lessons begin with a short review of previous learning.
- Re-teach material when necessary.

USEFUL STRATEGIES

Quizzing	Knowledge Organisers
Peer-supported retrieval	Concrete Examples
Independent Practice	Elaborative Interrogation
Rehearsal and Performance	Weekly and Monthly Review
Guided practice	Building Fluency
Make everyone think	Flash cards
Practise explaining	A ladder of difficulty
Multiple-choice questions	Dual coding: Mapping
Thresholds and pathways	F A C E T Revision model

USEFUL RESOURCES

APPENDIX 1E**PRINCIPLE 5****UTILISING THE STAGES OF PRACTICE**

Principle 2 highlights the need for practice to follow explanation and we recognise that this allows students to make sense of, rephrase, elaborate or summarise new material. This begins with guided practice, or practice lead by the teacher and featuring thorough explanations, high-frequency, short-answer questions or simple tasks where teacher and students engage interactively. Thus, opportunities for misconception are minimised.

We recognise effective practice as being key to securing high success rate in student learning, itself key for achieving high levels of motivation and engagement during more independent work. Independent practice is our ultimate goal and supporting our learners to carry out increasingly challenging learning on their own. Meta-skills is central in our consideration and planning to achieve this.

FEATURES OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE PRACTICE

- Provide a high level of practice for all students.
- Guide students as they begin to practice.
- Prepare students for independent practice.
- Monitor students when they begin independent practice.

USEFUL STRATEGIES

Guided practice	Independent practice

USEFUL RESOURCES

- [Education Endowment Foundation \(EEF\): Metacognition and self-regulation](#) (low cost/very high impact)

APPENDIX 1F**PRINCIPLE 6****PROVIDING EFFECTIVE FEEDBACK**

High quality feedback is designed to make learners think – not to generate an emotional response. It provides learners with an accurate understanding of their progress in learning and what they need to do to improve. Feedback focuses upon learning and shared learning goals, effectively informing and supporting progress in learning. In turn, learners should be able to give effective feedback to their peers and suggest ways in which they can improve. Feedback is complex and problematic so teachers think carefully about the responses individual learners have to feedback.

FEATURES OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE FEEDBACK

USEFUL STRATEGIES

Feedback that moves forward	
Feedback as actions	
Whole-class feedback	
Success criteria	
Spot your mistakes	
Selective marking	
Redrafting	

USEFUL RESOURCES

- [Education Endowment Foundation \(EEF\): Feedback](#) (low cost/very high impact)
- [Education Endowment Foundation \(EEF\): Individualised instruction](#) (low most/moderate impact)

APPENDIX 1G**PRINCIPLE 7****PLANNING, TRACKING AND MONITORING EFFECTIVELY**

Tracking and monitoring are well-understood and used effectively to secure improved outcomes for all learners, including the most deprived children and young people and those who are looked after. All teachers have well-developed skills of data analysis which are focused on improvement.

Planning is proportionate and manageable and clearly identifies what is to be learned and assessed. We plan appropriately over different timescales to meet the needs of learners across all areas of the curriculum. Learners are involved in planning their learning.

FEATURES OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE PLANNING, TRACKING AND MONITORING

USEFUL STRATEGIES

USEFUL RESOURCES

APPENDIX 1F
PRINCIPLE 8
MEETING LEARNER NEEDS

Meeting learner needs can take a variety of different approaches based on the needs of the pupils

FEATURES OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE PLANNING, TRACKING AND MONITORING

USEFUL STRATEGIES

USEFUL RESOURCES

APPENDIX 2

UNDERSTANDING ADAPTIVE TEACHING

Understanding Adaptive Teaching

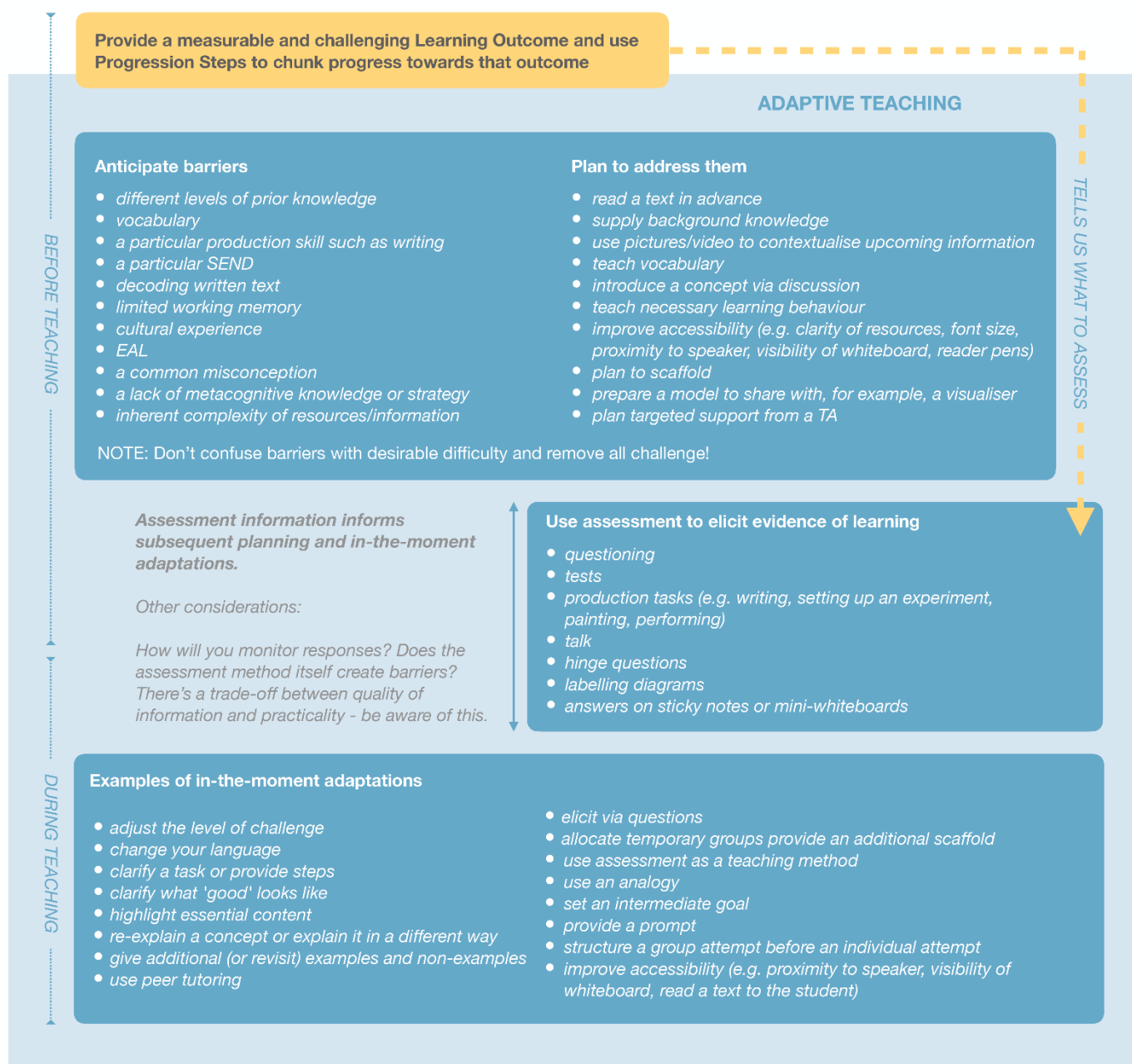
The Early Career Framework provides a helpful explanation of why Adaptive Teaching matters:

- Pupils are likely to learn at different rates and to require different levels and types of support from teachers to succeed.
- Seeking to understand pupils' differences, including their different levels of prior knowledge and potential barriers to learning, is an essential part of teaching.
- Adapting teaching in a responsive way, including by providing targeted support to pupils who are struggling, is likely to increase pupil success.

As far as possible, make curriculum do the work of determining learning objectives, assessment methods and likely barriers. A well-planned curriculum will reduce the teacher's need to make in-the-moment adaptations. When additional adaptations are necessary, note that the strategies below are illustrative, not exhaustive, and that adaptations will need considering from a subject-specific point of view.

For an overview of strategies which research evidence suggests can have a positive impact across phases and for all pupil groups, including those with SEND, see the EEF's '5-a-day' approach:

<https://bit.ly/EEF5aday>



APPENDIX 3

SELF-EVALUATION: TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT TOOL KIT

Examples of lesson observation sheets for

- Beginning of lessons
- Main content of lessons
- End of lessons