

High Quality Learning and Teaching

The follow represents a summary of feedback from the workshop sessions held in April 2015 in which teachers developed a definition of high quality learning and teaching at BISR.

At BISR High Quality Learning takes place when students are continually aware of where they are now in their learning, where they can or need to get to, and, most importantly, how best to get there.

Students take responsibility for their learning and can work independently or collaboratively. They evaluate their own work and reflect on the outcomes and are stimulated, inspired and challenged and are working towards targets that are understood and achievable.

High Quality Learning:

- Occurs when students are motivated and enthused by what they are learning;
- Is an active process – a product of doing rather than receiving;
- Builds on prior knowledge;
- Is supported by both the teacher and other students, and takes the form of interaction, collaboration and teacher intervention;
- Is centred on the learners' responsibility for their own learning. They are able to exercise choice, develop goals, plan their approach and work independently;
- Is reflective and enables learners to monitor and review the learning;
- Is where students make progress with their learning;
- Is when students display a strong desire to contribute the effort and concentration required to match the teacher's passion for learning.

What does high quality learning look like for BISR students?

- They make progress through the acquisition or development of new knowledge and skills;
- They are productive and work at a good pace;
- They are motivated to learn;
- They work with increasing concentration, confidence and independence;

- They are able to apply strategies they have learned in the classroom and transfer their learning to other subjects and situations;
- They show enjoyment and engagement in their learning;
- They understand what they are learning, how well they have done and the next steps that they need to take in their learning;
- They are moving towards taking responsibility for their own learning.

High Quality teaching:

High quality learning is not possible without high quality teaching.

- Provides carefully structured activities matched to student needs;
- Incorporates AfL in all its manifestations;
- Gives students responsibility for their own work;
- Develops well planned, prepared and paced lessons that maintain high levels of interaction with the class;
- Provides challenging work stemming from expert subject knowledge, how to teach it and how students learn;
- Maintains high levels of student engagement;
- Creates a positive atmosphere in the classroom through excellent relationship;
- Ensures appropriate pace, variety and challenge;
- Makes expectations clear;
- Incorporates high levels of praise and enthusiasm;
- Uses a variety of approaches; strategies and techniques are well selected and time is used productively;
- Uses homework effectively; particularly to reinforce and extend what is learned in school, if not prepare for a new topic;
- Models positive outcomes;

High Quality learning is most likely to take place when:

- Teachers demonstrate deep knowledge and understanding of the subjects they teach. They use questioning highly effectively and demonstrate understanding of the ways students think about subject content. They identify students' common misconceptions and act to ensure they are corrected.
- Teachers plan lessons very effectively, making maximum use of lesson time and coordinating lesson resources well. They manage students' behaviour highly effectively with clear rules that are consistently enforced.

- Teachers provide adequate time for practice to embed the students' knowledge, understanding and skills securely. They introduce subject content progressively and constantly demand more of students. Teachers identify and support any student who is falling behind, and enable almost all to catch up.
- Teachers check students' understanding systematically and effectively in lessons, offering clearly directed and timely support.
- Teachers provide students with incisive feedback, in line with the school's assessment policy, about what students can do to improve their knowledge, understanding and skills. The students use this feedback effectively.
- Teachers set challenging homework, in line with the school's policy and as appropriate for the age and stage of students, that consolidates learning, deepens understanding and prepares students very well for work to come.
- Teachers embed reading, writing and communication and, where appropriate, mathematics exceptionally well across the curriculum, equipping all students with the necessary skills to make progress. For younger children in particular, phonics teaching is highly effective in enabling them to tackle unfamiliar words.
- Teachers are determined that students achieve well. They encourage students to try hard, recognise their efforts and ensure that students take pride in all aspects of their work. Teachers have consistently high expectations of all students' attitudes to learning.
- Students love the challenge of learning and are resilient to failure. They are curious, interested learners who seek out and use new information to develop, consolidate and deepen their knowledge, understanding and skills. They thrive in lessons and also regularly take up opportunities to learn through extra-curricular activities.
- Students are eager to know how to improve their learning. They capitalise on opportunities to use feedback, written or oral, to improve.
- Parents are provided with clear and timely information on how well their child is progressing and how well their child is doing in relation to the standards expected. Parents are given guidance about how to support their child to improve.
- Teachers are quick to challenge stereotypes and the use of derogatory language in lessons and around the school. Resources and teaching strategies reflect and value the diversity of students' experiences and provide students with a comprehensive understanding of people and communities beyond their immediate experience. Students love the challenge of learning.

Appendix A

In order for High Qualifications to be a consistent feature of BISR, lessons should be well planned and include reviews of previous learning and offer a variety of learning activities. Differentiation is essential and Assessment for Learning is of prime importance:

Planning

All lessons should be planned and resourced with consideration to the age, ability and needs of the student. An effective lesson is structured to include a starter activity, the main body of the lesson and a plenary.

High quality planning:

- Enables all students to progress in their learning;
- Is informed by prior learning and assessment;
- Identifies clearly the learning that will take place, with clear learning objectives and learning outcomes;
- Identifies differentiation for varying needs by task, resources, outcomes and/or method;
- Allows for students to develop and practise higher order thinking skills such as application, problem solving, analysis, creativity and decision making;
- Identifies the questions and tasks that will be used to assess and summarise learning and help students to understand how to improve (plenaries and mini plenaries);
- Identifies effective question and AfL techniques to direct and challenge students;
- Allows learning sessions to be engaging and enjoyable.

In addition, well-planned lessons include:

Learning Objectives: Learning Objectives which are identified and shared. This needs to be a two-step approach in which students are told not only the purpose of the lesson but also what the teacher expects in terms of outcomes from activity. There is a need to communicate why they are doing what they are doing and how it fits into the bigger picture of the subject or their wider learning across the curriculum. This might be achieved through:

- The learning objectives being outlined to the students at or near to the beginning of each lesson.
- The students being clear about the learning objectives in terms of what they are expected to learn. Objectives could be phrased in terms of: 'We are learning to ...':
 - i. Know that ... (knowledge - factual information such as names of people or equipment, places, symbols, formulae etc.);
 - ii. Understand how/why ... (understanding – concepts, reasons, effects, principles, processes etc.);
 - iii. Develop/be able to ... (skills – using knowledge, applying techniques, analysing information etc.);

- iv. Develop/be aware of ... (attitudes and values – empathy, caring, sensitivity towards social issues, feelings, moral issues etc.);
 - v. Explore and refine strategies for ... (creating, designing, hypothesising, exploring alternatives).
- The students understand desired learning outcomes. Teachers should tell students what you expect from them as a high quality outcome of each lesson or part lesson and how they will be assessed on the work they are to do, create or produce? This will usually be done through effective modelling of tasks and describing or showing different possible attainment levels students will produce.

Outcomes could to be phrased in terms of: 'What I am looking For ...: ('WILF')

- a. from everyone is.....'
- b. you to be successful is...'
- c. for top marks is.....'

Review: Review learning from a previous lesson to link and consolidate Review helps create links with previous learning. This helps build secure foundations for subsequent learning, so that learners can progressively develop the skills, knowledge, understanding, attitudes and values contained in the curriculum.

Variety of Learning Activity: The main activity/activities in a lesson are critical in making learning an enjoyable and challenging experience. It should stimulate learning through matching teaching techniques and strategies to the range of learning styles and needs within your class. Effective lessons will contain activities for different types of learners. Ultimately, lesson preparation should involve using student data and assessments to design different tasks to meet individual intelligences. It should provide opportunities for students to show and develop their skills and abilities to work independently and collaboratively. When teachers decide how many tasks to cover in a lesson, and how long each should be, as a guide they should try not to exceed the concentration span of students. Tony Buzan suggests that the average concentration span corresponds roughly to chronological age plus one or two minutes.

Differentiation to Enable All Learners to Succeed. Differentiation can be seen as an on-going process that is accommodating the needs of individual students at BISR. It ensures that teaching allows most learners to make at least their expected progress in relation to their capability. It will also stretch the less able to work as close to their capability as possible and the gifted and talented way beyond. Differentiation is best achieved when based upon an informed review of the student's learning and therefore through a diagnostic and formative assessment procedure. Differentiation within classes should therefore take account of students' current and target grades. Other professional judgements through diagnostic and formative assessment may reshape initial strategies over time, but this data should remain central to the differentiation employed in the classroom.

Assessment for Learning The key focus of assessment in teaching and learning is to enable students to be continually aware of where they are now in their learning, where they can or need to get to, and, most importantly, how best to get there. Assessment is of prime importance to staff to inform their future planning and activity with classes. Teachers must recognise equally that it has a profound influence on student motivation and self-esteem. Therefore it must show consideration and be both constructive and sensitive.

In order to achieve this, teaching staff need

- An accurate knowledge and understanding of the cognitive and linguistic levels of their students and the developmental approach to language and learning;
- Knowledge of what students are capable of and provide learning opportunities that challenge them appropriately;

- A clear understanding of the Curriculum that students are working at and the next steps in their learning;
- A clear understanding of the specific learning needs and styles of their students;
- To use student targets as working documents in their planning to differentiate work for individual students;
- To work closely with TAs and Learning Support Assistants to ensure students are best supported in their learning.

Appendix B

Improving the Quality of Teaching and Learning through Differentiation

Differentiation is the process of meeting the needs of different types of learners in our classrooms.

This might be achieved by:

- a. **TASK** Because students work in a variety of ways with their different strength and aptitudes, a range of tasks spanning the spectrum of abilities can be an effective way of differentiating.
- b. **RESOURCE** are available to challenge the more able and support students with special educational needs. It means changing the resources by which students learn to meet their individual needs. Practical strategies could include:
 - Layout, design, graphics and readability of the resource.
 - Training the students to use a variety of resources independently (including a study skills programme such as SamLearning)
 - Reducing the dependence on whole class texts as a source for teaching.
 - Variety of mediums for example marker pens and poster paper
- c. **RESPONSE** The response of the teacher / adult / fellow student is a form by which differentiation can be achieved. This is essential in cases where differentiation by outcome is planned as the teacher's written or spoken response will vary from student to student. Marking of a student's work is an important medium for differentiation by response.
- d. **OUTCOME** Students working on a common un-differentiated task will inevitably produce different outcomes to the task set, as long as the task is not too closed.
- e. **GROUP** Differentiation by group is an important way to allow purposeful use of resources. Students could belong to smaller groups within a larger teaching group. The students will have a record of the groups to which they belong.
- f. **SUPPORT** The different needs of the different students will inevitably mean that some students need greater support than others. There are a number of strategies that can provide that support. Using the skills of TAs in the classroom to create a positive learning environment for example. These strategies adapt teaching to the potential and needs of each individual, from the gifted and talented to those with special educational needs, and as a result create a culture of respect for other