

Learning and Teaching Policy

In De La Salle College, we believe in the concept of lifelong learning. While we are professional teachers, we are also learners and as such we continue striving to improve our practice. This means coming to a better understanding of the learning and teaching process and being committed to continuous professional development.

We believe that learning should be a rewarding and enjoyable experience for everyone. Through our teaching we equip our students with the knowledge, skills and understanding that will enable them to make informed choices about the important things in their lives and to contribute to: their community; to society as a whole, and the economy.

We believe that with effective and enjoyable learning and teaching experiences we can help our students lead happy, healthy and rewarding lives.

## Rationale

***The purpose of this policy is:***

* To establish a shared understanding of what constitutes quality Learning and Teaching.
* To state, clearly, the expectations of De La Salle College with regard to Learning and

Teaching.

* To provide a framework against which we can evaluate our own performance as Teachers.
* To monitor the effectiveness of Learning and Teaching across the School.
* To provide Departments with a framework for determining their own Quality Indicators.
* To outline the template for the 4PLP.

## Our Aims for our Students:

**These are the values, skills and attributes we wish our students to have when they leave De La Salle to make their way in the world:**

***We wish our students to:***

* Communicate effectively, talk confidently and listen sympathetically.
* Be numerate, literate, good team players, flexible, adaptable and aspirational.
* Respect themselves and others.
* Have self-worth and self-belief that they have the ability to achieve their potential and something positive in their lives.
* Be good friends, caring family members and decent neighbours to others.
* Be hardworking young people who can be trusted to do the right thing.
* Have a sense of humour and fun.
* Embrace Gospel values of love, honesty, compassion, forgiveness and justice.
* Have an understanding and appreciation of their faith and cultural heritage.
* Be aware of their own history, language, culture and have a sense of their global identity, respecting the opinions, values, rights and cultures of others.
* Be young people of courage, understanding and wisdom with a sense of justice and fair play.
* Be proud of themselves and their achievements be they Academic, Sporting, Cultural and Artistic, and be proud of their school and where they come from.
* Be generous, compassionate, kind and caring young men and women.
* Be independent and lifelong learners with drive, determination and an eagerness to succeed.

**There are a number of key factors that promote effective learning and teaching:**

## The Learning Environment

**In order that students achieve as learners to their full potential, their learning must take place in an appropriate environment. While the environment may be physical its defining characteristic is based on relationships. An effective learning environment is characterised by:**

* A welcoming atmosphere, positive relationships between teachers and students and between students and students in a relaxed, well organised classroom that stimulates and inspires.
* A high level of enthusiasm for learning from the teacher transferred to students within an atmosphere of mutual respect based on our school ethos and values.
* Personal qualities: warm, caring, approachable, trustworthy, hardworking, enthusiastic, motivational, fair, sensitive, sympathetic but firm when required.
* Use of positive affirming language. Change “I can’t” to “I can” and use positive body language.
* Communication of appropriately high behavioural and academic expectations to **all students**.
* Listen to pupils, show interest in them as individuals and value their opinions.
* Praise often, ‘catch them being good’.
* Telling students directly that they have the ability to do well. Your belief in them will inspire their success.
* There is clear subject identity in all rooms;
* Vocabulary is displayed and forms a key component in the learning and teaching of the students; within the lesson routines there is clear evidence of the use of key words
* Presentational displays and aids to learning e.g. AFL Aids, TSPC, Reading, Writing, Spelling, Positive Behaviour are evident in all rooms and are consistent.
* Pupil work is displayed.
* Seating arrangements are conducive to activity/task and needs of the students;
* An invitational environment is promoted which is well kept, litter and graffiti free.
* Consistent and fair implementation of all school policies and expectations regarding behaviour for learning.
* High quality, stimulating resources, differentiated where appropriate and a range of learning activities to stimulate, engage and challenge learners including the use of ICT to enhance learning.

## Effective Teaching:

**Teaching can be said to be effective when:**

* Teachers have up to date and deep subject knowledge.
* There are good, positive working relationships between teachers and students.
* Lessons are well planned, prepared, resourced, structured and delivered.
* There is a flow to the lesson, which could/should include some of the following: recap on previous learning; communication of learning intentions; sharing of success criteria; active learning; group/paired work; independent research; reading, problem solving; effective questioning; reflection; creativity; didactic approaches; discussion and evaluation.
* To promote this in De La Salle College, teachers follow the Four Phase Lesson Plan model in planning and delivering lessons (see Appendix 1).
* A wide variety of teaching styles and methodologies are employed in a productive learning environment.
* Teachers consistently have realistic and challenging expectations of their students.
* Teachers **know their students** well and differentiate in terms of student ability, additional needs, student progress and preferred learning styles.
* Appropriate resources, including ICT, are used to stimulate and enhance the learning.
* Students are engaged, responsive, enthusiastic and motivated and are given opportunities to work individually, in pairs and in groups.
* Students are given opportunities to engage in open ended problem-solving activities in class and at home to consolidate learning.
* Students receive meaningful feedback on their learning and work and are encouraged to improve on previous best performance.
* The experience is enjoyed by both teacher and student.

## Effective Learning:

**Learning can be said to have been effective when:**

* Students are enjoying learning.
* The learning intentions have been shared and the success criteria met.
* Students succeed in public exams in line with predictions based on baseline testing and other data including tracking progress data.
* Students are able to learn from their mistakes and apply learning to different contexts.
* Students are able to take increasing responsibility for their learning, using homework diaries to aid organisation, engage in independent research and can talk confidently about their learning.
* Students complete tasks appropriate to their potential, participating in peer learning and teaching.
* Students display confidence and pride in their work and their achievements.
* Students set and meet or exceed their own learning targets.
* Students demonstrate competence in all of the Key Skills areas (Communication, Using Mathematics and Using ICT).
* Students are equipped to use ICT and emerging technologies to progress their own learning beyond the confines of a classroom in an e-learning world.
* Students acquire knowledge and skills through activities other than classroom teaching.

**DEFINING ASSESSMENT: (There is a separate Assessment and Reporting Policy)**

Assessment is a general term covering all the methods used to appraise the performance of students. This encompasses formative, diagnostic, summative and evaluative assessment:

**Assessment is:**

* An integral part of the process of learning and teaching and needs to be planned with the same care and precision.
* Making informed judgements about students’ achievements and progress.
* Highlighting students’ positive achievements.
* On-going and can take place on any occasion when students express themselves, intentionally or otherwise in relation to learning objectives.
* Based on what students know, understand and can do.
* A means of monitoring continuity and progression in students’ achievements as well as evaluating their curriculum;
* A subtle art not an exact science.

**PURPOSE OF ASSESSMENT**

**Some Assessment Definitions:**

**Formative assessment**

Formative assessment is an integral part of teaching and learning. It does not contribute to the final mark given for the module; instead it contributes to learning through providing feedback. It should indicate what is good about a piece of work and why this is good; it should also indicate what is not so good and how the work could be improved. Effective formative feedback will affect what the student and the teacher does next.

**Summative assessment**

Summative assessment demonstrates the extent of a learner's success in meeting the assessment criteria used to gauge the intended learning outcomes of a module or programme, and which contributes to the final mark given for the module. It is normally, though not always, used at the end of a unit of teaching. Summative assessment is used to quantify achievement, to reward achievement, to provide data for selection (to the next stage in education or to employment). For all these reasons the validity and reliability of summative assessment are of the greatest importance. Summative assessment can provide information that has formative/diagnostic value.

**Diagnostic assessment**

Like formative assessment, diagnostic assessment is intended to improve the learner’s experience and their level of achievement. However, diagnostic assessment looks backwards rather than forwards. It assesses what the learner already knows and/or the nature of difficulties that the learner might have, which, if undiagnosed, might limit their engagement in new learning. It is often used before teaching or when a problem arises.

**Controlled Assessment**

It is designed to assess skills which are not effectively measured by external examination. It retains many features of coursework while ensuring that the work submitted is the students’ own and that internal assessments are more manageable for teachers and students. Whilst the general rules are the same for all GCSEs, the specific requirements for Controlled Assessment are different for each subject. Information for teachers is provided in the subject specifications and subject specific guidance materials.

**Peer and Self-Assessment**

These Assessment for Learning strategies enable the learner to recognise success in their own and others’ work and to focus on how they are learning as well as what they are learning.

**Dynamic assessment**

Dynamic assessment measures what the student achieves when given some teaching in an unfamiliar topic or field. An example might be assessment of how much Swedish is learnt in a short block of teaching to students who have no prior knowledge of the language. It can be useful to assess potential for specific learning in the absence of relevant prior attainment, or to assess general learning potential for students who have a particularly disadvantaged background. It is often used in advance of the main body of teaching.

**Synoptic assessment**

Synoptic assessment encourages students to combine elements of their learning from different parts of a programme and to show their accumulated knowledge and understanding of a topic or subject area. A synoptic assessment normally enables students to show their ability to integrate and apply their skills, knowledge and understanding with breadth and depth in the subject. It can help to test a student's capability of applying the knowledge and understanding gained in one part of a programme to increase their understanding in other parts of the programme, or across the programme as a whole. Synoptic assessment can be part of other forms of assessment.

**Evaluative assessment** is used to inform curriculum planning and to provide information for monitoring and accountability.

**Assessment activities in De La Salle College will strive to reflect the following principles:**

* To make assessment an integral part of learning and teaching.
* To use assessment to support learning.
* To engage students in the learning process through the sharing of learning intentions.
* To encourage and use open questioning.
* To encourage peer and self-assessment.
* To give constructive feedback and encourage action for improvement.
* To use summative assessment formatively.
* To use new technologies to support the implementation of effective assessment for learning practices.

**Assessment for Learning strategies are central to effective practice in De La Salle College**

**and should be part of effective planning for learning and teaching.**

A teacher’s planning should provide opportunities for both learner and teacher to obtain and use information about progress towards learning goals. It also has to be flexible to respond to initial and emerging ideas and skills. Planning should include strategies to ensure that learners understand the goals they are pursuing and the criteria that will be applied in assessing work. How learners will receive feedback, how they will take part in assessing their learning and how they will be helped to make further progress should also be planned.

**Assessment for learning should focus on how students learn.**

The process of learning has to be in the minds of both learner and teacher when assessment is planned and when the evidence is interpreted. Learners should become as aware of the ‘how’ of their learning as they are of the ‘what’.

**Assessment for learning should be recognised as central to classroom practice.**

Much of what teachers and learners do in classrooms can be described as assessment. Tasks and questions prompt learners to demonstrate their knowledge, understanding and skills. What learners say and do is then observed and interpreted, and judgements are made about how learning can be improved. These assessment processes are an essential part of everyday classroom practice and involve both teachers and learners in reflection, dialogue and decision making.

**Assessment for learning should be regarded as a key professional skill for teachers.**

Teachers require the professional knowledge and skills to:

* Plan for assessment.
* Observe learning.
* Analyse and interpret evidence of learning.
* Give feedback to learners.
* Support learners in self-assessment.

Teachers should be supported in developing these skills through initial and continuing professional development. It is the responsibility of the school Principal and DLT to ensure effective assessment for learning is taking place throughout the school.

**Assessment for learning should be formative and constructive.**

Teachers should be aware of the impact that comments, marks and grades can have on learners’ confidence and enthusiasm and should be as constructive as possible in the feedback that they give. Comments that focus on how to improve are more constructive for both learning and motivation.

**Assessment for learning should take account of the importance of learner motivation.**

Assessment that encourages learning fosters motivation by emphasising progress and achievement rather than failure. Comparison with others who have been more successful is unlikely to motivate learners. It can also lead to their withdrawing from the learning process in areas where they have been made to feel they are ‘no good’. Motivation can be preserved and enhanced by assessment methods which protect the learner’s autonomy, provide some choice and constructive feedback, and create opportunity for self-direction.

**Assessment for learning should promote commitment to learning goals and a shared understanding of the criteria by which they are assessed.**

For effective learning to take place learners need to understand what it is they are trying to achieve – and want to achieve it. Understanding and commitment follows when learners have some part in deciding goals and identifying criteria for assessing progress. Communicating assessment criteria involves discussing them with learners using terms that they can understand, providing examples of how the criteria can be met in practice and engaging learners in peer and self-assessment.

**Learners should receive constructive guidance about how to improve.**

Learners need information and guidance in order to plan the next steps in their learning. Teachers should:

* Pinpoint the learner’s strengths and advice on how to develop them.
* Be clear and constructive about any weaknesses and how they might be addressed.
* Provide opportunities for learners to improve upon their work.

**Assessment for learning should recognise the full range of achievements of all learners’ capacity for self-assessment so that they can become reflective and self-managing.**

Independent learners have the ability to seek out and gain new skills, new knowledge and new understandings. They are able to engage in self-reflection and to identify the next steps in their learning. Teachers should equip learners with the desire and the capacity to take charge of their learning through developing the skills of self-assessment.

**Assessment for learning should recognise the full range of achievements of all learners.**

Assessment for learning should be used to enhance all learners’ opportunities to learn in all areas of educational activity. It should enable all learners to achieve their best and to have their efforts recognised.

Assessment for learning involves using assessment in the classroom to raise pupils’ achievement. It is based on the idea that pupils will improve most if they understand the aim of their learning, where they are in relation to this aim and how they can achieve the aim (or close the gap in the knowledge).

**Effective assessment for learning happens all the time in the classroom. It involves:**

* Sharing the learning intentions and the big picture (plan for learning).
* Establishing and sharing success criteria for and with students.
* Using effective and varied questioning strategies.
* Students are encouraged to demonstrate their learning in a variety of circumstances.
* Using a range of effective feedback instruments to stimulate and motivate the learner and to affirm what learning has taken place and how the learner can improve.
* Encouraging self-assessment and peer assessment to drive improvement.
* Both the teacher and pupils reviewing and reflecting on pupils’ performance and progress.
* Early detection of underachievement and promotes intervention.
* Recognising that both motivation and self-esteem, crucial for effective learning and progress, can be increased by effective assessment techniques.
* A planned plenary at the end of lessons to review the learning intentions and assess levels of understanding to inform future teaching plans.

**Using marking and feedback strategies:**

Teachers recognise that feedback is an essential element in helping pupils improve. When using assessment for learning strategies, teachers need to move away from giving work a numerical score with comments that may not be related to the learning intention of the task (e.g. ‘try harder’ or ‘join up your writing’, although these may be part of the comment) and move towards giving feedback to help the pupil improve in the specific activity. This will help to close the learning gap and move pupils forward in their understanding.

It is important to establish trust between the teacher and the pupil before giving feedback.

Pupils benefit from opportunities for formal feedback through group and plenary sessions. Where this works well, there is a shift from teachers telling pupils what they have done wrong to pupils seeing for themselves what they need to do to improve and discussing it with the teacher. Giving feedback involves making time to talk to pupils and teaching them to be reflective about the learning objectives and about their work and responses.

**Characteristics of effective feedback:**

Feedback is more effective if it focuses on learning intention of the task and is given regularly while still relevant.

* Feedback is most effective when it confirms that pupils are on the right track and when it stimulates correction or improvement of a piece of work.
* Suggestions for improvement should act as ‘scaffolding’, i.e. pupils should be given as much help as they need to use their knowledge. They should not be given the complete solutions as soon as they get stuck and should learn to think things through for themselves.
* Pupils should be helped to find an alternative solution if simply repeating an explanation continues to lead to failure.
* Feedback on progress over a number of attempts is more effective than feedback on one attempt treated in isolation.
* The quality of dialogue in feedback is important and most research indicates that oral feedback is more effective than written feedback.
* Pupils need to have the skills to ask for help and the ethos of the school should encourage them to do so.

A culture of success should be promoted in which every pupil can make achievements by building on their previous performance rather than being compared with others. This is based on informing pupils about the strengths and weaknesses demonstrated in their work and giving feedback about what their next steps should be.

**Sharing learning goals:**

Most schemes of work emphasise the need to clearly identify the learning objectives for a lesson. Teachers should ensure that pupils recognise the difference between the task and its learning intention (separating what they have to do from what they will learn).

Assessment criteria or learning outcomes are often defined in formal language that pupils may not understand. To involve pupils fully in their learning teachers should:

* Explain clearly the reasons for the lesson or activity in terms of the learning objectives.
* Share the specific assessment criteria with pupils.
* Help pupils to understand what they have done well and what they need to do develop.

Looking at a range of other pupils’ responses to the task set can help pupils understand how to use the assessment criteria to assess their own learning.

**Peer and self-assessment**

Research has shown that pupils will achieve more if they are fully engaged in their own learning process. This means that if pupils know what they need to learn and why, they will achieve more than if they sit passively in a classroom working through exercises with no real comprehension either of the learning intention or why it might be important.

**Peer-assessment**

Peer assessment can be effective because pupils can clarify their own ideas and understanding of both the learning intention and the assessment criteria while marking other pupils’ work.

Peer assessment must be managed carefully. It is not for the purpose of ranking because if pupils compare themselves with others rather than their own previous attainment, those performing better than their peers will not be challenged and those performing worse will be demotivated.

**Self-assessment**

Self-assessment is an important tool for teachers. Once pupils understand how to assess their current knowledge and the gaps in it, they will have a clearer idea of how they can help themselves progress.

Teachers and pupils should set targets relating to specific goals. This acts as a guide and gives pupils more control over their learning intentions. It also assists the teacher in providing help where necessary or appropriate. In addition, pupils need to:

* Reflect on their own work
* Be supported to admit problems without risk to self-esteem.
* Be given time to work problems out.

Asking pupils to look at examples of other pupils’ work that does and does not meet the assessment criteria can help them to understand what was required from a task and to assess the next steps they might need to take. Looking at different responses can also help pupils understand the different approaches they could have taken to the task. It is often helpful if the work is from pupils they do not know.

In De La Salle College we understand we have a ‘Pastoral’ role as well as an ‘Academic’ role to play. We demonstrate this:

* By fostering a School atmosphere based on strong values, mutual respect, openness and trust.
* By presenting ourselves as role models for our students in our values, words and actions.
* By being a genuine, dedicated, caring staff that value their students and are happy to listen, talk to and work with our young people.
* By having unconditional positive regard for our students and by forgiving their misdemeanours and guiding them once again in the right direction.
* By empathising, understanding and knowing our students.
* By working hard to help each student reach their full potential.
* Through quality leadership at all levels and working together as a Staff to achieve shared goals.
* By recruiting and retaining high quality, committed, well qualified teachers.
* By demonstrating our belief in and commitment to Continuing Professional Development.
* By striving to create and maintain good working relationships with parents and guardians, our partners, community and parishes.
* By giving of ourselves and our time both in and beyond the classroom and the school day.
* By providing support for those students who need extra help, when they need it.
* By giving our students the knowledge of their faith and the experience of the practice of their faith.
* By demonstrating that we are all still learning and by having a sense of fun.
* By regularly celebrating achievement and praising our students.

**Monitoring, Evaluation and Review:**

* **Role of every member of Staff:**
  + To implement the Learning and Teaching Policy; participate in whole school surveys focused on Learning and Teaching; self-evaluate, engage with contemporary pedagogical literature/ research and review classroom practice as necessary.
* **Role of Heads of Department:**
  + During Tuesday directed time/Staff Development Days, Heads of Department will discuss the Learning and Teaching Policy in relation to their subject area and agree monitoring strategies with Department members. Departmental feedback using proforma provided will be completed and copied to SLT. Learning and Teaching is to be a focus of every Departmental meeting.
  + HoDs will also be responsible for ensuring that the CATs are completed with rigour and the data recorded on the school tracking systems.
  + Trusted Colleague Networking will also be part of standard departmental practice.
* **Role of Heads of Year:**
  + During Tuesday directed time/Staff Development Days, Heads of Year will discuss the Learning and Teaching Policy in relation to their Year Group and agree monitoring strategies with Form Tutors. Year Group feedback will be provided to SLT through the Year Group SLT Link.
  + Year Heads recognise that they have a huge role to play in the academic achievements of their year group and the successful implementation of the Learning and Teaching Policy is part of their responsibility.
* **Role of SLT:**
  + Throughout the year monitoring will be carried out through Annual HOD/HOY Review, PRSD and other observations including ‘Learning Walks’ and ‘SLT Book-looks’. SLT and Principal will discuss, determine, monitor and evaluate the extent of implementation of the School Learning and Teaching Policy in terms of the characteristics of a stimulating learning environment and effective learning, as well as the aims for our Students and our School Mission Statement. SLT link meetings will take place on a termly basis with a view to monitoring departmental progress on whole school Learning and Teaching objectives.
* **Methods of monitoring, reviewing and evaluating progress:** 
  + Formal (PRSD, Learning Walks) and informal observation (TCN).
  + Sampling of pupil work in departments and at whole school level.
  + SLT link meetings.
  + Stakeholder voice (Pupil, Staff, Parents).
  + Use of other auditing tools including analysis of all school data.
  + Range of qualitative information to determine the extent of our school ethos in action.
* As Learning and Teaching is the core business of De La Salle College, the Learning and Teaching Policy will be reviewed on an annual basis.

*Sources of Evidence:*

* Departmental Learning and Teaching Policy in context of whole school Learning and Teaching Policy.
* Pupil Work
* Stakeholder Voice – Pupil and Teacher
* Classroom Observation formal and informal
* CPD – Staff Development Records
* PRSD Process and records

*Linked Policies, School and DENI Documents:*

* School Development Plan
* Assessment and Reporting Policy
* Every School a Good School (ESAGS)
* Together Towards Improvement
* Count, Read, Succeed

**Appendix 1: De La Salle College: 4PLP as a model of Good Practice**

The 4PLP is not fundamentally different from what teachers have historically done with regard to lesson planning. It simply formalises and creates a common template by which we discuss and plan lessons. It is not designed to eliminate individuality or creativity and it is recognised that the application of the 4PLP will vary from lesson to lesson. As Mike Hughes says, **“it is a template not a straightjacket.”**

Aside from it being an effective template for planning, the 4PLP is used in De La Salle College because it helps highlight that teaching and learning are different. The essence of effective learning is understanding. Students need to make personal sense of information and that requires them to engage with the information they receive in different ways. It requires students to be challenged and most importantly to think

There is no point in adopting a lesson template if it is not going to improve teaching and learning. In both cases it is Phase 3 that holds the key. The difference between an excellent lesson and a satisfactory lesson is often the extent to which students are engaged in their learning and the ways in which they are challenged to think and interact with information. **Socrate**s has an interesting perspective on this: **“I cannot teach anybody anything, I can only make them think.”** Learning is an active process – the product of doing rather than receiving. Acquiring information is not the same as understanding it and making personal sense of it – this is what learning is all about.

Mike Hughes states: **“The biggest advantage of adopting the 4PLP structure is that it emphasises the centrality of understanding in the learning process and highlights the crucial distinction between teaching and learning.”**

**Phase one: Overview/Lesson introduction**

**Indicators of excellence:**

* Teacher creates a relaxed yet purposeful atmosphere.
* Curiosity is stimulated.
* Work is set in the context of and connections are made with prior learning helping provide students with an overview.
* Learning objectives are shared.
* There is a sense of challenge.



**Phase two: Input/Teaching**

**Indicators of excellence:** **“High quality exposition does not guarantee understanding but it does make it more likely.” (Mike Hughes)**

* Information presented in short chunks and students’ attention spans are not exceeded.
* Frequent closed questions to check shallow understanding.
* As the input phase moves to a conclusion more open questions can be asked to prime the brain for the next phase.
* New information should be delivered in a variety of ways (multisensory), to suit students with visual, auditory and kinaesthetic learning preferences.
* Appropriate technical and subject specific language should be used and understood.



**Phase three: Processing/Learning (understanding)**

**Indicators of excellence:**

* Students are fully engaged in their learning.
* Time for students to engage in activities to develop understanding.
* Tasks that require students to think and gives them the opportunity to generate their own questions **(Socratic dialogue).**
* High proportion of open questions that challenge students and encourage them to reflect.
* Opportunities for students to verbalise their understanding.
* Opportunities for students to demonstrate their understanding.
* Frequent, high quality teacher-student, student-student interactions.
* High proportion of open questions.
* Tasks that enable teachers to assess student understanding.
* Students given opportunities to process understanding in their preferred style.
* An emphasis on recreating not reproducing information. Consider reduction and transformation activities.

Reduction activities:

* Summarise in 100 words.
* Rank order the following statements.
* Which is the most important sentence/paragraph in describing this event/character?
* Underline six key words.

Transformation activities:

* Convert a text into a labelled diagram, flow chart, picture, story board.
* Describe a graph/diagram/picture in words.
* Portray this piece of text as a diagram/role play.
* Put the key words into a poem/rhyme.

Phase 3: Beware of:

* students writing things down that they don’t understand;
* copious note-taking;
* low-level comprehension exercises;
* students copying graphs, diagrams;
* using a large proportion of closed questions;
* activities that lack challenge – colouring; cutting; sticking; word searches etc.;
* students reproducing rather than re-creating information.

**In accordance with the Northern Ireland Curriculum, it is expected that learning experiences are:**

* relevant and enjoyable;
* media-rich;
* skills-integrated;
* active and hands-on;
* challenging and engaging;
* culturally diverse; and
* varied to suit learning styles.

**Learning activities should:**

* present opportunities for investigation and problem solving;
* allow an extent of choice on behalf of the learner;
* provide for on-going reflection on learning and progress.
* Where possible address other curriculum areas.

**Effective questioning should promote thinking skills.**

**Effective Questioning Techniques**

1. Use open questions.
2. Provide wait time—students need time to think through their answers before replying.
3. Provide thinking time by giving an advance warning, such as ‘In two minutes I am going to ask you.’
4. Allow students to explore and articulate their thinking by giving them two minutes to discuss their responses in pairs.
5. Ensure students fully understand the question by asking them to re-word it for someone three years younger.
6. Extend and deepen thinking by asking follow-up questions to the same student.
7. Help students to think about their thinking by asking follow-up questions such as: ’What made you think that?’
8. Students often give the first answer that comes into their heads without really thinking it through. Ask students to identify three possible answers and then select the best one.
9. Provide, or get students to generate, ten possible answers by ’snowballing’ e.g. ‘Think of three reasons; now work in pairs to see if you can get five; now work as a group and get eight...now select the best answer’.
10. Socratic dialogue.

**Phase four: Review/Lesson plenary**

**Indicators of excellence:**

* Teachers should assess the extent to which students have progressed towards the learning objectives i.e. how much do they understand?
* Sufficient time planned for reviewing ***what*** has been learned.
* Students encouraged to reflect on ***how*** they learned.
* Explicit reference to learning objectives.
* Students actively engaged in the review process and asked to demonstrate their understanding.
* Stimulate thought and curiosity ahead of the next lesson.



**Appendix 2: Learning and Teaching Team**

**Purpose:**

The purpose of the L&TT is to raise standards in the quality of classroom practice in De La Salle i.e. to improve the processes of both Learning and Teaching with a view to improving outcomes.

**Role/activities:**

In the early stages the L&TT will be focused on researching the available literature and evidence base on effective practice, the 4PLP and pedagogy. The team will act as a think tank and subsequent disseminator of the materials required to drive improvements in L&T in La Salle. While there is a core membership drawn from all teaching levels within the school, it is envisaged that there will be some fluidity to allow certain expertise to be utilised as required e.g. ICT.

As progress is made the L&TT will develop into a more active role regarding modelling/exemplifying identified Good Practice and planning staff development sessions.

The ultimate objective is to have a team of L&T evangelists who are at the cutting edge of practice and who (through the L&TT have a vehicle to) share that enthusiasm with a view to driving up standards across the school.

**Current membership: John MacManus, Stephen Killyleagh, Joanne Quinn, Stephan Begley, Aileen Bartlett, Paula Lynch, Sarah-Jane Lynch, Stacey Cross, David Monteith, Patricia McIlmurray.**