



TEACHING & LEARNING HANDBOOK



Professional Expectations

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DIPS-G Motto, Vision and Mission

DIPS-G MOTTO: Reaching the best potential of every learner in an international and inclusive environment

OUR VISION

DIS, in partnership with parents and community, strives to prepare every student to be digitally literate, a lifelong learner, and a productive citizen.

OUR MISSION

DIS is committed to provide education following international standards yet adhering to local values and traditions.

OUR PHILOSOPHY

We welcome every child in our nurturing school environment where parents are engaged, and teachers are valued. The school actively supports learners in a safe, caring, inclusive, and international learning community that allows them to grow and develop academically, emotionally, physically, and socially. We aim to promote equity among all learners so that all students have access to curriculum and learning to the best of their abilities.

GUIDING STATEMENTS

DIPS-G is committed to developing independent, confident, and 21st Century lifelong learners by:

- Providing a balanced, rigorous American Curriculum aligned to California State Standards in all subjects where the medium of instruction is English and to the Ministry of Education standards for Arabic, Islamic Studies, Moral Education Program, and Social Studies
- Promoting a curriculum which accommodates students' wellbeing as well as physical, social, emotional, personal, cultural, and educational needs and development
- Creating a student-centered environment that is conducive to learning where students are engaged, dynamic, and active
- Ensuring an international and inclusive learning environment which provides both support and enrichment to best accommodate the diverse educational needs of students
- Providing interactive instructional practices and interventions which improve students' academic achievement by raising attainment and accelerating progress based on starting points and assessment data
- Encouraging effective community involvement in the school life



DIPS-G Core Values

Core Values of DIPS-G are found in the acronym **INSISTENCE**

Internationalism: DIPS-G is perceived through effective collaboration among all members and with the community in a diverse and international environment. Consequently, DIPS-G celebrates internationalism and diversity in a culture of openness and respect.

Nationalism: DIPS-G makes an active contribution to the local community and encourages all members to maintain a sense of belonging and pride of their culture and traditions.

Sustainability: DIPS-G ensures that the school takes actions today to best serve the school community in a sustainable learning environment. Sustainability is supported in the school's physical operations as well as in its curriculum.

Innovation: DIPS-G finds the courage to challenge convention. DIPS-G believes that no idea is too small or too large if it makes things better for our learners and the community. The school addresses innovation through experimenting and stimulating creativity.

Self-Discipline and Commitment: DIPS-G is committed to maintaining high standards and expectations for all learners, ensuring they are self-disciplined and committed towards working hard to achieve success.

Tolerance: DIPS-G respects differences of others, appreciates diversity of views, values and cultures, and provides a safe international and inclusive environment to all learners.

Equity: DIPS-G community strives to create opportunities for all learners to achieve success in an international, inclusive environment. The school provides support to all learners based on their individual needs.

Novelty: DIPS-G appreciates new and original ideas and actions. The school always seeks unusual opportunities in different aspects and areas.

Confidence: DIPS-G encourages learners and the community to trust their abilities and to believe in themselves. The school celebrates the success of all members of community to instil pride and confidence in them.

Excellence: DIPS-G community works to continually exceed expectations. Just as we set educational standards for our school, we ensure that everything we do is delivered to a high standard. We go the **extra mile** for our students and our colleagues.



A Framework for Professional Teaching Practice

Any framework developed for professional practice must provide guidelines on what a teacher does when teaching. Thus, to better understand the responsibilities of teachers, DIPS-G has developed and Adopted a framework for teaching that identifies aspects of a teacher's responsibilities that empirical studies have demonstrated as promoting improved student learning.

The benefits of having a framework for professional practice are several. First, a framework offers the profession of teaching a shared vocabulary as a way to communicate about excellence. For novice teachers, a framework provides a pathway to excellence by laying out the twenty-two important components that constitute professional practice. A framework for teaching provides a structure for discussions among teachers and also serves to sharpen the focus for professional development. A framework also serves to communicate to the larger community the array of competencies needed to be an effective teacher.

Through the DIPS-G framework for professional teaching practice, the complex activity of teaching is divided into twenty-two components clustered into four domains of teaching responsibility:

- (1) planning and preparation,
- (2) the classroom environment,
- (3) instruction, and
- (4) professional responsibilities.

A brief review of each of these domains provides a road map of the skills and competencies new teachers need to develop.

Domain 1: Planning and Preparation. This domain outlines how a teacher organizes the content of what students are expected to learn — in other words, how the teacher designs instruction. It includes, demonstrating knowledge of content and pedagogy, demonstrating knowledge of the students, selecting instructional goals, demonstrating knowledge of resources, designing coherent instruction, and assessing student learning.

Domain 2: The classroom Environment. This domain consists of the interactions that occur in a classroom that are non-instructional. These consist of creating an environment of respect and rapport among the students and with the teacher, establishing a culture for learning, managing classroom procedures, managing student behavior, and organizing the physical space.

Domain 3: Instruction. This domain is what constitutes the core of teaching — the engagement of students in learning. It includes communicating clearly and accurately, using questioning and discussion techniques, engaging students in learning, providing feedback to students, and demonstrating flexibility and responsiveness.

Domain 4: Professional Responsibilities. This domain represents the wide range of a teacher's responsibilities outside the classroom. It includes reflecting on teaching, maintaining accurate records, communicating with families, contributing to the school and district, growing and developing professionally, and showing professionalism. Teachers who demonstrate these competencies are highly valued by their colleagues and administrators, as well as being seen as true professionals.



Role of DIPS-G Teacher

Teaching is full of many responsibilities, roles, and challenges. To teach is to nourish. This nourishing encompasses all aspects of development: social, emotional, cognitive, and physical. In every interaction, a teacher should nurture appropriate growth and development. Paperwork, lesson planning, preparing materials and the environment, and negotiating require teachers to have strong management skills. Managing a classroom requires organizational skills, attention to detail, and commitment. There are many balls in the air and it is the teacher's job to keep them up and moving!

Generally, the roles and responsibilities of teachers at DIPS-G include the following:

Curriculum and Planning

- Participate in the curriculum's continuous study, revision, and development at our school.
- Design and prepare the curriculum maps and weekly plans before the beginning of each academic year.
- Create session plans that are aligned with the school vision and mission, curriculum standards, and department guidelines.

Instruction and Assessment

- Introduce, implement, and facilitate instruction and classroom experiences that promote student learning and development.
- Design and employ appropriate forms of formative assessments and summative evaluations.
- Examine and analyse data to detect student ability and achievement to inform, modify, and adjust instruction.
- Examine individual student progress and appropriately utilize results to differentiate instruction and assessment and/or provide further student support and follow-up.
- Provide timely feedback on assessments to students that support them in adjusting their learning strategies and refining their knowledge and understanding.

Learning Environment

- Create and manage an effective learning environment that supports student learning.
- Implement effective use of instructional technology and school resources, such as computers, LCD projectors, Over-Head Projectors, computer labs, software, etc...
- Abide by the school's discipline policy and be consistent about it at all times.
- Maintain an organised, print-rich, and safe environment which is conducive to learning.



Teachers Responsibilities

Professional Expectations

Orderly Beginning of the Day

- All teachers must sign in no later than **7:00 am** on daily basis from Monday to Friday, collect / prepare their class materials and files and head to the morning meeting venues (as mentioned below).
- Teacher to be in class at 7:40 am sharp
- Zero period begins at 7:45 am sharp
- Zero Period in the morning is expected to comprise of the following activities and procedures:
 1. At 7:45 am sharp, students stand up showing respect to and sing the UAE National Anthem.
 2. Teacher takes classroom attendance and marks it on the school door (and on the school management system).
 3. DEAR Time (Drop Everything and Read) Every student must then be reading a story or a book.
 4. Brief discussion of the UAE National Agenda Parameter and Targets must be conducted in all classes.
 5. Character Counts discussion must also be held based on the character educational value of the week (according to MEP: Moral Education Program)
 6. For all KG and Elementary classes, teachers are expected to play songs about Good morning, classroom rules, Jolly Phonics, days of the week, months of the year, and seasons of the year.
- **Any time students enter a building or their class or go to a common facility or to the playground they should do so in an orderly manner.** Teaching students to line up quietly is an important aspect of their daily discipline and behavior. It is the full responsibility of every teacher to make sure that all students remain disciplined inside and outside classrooms at all times whether instructional or non-instructional times. Teachers are accountable for this important responsibility and their performance is assessed with this aspect in mind.
- Teachers check out from the school building at **3:00 pm**.

Punctuality

- Always arrive at your classes on time; never dismiss students before the end of the period. It is expected that all teachers fully respect and abide by their individual schedules for both contact and non-contact periods as well as duty expectations.
- The term FREE period / time DOES NOT EXIST in the school – teachers' working time is distributed in such a way that instructional time is referred to as CONTACT period whereas non-instructional time on the teacher's schedule is referred to NON-CONTACT period where teachers will be occupied and engaged with work that is relevant to their job designation in the school; e.g. planning, meeting with academic and administrative leaders, correcting and writing feedback on students' work, and tracking individual students' attainment and progress.
- It is strictly NOT ALLOWED for anyone to make any changes to any schedule without prior written approval from the School Superintendent /Principal.
- Use time efficiently and effectively keeping students engaged in learning and on-task AT ALL TIMES.



- Teachers are not expected to leave their classrooms before the next teacher comes in especially Elementary teachers. This is a major safety and security procedure which will help avoid unnecessary chaos or accidents that jeopardize students' protection. Transitional period between classes is expected to be paced smoothly and efficiently - which is an area that all administrative supervisors will follow up closely and report to the office of the School superintendent/Principal on daily basis.
- After a non-contact period teachers are expected to leave the staff room / work station and join the assigned classes at least 2 minutes before their lessons are scheduled to begin. Under no condition are students to be left unsupervised. This requires respecting punctuality in attending to duties. Safety of students should be the teacher's top priority and that of every teacher during the school day everyday.

First Break-Snack Time (for ELEMENTARY CLASSES ONLY)

- For purposes of safety and security and to ensure smooth procedures during break times, first break procedures are expected to be carried out according to the following:
 - Break time for Elementary classes (Grades 1 to 5) is expected to be divided into two parts; i.e. eating time and play time.
 - The first part of the break is the eating time which comprises the first 15-20 minutes of the break, where teachers make sure students eat their breakfast in class.
 - The teacher who sits with students during eating time is the teacher who has a contract period with the classroom during the period before break time.
 - Eating time is monitored by the teacher who makes sure that every student completes his/her meal before going out to the playground for play time.
 - During eating time, ALL STUDENTS must be seated at their desks as they eat their meals. The teacher is also expected to make sure students practice correct and appropriate manners of eating and cleaning after themselves. This is a very important cultural aspect in both the school and Dubai.
 - During eating time, the teacher may show some cartoons and/or songs to keep students calm and focused on eating rather than playing or moving around the classroom.
 - It is expected that teachers' snack supervision includes making sure students are **reminded of the rules** to acquire good eating manners, keeping **noise levels low** and **prohibiting student movement around while eating or drinking to avoid spillage or choking**.
 - Students who wish to go to the canteen are expected to line up and must be escorted by administrative supervisors and/or teacher assistants. These students must also be reminded to make polite requests, speak in English, practice saying please and thank you to the canteen staff.
- At the end of eating time, students will put their lunch boxes in their designated places and clean up. It is also the teacher's responsibility to make sure that students wash their hands and/or use wet wipes / sanitizer gel before they exit the classroom for play time in the playground.
- Play time begins once eating time is over. **No student should be allowed to remain in the class room during break time** except those attended to by their teacher to finish unfinished work or students in detention.
- Again, the expectation here is that the teacher makes sure students line up in an orderly manner before they exit the classroom. It is also an expectation that all light and electricity are switched OFF and that the classroom door is closed prior to escorting the children to the playground. Administrative supervisors will report on this expectation per teacher per class on daily basis.



- Teachers escort students to the playground and make sure students are on the playground in the presence of staff on duty. Then, if the teacher is not on duty, s/he may return to workstation and/or staff room.
- For classes in middle and high school, students line up in an orderly manner and go to the canteen / playground escorted by their teachers. Once teachers make sure students are out (in the canteen or in the playground), they may go back to their workstations / staff room as long as they are not on duty. It is strictly NOT ALLOWED to leave have students go down the stairs without being escorted by teachers or to have them run down in an unordered manner. If this is the case, administrative supervisors will NOT ALLOW students to go on break until teachers escort them.

Supervision during Breaks

- All teachers are assigned playground supervision/duty rotations during the week. It is strictly prohibited for any teacher to skip or violate break duty schedules and expectations as this will be deemed a serious violation to this job description document and will not be tolerated by the school leadership. Again, it is the full responsibility of every Administrative Supervisor to make sure all teachers abide by their duty assignments both efficiently and on time.
- All teachers are assigned Morning Student Arrival and Afternoon Student Dismissal supervision rotations.
- Teachers on duty MUST be **vigilant and alert**. Any accidents taking place are the teachers' responsibility. Students need to be **constantly reminded before going out of the classroom to walk quietly, to avoid pushing and fighting**. Using obscene language, **rudeness or any form of hostility, verbal or physical is strictly prohibited**. Accidents could be prevented or corrected as they happen; **effective and proper teacher supervision during play time** will maximize proper play habits and **minimize accidents** and injuries that could endanger students' safety.

Academics – Teaching, Learning, and Assessment

- Contact periods and instructional time (according to individual teachers' schedules and time-tables) are expected to be fully respected by all teachers at all times. Using instructional time for non-instructional purposes such as playing cartoons for students instead of teaching and learning is NOT ALLOWED and will lead to serious corrective measures taken by the school administration.
- Teachers are NOT ALLOWED to stay seated at their desks inside the classes and leaving students unattended or working on their own without any teacher supervision or intervention.
- All teachers are expected to budget their time properly and wisely in accordance with the time needed for instruction to be covered as per the school schedule. Throughout all lesson plans, time must always be clearly allocated in minutes for each outcome and activity.
- Plan what you want to teach and know what you wish to achieve by the end of each lesson. Your lesson outcomes must be clearly posted on the board to enforce learning. All items of the Board View must be fully visible and implemented during instructional time. Also, it is the teacher's full responsibility to make sure students are able to communicate and explain Board View expectations at all times.
- Have a hard copy of each lesson plan for each day. It is also an expectation here that every teacher files all his/her lesson plans with him/her. This lesson plan file is expected to be with the teacher at all times during instructional time. From time to time, the school leadership and School Superintendent/ Principal may ask for these files for follow-up, monitoring, revision, and feedback.



- Traditional / passive teaching methods; including lecturing must be avoided at all times. What the school leadership will always be looking for is evidence where teachers motivate students to participate in the discussions and be fully engaged in learning. Instructional time which is spent by the teacher remaining next to the white board area and spending the time talking to students IS NOT WHAT THIS LEADERSHIP DEEMS AS EFFECTIVE TEACHING AND LEARNING.
- Stimulate the interest of students and keep them lively and attentive. Use the school-wide motivational system (Class DOJO).
- ALL lesson plans (with all attachments) and weekly plans (with all attachments) are expected to be submitted in a timely manner to Director of Curriculum Design and Implementation as per the shared policies and procedures. The nature of the weekly plan should encourage students to master skills and help improve their performance and learning prior to testing.
- Both lesson plans and weekly plans are expected to be fully implemented as is. Any change to the approved plans is NOT accepted without the clear, written approval of the School Superintendent/ Principal.
- ALL students' work in copybooks, worksheets, and textbooks is expected to be marked on daily basis by every teacher. Accumulating or delaying corrections or allowing it to over load the teacher or reflect negatively on teacher's or student's performance is not allowed.
- It is the full responsibility of every teacher to know exactly and familiarize himself/herself with all skills, concepts, basic principles, and curriculum standards which students are expected to master throughout the course of the academic year. All these must be the basis of all assigned classwork and homework, instructional decisions, and assessments.
- Every teacher is expected to fully dedicate his/her time to students who need additional support, intervention, help, and advice. Re-teaching low-achieving and struggling students must begin during the first week of October. It is important to highlight that every teacher is fully responsible and accountable for their attainment and progress.
- It is expected that every teacher uses a grade book as an assessment tool by periodically jotting down specific comments regarding students work habits and learning, identifying areas of strengths and weaknesses. Such comments will form the basis of content for writing end of term reports which will be communicated with parents.
- Conferring and sharing information and experiences with colleagues teaching in the same grade level or department is a crucial step to avoid complaints and to find solutions to potential obstacles that any teacher may encounter.
- Attending meetings and full cooperation with all members of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT), Middle Leadership Team (MLT), and with Administrative Supervisors is an expectation. Being active and participating in discussions that aim at developing policies and assessing procedures that serve the best interest of the educational program and students is non-negotiable.
- Every teacher is expected to be fair in testing students. Sound assessment procedures, forms, and documents should be fully aligned with curriculum standards, well-balanced against the time limit, thoughtfully structured in their coverage and depth and aimed at testing basic concepts and learning outcomes and what students should have acquired, learned and practiced well in class. Teachers may use samples of the tests provided by the curriculum kits and resources as well as tests that target concepts tested in CAT4 and MAP (as per KHDA expectations and requirements).



- Test results, feedback on students' performance in tests, and analysis of students' results should be given within 3 days after administering the test – students, teachers and parents benefit most from feedback received early. Priority should be diagnosing weak students and working on improving their academic standards. Academic leaders, phase directors, and members of SLT are expected to pay close attention to all these items and report on them directly to School Superintendent/Principal.
- Teachers are responsible for inputting their student grades onto the student files on the schools' shared server, Excel Sheets, and the analysis software.
- Each teacher should prepare and offer one afterschool extra-curricular activity for students. These activities are free of charge for the students and would be 45 minutes at least once a week.
- Each teacher is expected to analyze students' results in every assessment and to use this data to guide and inform all teaching practice.

Classroom Environment

- The classroom environment, its physical set-up and décor must at all times be conducive to learning.
- ALL bulletin boards must always be decorated and neat. Corrected students' work must be displayed at all times to show students' progress and how teacher provides feedback on their work. Also, in both KG and Elementary classes, all teachers are expected to be using the strings / clothes lines in the class to display students' work also. Administrative and academic leaders are expected to report on every classroom where bulletin board and string are empty and classes that are messy or dirty during or after instructional time.
- Classrooms must remain clean, orderly throughout the school day. Students must be taught to implement school and classroom rules (pick up trash, put games away after use). It is the full responsibility of the teacher to monitor this and make sure all students keep the classroom physical environment clean and clear at all times.
- Turning lights off at the end of the day or when the room is not used during the day is also the responsibility of the teacher.
- Teachers should take proper care of all materials and games at their disposal. At the end of the period all items related to that subject must be put in their right places, on shelves and the teacher's desk must be cleared for the next teacher coming in.
- Cupboards, shelves and other installation in the classroom must remain organized with materials placed orderly and straightened up.
- School bags should be emptied then put in their designated areas outside classrooms as students enter their classes in the morning (this will help avoid students going in and out of the classes in transition time). Administrative supervisors are expected to closely monitor this.
- Teachers have to check that all students' items should be labelled and looked after. Snack boxes must be stored in their designated areas.
- Displays on bulletin boards inside and outside classes must be updated regularly and in accordance with academic concepts and topics covered. Students' work display boards in common and corridor areas must be the work of the students' only. Moreover, classroom boards usually serve educational purposes and



display instructional charts and visual material prepared by the subject teacher (Refer to Policy on Bulletin Boards).

Corridors and Common Areas

- The quality of student's work in copybooks, worksheets and monthly projects reflects the standard of teaching they have received.
- Teachers and students should take pride in what the students have produced. Samples of good productions should be displayed in hallways and changed regularly every month. Background and decorations of corridor bulletin boards must be completed by the teacher.
- Classrooms are a public area and the whole school is expected to take pride and aim for quality displays that reflect marked progress, high standards and excellence in students' work.

Discipline and Supervision

- It is important to mention that students view teachers as ideal role models in whom they have confidence and respect. Henceforth, all teachers are expected to always act and behave accordingly.
- The teacher is the master of the class and must never allow unacceptable patterns of behavior to develop among students. School rules must be reviewed on daily basis at the beginning of every day and at the beginning of every instructional period until students reach the expected standard of self-discipline required by the school.
- The teacher is an adviser at large and, therefore, violations and infractions must not be undermined whenever and wherever they are witnessed. If students are heard using obscene language, throwing trash on the floor, damaging school property, or trespassing on the rights of others, the teacher must immediately stop and intervene. A teacher is not only a subject teacher, but a teacher of the entire school.

Staff-Development

- Keeping abreast of new ideas, new facts and new techniques in the subject taught is the full responsibility of the teacher. Showing initiative, sharing latest research in education and teaching methodologies in meetings is a crucial part of the teachers' job description and responsibilities.
- Attending in-service training programs and / or seminars that may be organized by the school is an integral process that must be abided by. None of us can claim we acquired perfection either in our knowledge or approach.
- A teacher is resourceful and always looking for change and variation, improvement, and enhancement in the method of teaching. Routine bores and demotivates teachers and lead to students losing interest. The school prides on being an educational institution that is experimental and progressive by nature.
- Viewing the administration as a source of support is number one priority which will help every teacher meet the targets of the school. Teachers must always feel free to talk to direct leaders who should listen and stand ready to provide assistance when needed, and whenever they can.



- Every teacher must be confident that his / her evaluation by the administration aims at identifying his/her strong attributes and helping him / her overcome areas of weakness in teaching in a way that guarantees improved student learning and outcomes and accelerated progress for all students.

Professionalism

- Every school policy or procedure must be honored and implemented consistently and effectively by all teachers, staff members and workers.
- Be kind, considerate and cooperative in dealing with colleagues, whether teachers, staff or workers.
- Pleasant working relationships must prevail among all personnel working in the school.
- Conflicts, if any, should be resolved through mutual understanding and respect.
- Feedback addressed to teachers, or the administration cannot be a public issue. Should a teacher have any issue about anyone or the school system, it would be appropriate to talk directly to the person concerned. Never use such matters as items of discussion in classrooms or staff rooms – conflicts among teachers in the implementation of school policies and procedures should be referred to the Superintendent /principal.
- Your belongingness and loyalty to the school are essential for its unity and progress.
- The school is a smoke-free campus. Smoking is not allowed on the school premises. The school parking lot is considered a part of the school premises. Violating this expectation will be deemed as a serious offense will not be tolerated and will not pass unpunished.
- Dress properly: be presentable when on duty or for official school business.
- Chewing gum, smoking, and/or smelling of smoke are strictly NOT ALLOWED at all times. Violations will be deemed as a serious offense towards professionalism and source of disturbance to the school focus on student learning. Therefore, such violations will NOT BE TOLERATED OR ACCEPTED by school leadership.
- Using mobile phones is strictly NOT ALLOWED at all times. Violations will be deemed as a serious offense towards students' safety and source of disturbance to the school focus on student learning. Therefore, such violations will NOT BE TOLERATED OR ACCEPTED by the school leadership.
- Refrain from political or religious discussions or arguments with colleagues on school premises. Remember that this school is a working place and therefore it is inappropriate to discuss matters of personal nature or engage in spreading gossip about students, parents or colleagues.

Communication

1. Teachers will be assessed periodically for their:

- Consistent implementation of policies and binding procedures
- Attendance
- Academic performance

In addition to their personal qualities:

- Positive attitude and courtesy
- Warmth, honesty and transparency
- Punctuality



- Voice modulation
- Presentability
- Patience and tolerance
- Integrity
- Activity and energy
- Flexibility
- Discipline
- Professionalism
- Supportiveness and loyalty
- Personal and professional growth
- Initiative
- Creativity
- Belongingness
- The total impact they have on the student and the school system at large

2. Rules are explicit and duties are clear and thus staff members are expected to apply them accurately at all times to the best of their ability.

3. Any comments or remarks of significance about a staff member's performance whether positive or negative will be discussed with him/her and put in writing.

Corporate Responsibility

- To fully and effectively implement and abide by all KHDA and NEASC expectations and requirements for school inspection and accreditation purposes.
- Effectively participate in writing, refining, and reviewing the monthly SEF document as expected by the School Superintendent/ Principal
- To be fully conversant with, and implement, the School's Equality and Diversity objectives; and take appropriate positive action in the promotion and delivery of Equality and Diversity targets within their areas of responsibility
- To be fully conversant with and implement the School's range of safeguarding policies and procedures, to ensure the health, safety and welfare of all learners
- To maintain a transparent and professional relationship with all employees at all times
- To seek feedback and approval from the School Superintendent /Principal on all aspects pertaining to this job description (and develop step-by-step procedures - showing HOW - for every item in the Job Description in a timely manner agreed upon with the School Superintendent /Principal)
- Abide by all written instructions of the school higher leadership and management
- Participate effectively in all meetings led by the School Superintendent /Principal and the School Leadership
- Effectively lead and report in writing on all daily, weekly, and monthly meetings with the different staff members
- To participate effectively in reviewing, creating, and writing school policies as directed by the School Superintendent /Principal
- To carry out other duties as directed by the School Superintendent /Principal

Additional areas may be added as directed by the School Superintendent/ Principal through separate addendums or annexes.



Teacher Performance Standards

Professional Responsibilities and Effective Communication

Professionalism and effective communication are behaviors which demonstrate respect for the dignity and worth of the individual. To promote an atmosphere of mutual respect, a competent teacher accepts the rights of others to hold divergent feelings and opinions, values diversity, uses open, clear, and forthright communication throughout the district, participates in team planning, shared decision-making, and group problem-solving; and collaborates to develop a shared sense of meaning.

Planning and Curriculum

Planning, preparation and curriculum are defined as the ability to develop comprehensive planning by organizing the subject matter content, including knowledge and skills, around key concepts and frameworks, then selecting and designing materials so that the content can be taught for understanding, application, and transfer. In creating or teaching curriculum, the competent teacher defines essential learning, gives students frames of reference that will help build understanding of the subject matter, and provides multiple perspectives from which to look at the subject matter content.

Instruction

Effective teaching is dependent upon a comprehensive and integrated vision of instruction that includes a repertoire of instructional approaches appropriate to a variety of specific learning outcomes. It includes the ability to choose appropriate approaches that address each student's needs, interests, and learning style and cause students to learn by doing, learn for understanding, learn in context, learn for transfer. It also provides students with the skills to learn how to learn. Teaching is a behavior that increases the probability of learning. The competent teacher demonstrates an ability to implement an appropriate balance of **Explicit Teaching**, in which highly structured, teacher directed activities teach for skills, knowledge and application in meaningful contexts, and **Teacher-Facilitated** learning experiences that encourage students to take increasing responsibility for acquiring knowledge and structuring and applying their own learning.

Assessment Practices

Assessment is the essential process of measuring student progress and providing information for improvement of instruction. Assessment is the gathering, interpreting and communicating to appropriate audiences the evidence of student learning. The competent teacher demonstrates ability to select and use a variety of formal and informal assessment strategies and instruments to assess student performance and to continue to improve curriculum and instructional practices. The teacher is able to demonstrate understanding of the multiple purposes of assessment, know and use a variety of assessment strategies matched to desired outcomes, and record and communicate student progress in a timely manner.

Learning Environment

Effective student management and supervision create an atmosphere in which learning is clearly the primary value influencing decisions and actions. Effective student management and supervision increase the probability for student success. The competent teacher establishes an atmosphere that facilitates learning and teaches students to be self-directed, independent learners.

Fulfilling Professional Responsibilities



An effective teacher is an ethical, responsible, contributing, and ever-learning member of the profession. The teacher collaborates with colleagues, administrators, and other student-oriented professionals to determine the needs of his or her students and to plan and provide them with the appropriate learning experiences and assessments. The teacher regularly attends and contributes to departmental meetings, faculty meetings, strategic planning sessions, and the like. The teacher actively supports the efforts of school organisations such as parent-teacher groups and school improvement councils. Both inside and outside the classroom, the teacher's spoken and written language is clear, correct, and appropriate for each target audience. The teacher communicates with parents/guardians on a regular basis about goals and expectations for student learning, behavioral rules and consequences, assignments, suggestions for supporting student learning at home, assessment results, and student progress and performance. The teacher responds appropriately to parental concerns.

Professional Growth

Teachers who are engaged in effective professional development take greater responsibility for the learning of all students. As they take more responsibility, and as they discover that their new professional knowledge and practice have a positive impact on their students, they begin to feel more effective as teachers. Like greater expectations, heightened responsibility is developed most effectively when teachers observe that their new teaching practices are having positive impacts on their students.



Instructional Techniques and Strategies

Within five minutes, carry out the following tasks:

1. Highlight the techniques which you have implemented in the teaching-learning process in your classroom.
2. Circle the techniques which you have not yet implemented, but you are willing to implement in the near future.
3. According to what you have highlighted, do you consider yourself a teacher who focuses on Teacher-Centered Instruction or on Learner-Centered Instruction?

- | | |
|---|---|
| • Whole-Class Instruction | • Learning Centres |
| • Student Presentations | • Library Research on Topics or Problems |
| • Students Solving Homework on Board | • Mind Mapping |
| • Small Group Work | • Peer Teaching |
| • Adjusting Questions | • Problem Solving |
| • Advanced Graphic Organizers | • Case Studies |
| • Anchoring Activities | • Problem-Based Learning |
| • Audio-Tutorial Lessons | • Reading Buddies/Partners |
| • Brainstorming | • Role Playing |
| • Buddy-Studies / Study Partners | • Round Table Discussions |
| • Class Discussion Led by Teacher | • Student-Created Charts |
| • Compacting Curriculum | • Student Debate |
| • Concept Mapping | • Student-Teacher Interaction |
| • Concept Questions | • Surveys |
| • Content Questions | • Textbook Assignments |
| • Construction of Summaries by Students | • Tiered Assignments (3-leveled activities) |
| • Students Explanation of Lessons | • Use of Radio / TV Programs |
| • Students Copying from PPT | • Leading Questions |
| • Gaming and Simulation | • Interviews |
| • Independent Study Projects | • Flexible Grouping (Homogeneous/Heterogeneous) Student's |

Teacher's Reflection and Feedback



- **Anchoring Activities**

Have you ever heard a student say, "I'm done"? Anchor Activities allow students to take the initiative to follow through on their personal goals and develop skills as an extension to what the teachers are doing in class.

- **Curriculum Compacting**

Curriculum compacting is a way to help high ability students move at their own pace through the curriculum. Curriculum compacting involves defining a set of objectives, pretesting students over those objectives and then eliminating what they already know from teachers' teaching and their practice.

- **Concept Mapping**

Concept maps are graphical tools for organizing and representing knowledge. They include concepts, usually enclosed in circles or boxes of some type, and relationships between concepts indicated by a connecting line linking two concepts. Words on the line, referred to as linking words or linking phrases, specify the relationship between the two concepts.

Concept mapping serves several purposes for learners:

1. Helping students brainstorm and generate new ideas
2. Encouraging students to discover new concepts and the propositions that connect them
3. Allowing students to more clearly communicate ideas, thoughts and information
4. Helping students integrate new concepts with older concepts
5. Enabling students to gain enhanced knowledge of any topic and evaluate the information

- **Mind Mapping**

A mind map is a graphical way to represent ideas and concepts. It is a visual thinking tool that helps structure information, helping you to better analyze, comprehend, synthesize, recall and generate new ideas. In a mind map, as opposed to traditional note taking or a linear text, information is structured in a way that resembles much more closely how your brain actually works. Since it is an activity that is both analytical and artistic, it engages your brain in a much, much richer way, helping in all its cognitive functions. And, best of all, it is fun!

- **Problem-Based Learning**

In Project Based Learning (PBL), students go through an extended process of inquiry in response to a complex question, problem, or challenge. While allowing for some degree of student "voice and choice," rigorous projects are carefully planned, managed, and assessed to help students learn key academic content, practice 21st Century Skills (such as collaboration, communication & critical thinking), and create high-quality, authentic products & presentations.

- **Teaching and Learning Strategies**

In this area, you will find information on some of the best researched and the most widely implemented methods of helping all students to learn more successfully. These strategies have been demonstrated to be successful with students of all ages and ability levels, including low-achievers and those who do not learn in traditional ways.

- **Accelerated Learning Techniques**

The Accelerated Learning Method is based on using the techniques that match the students' preferred ways of learning so that they learn more naturally. Because it is more natural for them, learning becomes easier. And



because it is easier, it is quicker. By also incorporating well-researched memory techniques, Accelerated Learning makes learning an enjoyable, successful and satisfying experience.

- **Action Research**

Action research is done by teachers to understand their own teaching and students. The most effective action research results in opportunities to improve learning and engagement.

Action research can:

1. lead to positive change in your classroom and school.
2. offer professional development and continual improvement.
3. provide opportunities for collaboration with colleagues.
4. be a part of a successful master's degree.
5. create an opportunity to reflect on your own practice.

- **Applied Learning**

Applied learning is an approach to learning which focuses on motivating and challenging students to connect what they learn with the world they experience and with what interests them. The basic premise is that if academic content is made more relevant, participatory and concrete, students learn better, retain more and apply learning in their lives. Teaching in this model uses hands-on innovative teaching methods sometimes called contextual learning. Teachers help students understand the reasons for studying their subject matter and capitalize on students' natural learning inclinations and problem-solving approaches they can use well beyond the classroom throughout their lives.

- **Assessment Alternatives**

There is growing recognition that true/ false, multiple choice, and short answer tests do not give a true picture of what students know and have accomplished. These are primarily measures of memorization and recall, and do not always even test comprehension. They certainly do not give students opportunities to demonstrate that they can apply what they have learned or use their knowledge in creative or even just practical ways. Hence, a teacher must diversify the assessment techniques that she uses.

- **Cognitive Coaching**

Cognitive coaching is a model that requires the coach/teacher to be non-judgmental in order to encourage reflective practice and to guide students to self-directed learning. To encourage reflection, cognitive coaching focuses on a teacher's thinking, perceptions, beliefs, and assumptions, and how these affect one's practices. Using this approach, teachers help students to develop expertise in planning, reflecting, problem-solving, and decision-making. It is a reciprocal learning process between the teacher and the learner.

- **Democratic Classrooms**

This is a classroom management mode which employs a more democratic approach, sharing power with students and supporting them in managing their own behaviors. Research indicates that a democratic approach is more effective, both for classroom management and student learning.

- **Emotional Intelligence**

Emotional intelligence (EI) refers to the ability to perceive, control and evaluate emotions. Some researchers suggest that emotional intelligence can be learned and strengthened. while others claim it is an inborn characteristic. There are four different factors of emotional intelligence: the perception of emotion, the ability reason using emotions, the ability to understand emotion and the ability to manage emotions.



- **Environmental Education (e.g. Nature Appreciation Days)**

Environmental education is the study of the relationships and interactions between dynamic natural and human systems. Environmental education:

1. Includes learning in the field as well as the classroom
2. Incorporates the teaching methods of outdoor education, experiential education, and place-based education
3. Is inherently interdisciplinary
4. Promotes school/community partnerships
5. Is hands-on, student-centered, inquiry driven, engages higher level thinking skills, and relevant to students' everyday lives
6. Develops awareness, increases knowledge, builds skills, and creates the capacity for stewardship and good citizenship regarding the environment upon which we depend for life support.
7. Helps address the causes of "nature deficit disorder"
8. Boosts student achievement in math, science, reading, writing and social studies

- **Environments for Learning**

Personal Learning Environments (PLE) are systems that help learners take control of and manage their own learning. This includes providing support for learners to:

1. set their own learning goals
2. manage their learning, both content and process
3. communicate with others in the process of learning

- **Instrumental Enrichment**

An intervention program, based on the belief that intelligence is modifiable and not fixed, and is designed to enhance the cognitive skills necessary for independent thinking. IE aims to sharpen critical thinking with the concepts, skills, strategies, operations, and attitudes necessary for independent learning; to diagnose and correct deficiencies in thinking skills; and to help individuals "learn how to learn".

- **Multicultural Education**

Multicultural education relates to education and instruction designed for the cultures of several different races in an educational system. This approach to teaching and learning is based upon consensus building, respect, and fostering cultural pluralism within racial societies. Multicultural education acknowledges and incorporates positive racial idiosyncrasies into classroom atmospheres.

- Arts in Education
- Character Education
- Cooperative Learning
- Differentiated Instruction
- Environments for Learning
- Graphic Tools/Organizers
- Keeping Fit for Learning
- Learning Styles
- Literacy
- Multiple Intelligences



- Teaching for Understanding
- Technology in Education
- Thinking Skills

These strategies are most successful when they are implemented in a system that encourages collaboration among staff and students, and in which each is a part of a well-planned whole system. It is important to recognize that while these strategies are useful, little will be accomplished in implementing them unless there is ongoing documentation of their results. There must also be efficient methods of feeding that information back into the system so that there will be continuing progress in teaching and learning. It is also certain that these strategies are most effective when they are applied in positive, supportive environments where there is recognition of the emotional, social and physical needs of students and where individual strengths are recognized, nurtured, and developed.



McREL'S Nine Strategies

Researchers at McREL have identified nine instructional strategies that are most likely to improve student achievement across all content areas and across all grade levels. These strategies are:

1. Identifying Similarities and Differences

The ability to break a concept into its similar and dissimilar characteristics allows students to understand (and often solve) complex problems by analysing them in a more simple way. Teachers can either directly present similarities and differences, accompanied by deep discussion and inquiry, or simply ask students to identify similarities and differences on their own. While teacher-directed activities focus on identifying specific items, student-directed activities encourage variation and broaden understanding, research shows. Research also notes that graphic forms are a good way to represent similarities and differences.

Applications

- * Use Venn diagrams or charts to compare and classify items.
- * Engage students in comparing, classifying, and creating metaphors and analogies.

2. Summarizing and Note Taking

These skills promote greater comprehension by asking students to analyze a subject to expose what's essential and then put it in their own words. According to research, this requires substituting, deleting, and keeping some things and having an awareness of the basic structure of the information presented.

Applications

- * Provide a set of rules for creating a summary.
- * When summarizing, ask students to question what is unclear, clarify those questions, and then predict what will happen next in the text.

Research shows that taking more notes is better than fewer notes, though verbatim note taking is ineffective because it does not allow time to process the information. Teachers should encourage and give time for review and revision of notes; notes can be the best study guides for tests.

Applications

- * Use teacher-prepared notes.
- * Stick to a consistent format for notes, although students can refine the notes as necessary.

3. Reinforcing Effort and Providing Recognition

Effort and recognition speak to the attitudes and beliefs of students, and teachers must show the connection between effort and achievement. Research shows that although not all students realize the importance of effort, they can learn to change their beliefs to emphasize effort.

Applications

- * Share stories about people who succeeded by not giving up.
- * Have students keep a log of their weekly efforts and achievements, reflect on it periodically, and even mathematically analyse the data.



According to research, recognition is most effective if it is contingent on the achievement of a certain standard. Also, symbolic recognition works better than tangible rewards.

Applications

- * Find ways to personalize recognition. Give awards for individual accomplishments.
- * "Pause, Prompt, Praise." If a student is struggling, pause to discuss the problem, then prompt with specific suggestions to help him/her improve. If the student's performance improves, offer praise.

4. Homework and Practice

Homework provides students with the opportunity to extend their learning outside the classroom. However, research shows that the amount of homework assigned should vary by grade level and that parent involvement should be minimal. Teachers should explain the purpose of homework to both the student and the parent or guardian, and teachers should try to give feedback on all homework assigned.

Applications

- * Establish a homework policy with advice-such as keeping a consistent schedule, setting, and time limit-that parents and students may not have considered.
- * Tell students if homework is for practice or preparation for upcoming units.
- * Maximize the effectiveness of feedback by varying the way it is delivered.

Research shows that students should adapt skills while they're learning them. Speed and accuracy are key indicators of the effectiveness of practice.

Applications

- * Assign timed quizzes for homework and have students report on their speed and accuracy.
- * Focus practice on difficult concepts and set aside time to accommodate practice periods.

5. Non-linguistic Representations

According to research, knowledge is stored in two forms: linguistic and visual. The more students use both forms in the classroom, the more opportunity they have to achieve. Recently, use of non-linguistic representation has proven to not only stimulate but also increase brain activity.

Application

- * Incorporate words and images using symbols to represent relationships.
- * Use physical models and physical movement to represent information.

6. Cooperative Learning

Research shows that organizing students into cooperative groups yields a positive effect on overall learning. When applying cooperative learning strategies, keep groups small and don't overuse this strategy-be systematic and consistent in your approach.

Applications



- * When grouping students, consider a variety of criteria, such as common experiences or interests.
- * Vary group sizes and objectives.
- * Design group work around the core components of cooperative learning-positive interdependence, group processing, appropriate use of social skills, face-to-face interaction, and individual and group accountability.

7. Setting Objectives and Providing Feedback

Setting objectives can provide students with a direction for their learning. Goals should not be too specific; they should be easily adaptable to students' own objectives.

Applications

- * Set a core goal for a unit, and then encourage students to personalize that goal by identifying areas of interest to them. Questions like "I want to know" and "I want to know more about . . ." get students thinking about their interests and actively involved in the goal-setting process.
- * Use contracts to outline the specific goals that students must attain and the grade they will receive if they meet those goals.

Research shows that feedback generally produces positive results. Teachers can never give too much; however, they should manage the form that feedback takes.

Applications

- * Make sure feedback is corrective in nature; tell students how they did in relation to specific levels of knowledge. Rubrics are a great way to do this.
- * Keep feedback timely and specific.
- * Encourage students to lead feedback sessions.

8. Generating and Testing Hypotheses

Research shows that a deductive approach (using a general rule to make a prediction) to this strategy works best. Whether a hypothesis is induced or deduced, students should clearly explain their hypotheses and conclusions.

Applications

- * Ask students to predict what would happen if an aspect of a familiar system, such as the government or transportation, were changed.
- * Ask students to build something using limited resources. This task generates questions and hypotheses about what may or may not work.

9. Cues, Questions, and Advance Organizers

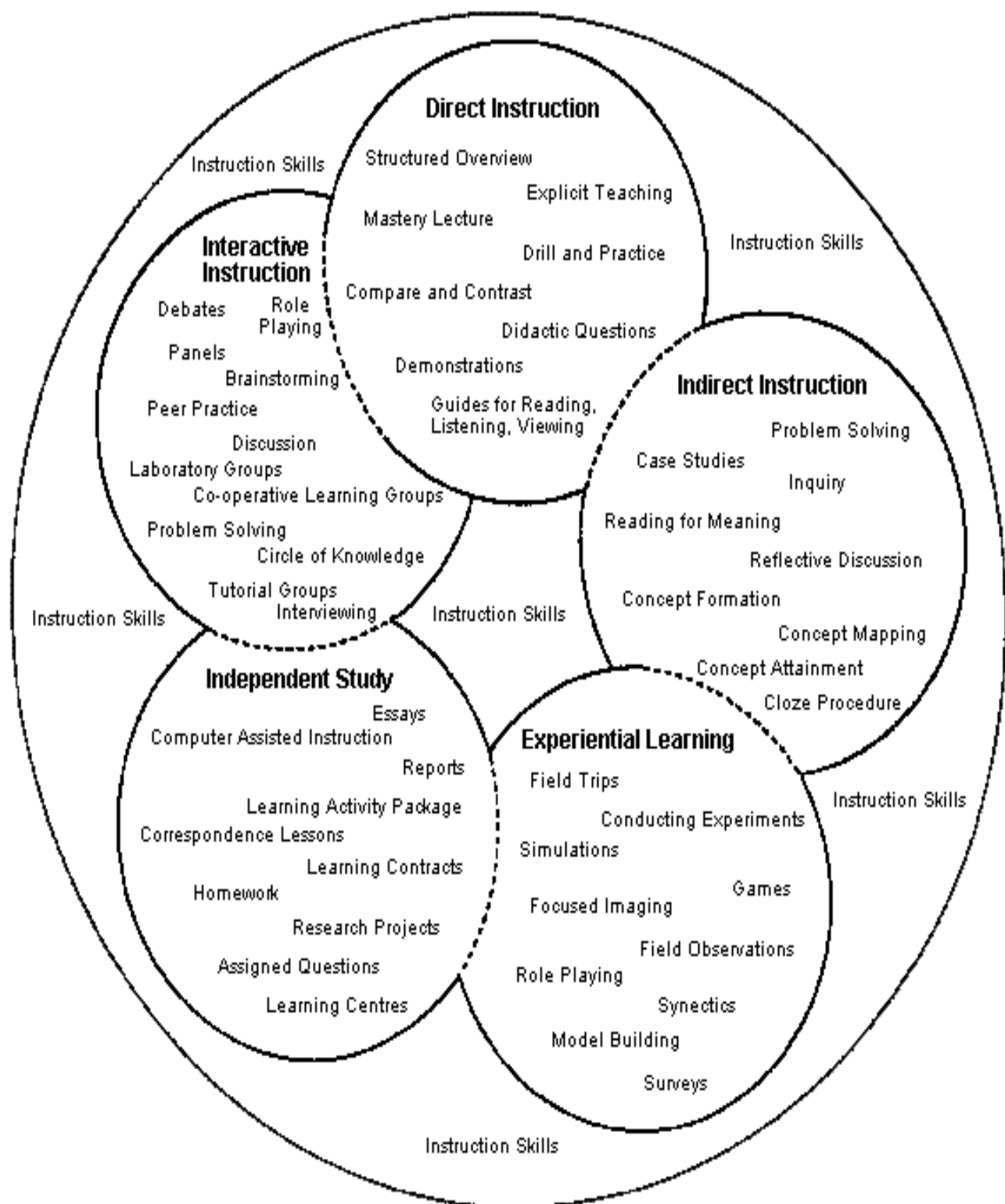
Cues, questions, and advance organizers help students use what they already know about a topic to enhance further learning. Research shows that these tools should be highly analytical, should focus on what is important, and are most effective when presented before a learning experience.

Applications

- * Pause briefly after asking a question. Doing so will increase the depth of your students' answers.



* Vary the style of advance organizer used: Tell a story, skim a text, or create a graphic image. There are many ways to expose students to information before they "learn" it.





Bloom's Taxonomy

In 1780, Abigail Adams stated, "Learning is not attained by chance; it must be sought for with ardor and attended to with diligence". Learning, teaching, identifying educational goals, and thinking are all complicated concepts interwoven in an intricate web. Bloom was arduous, diligent, and patient while seeking to demystify these concepts and untangle this web. He made "the improvement of student learning" the central focus of his work. Discussions during the 1948 Convention of the American Psychological Association led Bloom to spearhead a group of educators who eventually undertook the ambitious task of classifying educational goals and objectives. Their intent was to develop a method of classification for thinking behaviors that were believed to be important in the processes of learning. Eventually, this framework became a taxonomy of three domains:

- **The cognitive** - knowledge based domain, consisting of six levels
- **The affective** - attitudinal based domain, consisting of five levels, and
- **The psychomotor** - skills based domain, consisting of six levels.

In 1956, eight years after the group first began, work on the cognitive domain was completed and a handbook commonly referred to as "Bloom's Taxonomy" was published. This chapter focuses its attention on the cognitive domain.

While Bloom pushed for the use of the term "taxonomy," others in the group resisted because of the unfamiliarity of the term within educational circles. Eventually Bloom prevailed, forever linking his name and the term. The small volume intended for university examiners "has been transformed into a basic reference for all educators worldwide. Unexpectedly, it has been used by curriculum planners, administrators, researchers, and classroom teachers at all levels of education" (Anderson & Sosniak, 1994, p. 1). While it should be noted that other educational taxonomies and hierarchical systems have been developed, it is Bloom's Taxonomy which remains, even after nearly fifty years, the de facto standard.

Understanding that "taxonomy" and "classification" are synonymous helps dispel uneasiness with the term. Bloom's Taxonomy is a multi-tiered model of classifying thinking according to six cognitive levels of complexity. Throughout the years, the levels have often been depicted as a stairway, leading many teachers to encourage their students to "climb to a higher (level of) thought." The lowest three levels are: knowledge, comprehension, and application. The highest three levels are: analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. "The taxonomy is hierarchical; [in that] each level is subsumed by the higher levels. In other words, a student functioning at the 'application' level has also mastered the material at the 'knowledge' and 'comprehension' levels." One can easily see how this arrangement led to natural divisions of lower and higher-level thinking.

Clearly, Bloom's Taxonomy has stood the test of time. Due to its long history and popularity, it has been condensed, expanded, and reinterpreted in a variety of ways. Research findings have led to the discovery of a veritable smorgasbord of interpretations and applications falling on a continuum ranging from tight overviews to expanded explanations. Nonetheless, one recent revision (designed by one of the co-editors of the original taxonomy along with a former Bloom student) merits particular attention.

The terms of the taxonomy are defined as:

- **Remembering:** Retrieving, recognizing, and recalling relevant knowledge from long-term memory.
- **Understanding:** Constructing meaning from oral, written, and graphic messages through interpreting, exemplifying, classifying, summarizing, inferring, comparing, and explaining.
- **Applying:** Carrying out or using a procedure through executing or implementing.



- **Analysing:** Breaking material into constituent parts, determining how the parts relate to one another and to an overall structure or purpose through differentiating, organizing, and attributing.
- **Evaluating:** Making judgments based on criteria and standards through checking and critiquing.
- **Creating:** Putting elements together to form a coherent or functional whole; reorganizing elements into a new pattern or structure through generating, planning, or producing.

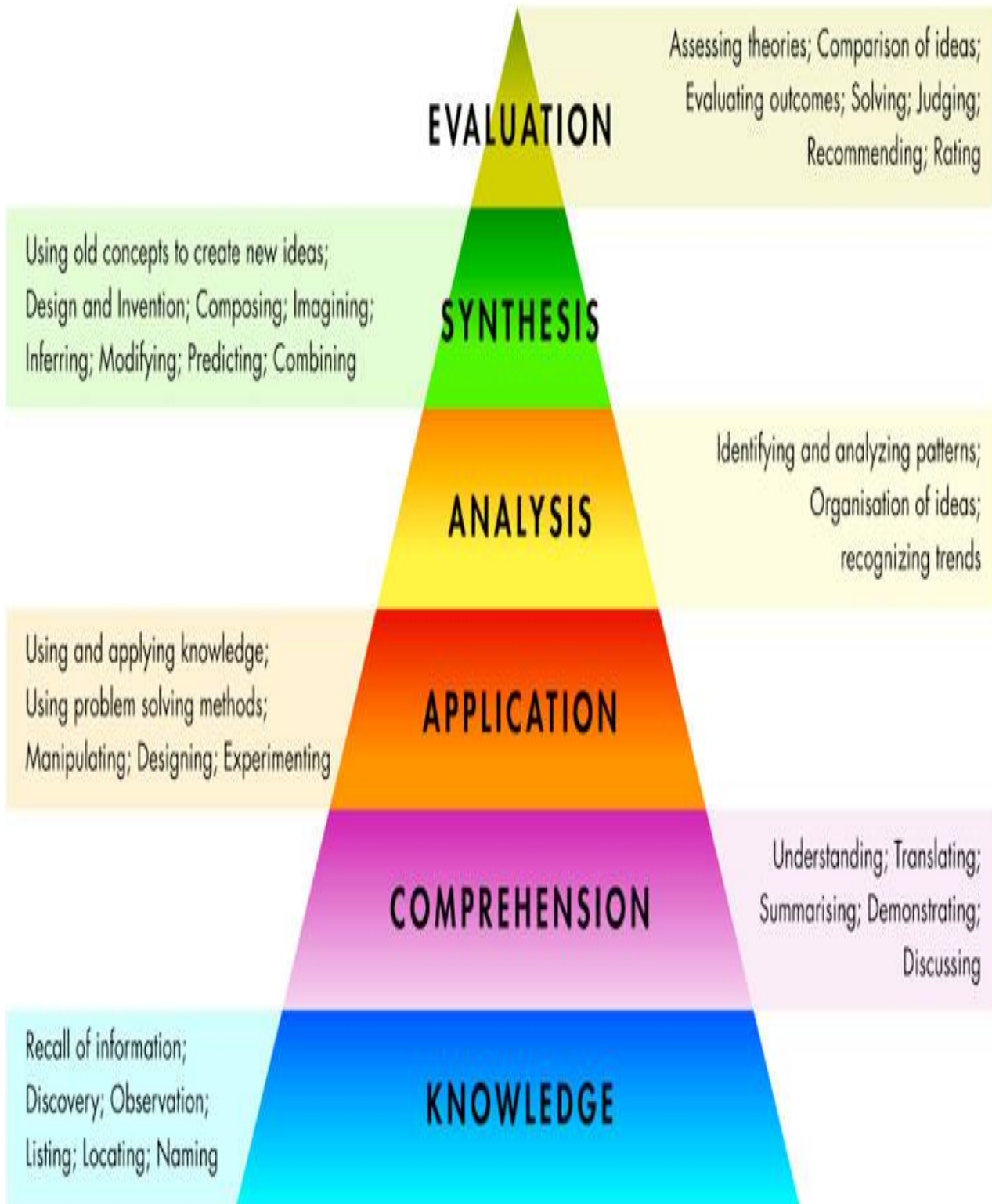
As history has shown, this well known, widely applied scheme filled a void and provided educators with one of the first systematic classifications of the processes of thinking and learning. The cumulative hierarchical framework consisting of six categories each requiring achievement of the prior skill or ability before the next, more complex, one, remains easy to understand. Out of necessity, teachers must measure their students' ability. Accurately doing so requires a classification of levels of intellectual behavior important in learning. Bloom's Taxonomy provided the measurement tool for thinking.

With the dramatic changes in society over the last five decades, the Revised Bloom's Taxonomy provides an even more powerful tool to fit today's teachers' needs. The structure of the Revised Taxonomy Table matrix "provides a clear, concise visual representation" of the alignment between standards and educational goals, objectives, products, and activities.

Today's teachers must make tough decisions about how to spend their classroom time. Clear alignment of educational objectives with local, state, and national standards is a necessity. Like pieces of a huge puzzle, everything must fit properly. The Revised Bloom's Taxonomy Table clarifies the fit of each lesson plan's purpose, "essential question," goal or objective.



BLOOMS TAXONOMY





Debono's Six Thinking Hats

Using a variety of approaches within thinking and problem solving allows the issue to be addressed from a variety of angles, thus servicing the needs of all individuals concerned. The thinking hats are useful for learners as they illustrate the need for individuals to address problems from a variety of different angles. They also aid learners as they allow the individual to recognize any deficiencies in the way that they approach problem solving, thus allowing them to rectify such issues.

Debono believed that the key to a successful use of the Six Thinking Hats methodology was the deliberate focusing of the discussion on a particular approach as needed during the meeting or collaboration session. For instance, a meeting may be called to review a particular problem and to develop a solution for the problem. The Six Thinking Hats method could then be used in a sequence to first of all explore the problem, then develop a set of solutions, and to finally choose a solution through critical examination of the solution set.

The premise of the method is that the human brain thinks in a number of distinct ways which can be deliberately challenged, and hence planned for use in a structured way allowing one to develop tactics for thinking about particular issues. Debono identifies six distinct directions in which the brain can be challenged. In each of these directions the brain will identify and bring into conscious thought certain aspects of issues being considered (e.g. gut instinct, pessimistic judgment, neutral facts). None of these directions are completely natural ways of thinking, but rather how some of us already represent the results of our thinking.

Since the hats do not represent natural modes of thinking, each hat must be used for a limited time only. Also, many will feel that using the hats is unnatural, uncomfortable or even counterproductive and against their better judgment.

A compelling example presented is sensitivity to "mismatch" stimuli. This is presented as a valuable survival instinct, because, in the natural world: the thing that is out of the ordinary may well be dangerous. This mode is identified as the root of negative judgment and critical thinking. Six distinct directions are identified and assigned a color. The sixth meta thinking (Blue) is discussed in the next section.

The other 5 directions are:

- **Information (White)** - considering purely what information is available, what are the facts?
- **Emotions (Red)** - intuitive or instinctive gut reactions or statements of emotional feeling (but not any justification)
- **Discernment (Black)** - logic applied to identifying reasons to be cautious and conservative
- **Optimistic response (Yellow)** - logic applied to identifying benefits, seeking harmony
- **Creativity (Green)** - statements of provocation and investigation, seeing where a thought goes



PROCESS



Blue Hat - Process

Thinking about thinking.
What thinking is needed?
Organizing the thinking.
Planning for action.

CREATIVITY



Green Hat - Creativity

Ideas, alternatives, possibilities.
Solutions to black hat problems.

FACTS



White Hat - Facts

Information and data.
Neutral and objective.
What do I know?
What do I need to find out?
How will I get the information I need?

BENEFITS



Yellow Hat - Benefits

Positives, plus points.
Why an idea is useful.
Logical reasons are given.

FEELINGS



Red Hat - Feelings

Intuition, hunches, gut instinct.
My feelings right now.
Feelings can change.
No reasons are given.

CAUTIONS



Black Hat - Cautions

Difficulties, weaknesses, dangers.
Spotting the risks.
Logical reasons are given.



Cooperative learning

Kagan has developed roughly 200 classroom "structures", which may be thought of as steps to classroom activities. These structures stress positive interpersonal peer relationships, equality, self-esteem, and achievement. Students can work together by following the steps to the structure, using material or content selected by the students themselves or by the teacher.

The structures have various aims, such as: building team spirit and positive relationships among students; information sharing; critical thinking; communication skills; and mastery (learning/remembering) of specified material. Many of the structures can fulfill a number of aims simultaneously, depending on how the teacher uses them. Structures can be mixed and matched and adapted to the particular student group.

Here under are the basic cooperative learning structures which are adopted at DIPS-G:

(1) Timed Pair Share

Students pair off, then number off, 1-2. The teacher chooses a number, 1 or 2, to speak first. That student speaks about a specified topic for a specified length of time. The other student listens quietly and can nod or smile, but cannot speak or interrupt the speaker. After the allotted time has elapsed, the other student speaks for the same period of time on the same, or another, stipulated topic, with her or his partner in the listener role. After both partners have had equal opportunity to speak, the teacher randomly chooses a number of students, and asks them to summarize what their partners have said. (In a small class, all students could perhaps report.)

This structure encourages self-expression and idea exchange by having students "share the floor" equally. Listening is encouraged by students' need to summarize their partner's contribution after the exchange is complete (students cannot accomplish this step without listening). If the teacher does not wish to call on all students to report what has been said, randomly choosing a few students encourages all students to be ready to do so. Students do not know in advance whether or not they will be chosen to report, so they prepare in the event they will be chosen.

(2) Folded Value Line

A problem, or issue, is raised (e.g., capital punishment, building shelters for the homeless). The teacher elicits which students are strongly supportive of, or against, the issue or idea via a show of hands. Students who feel strongly for or against the issue stand at either end (the "poles") of the Value Line, where one end of the line represents strong support for an issue/concept, and the other represents its opposite. The rest of the class physically position themselves along the line at the point reflecting their own opinion. Thus, those who feel squarely in the middle of an issue stand at the middle, while those who feel rather strongly in agreement with either "pole" stand near that end of the line.

For students to first think about and articulate views with others holding similar views, students can pair off with persons standing next to them in the line. In pairs, they can exchange opinions and explain rationales for their viewpoints. This can also be done in groups of three or four. It can also be practiced first in pairs, followed by two pairs joining to create a group of four, participating in an idea exchange which includes reiteration of points made during the first pair exchange. Summarizing earlier conversations gives students additional language practice (in language courses) and/or helps students find out what was heard / understood / remembered.

Subsequently, for students to listen to views different from their own, the line can be divided in half. The two halves can then be lined up as two parallel lines of students facing each other. To illustrate, if you have 24 students in a class standing in a single line, with person 1 strongly supporting the issue/statement, and person 24 being strongly against it, the line would initially look like this:



1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24

The teacher can then ask students to divide the line between persons 12 and 13. Person 13 leads the second half of the line over to person 1. The second half of the line then thus pairs off with the first half like this:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12
13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24

Students can now exchange opinions easily with the person standing across from them. The lines can be repeatedly divided and refolded to regroup students, who then repeat their idea exchanges, to allow further airing of diverse views. It is also possible to combine this structure with ones like the Timed Pair Share, in which student exchanges are structured for equal participation via time limits and rotating speaking order.

A final step can be for randomly selected students to orally summarize to the class the views they heard, or for students to write a paper for homework that describes the breadth of opinions they heard, complete with supporting and opposing arguments that were given. Students could also be instructed to write/speak from the point of view of an opinion they heard which is opposite, or very unlike, their own opinion, rather than their own, to encourage perspective-taking.

This structure can be used to encourage self-expression, listening, paraphrasing, turn taking, and trying to understand and appreciate various viewpoints. Listening to, and then evaluating, various viewpoints boosts critical thinking skills as students consider an issue from various angles. Students can be asked to note, for example, the strong points of each diverse view, or to come up with a composite view incorporating what they believe to be valuable in all viewpoints.

(3) Corners

As with the previous structure, Corners can be used to have students express, and listen to, various opinions on a topic, honing listening, critical thinking, and self-expression skills. The teacher can make each corner of the classroom represent a stipulated view. For example, three possible corners could constitute For, Against, and Undecided relative to a topic. Students move to the corner that represents their viewpoint. Next, students discuss their opinions, or respond to a comment, within their corners. This could first be done in pairs, and later with pairs joining other pairs to make groups of 4, or with subsequent changes of partners to form new pairs.

Students can begin by summarizing their earlier conversation to their new partner(s). Summarizing or repeating ascertains whether the listener listened and understood, and helps validate the ideas of former speakers. The views of all members in one corner can be aired for the benefit of the entire corner after ideas have initially been exchanged in smaller groups. For example, students stand in a circle in the corner, and each person summarizes what the person on their left said. Asking students to summarize what another person said encourages them to listen to others, since if they haven't listened, they will not be able to complete this task.

After students have finished their in-corner discussions, they can rotate around to other corners in order to share their corner's viewpoints. One way to do this is for the teacher to randomly select two representatives from each corner to go to another corner and summarize their corner's viewpoint. They can rotate to all other corners, making their presentation to each new corner; these presentations can be performed within specified time limits to give all representatives an equal chance to speak. The final step could include randomly choosing students, other than rotating representatives, to report to the class on what was expressed, heard, or learned.



(4) Team Statements; Blackboard Share

Students first think about a stipulated topic alone, such as What can we do to rectify economic disparities? or What can we do to alleviate gender-based job discrimination? After students have had time to think and perhaps take notes if they wish they share their ideas in pairs or small groups.

Next, students again work alone and devise one statement that reflects their view. Students then alternate presenting their individual statements to each other, allowing other students in their group to ask for clarification, or further information. The team then creates a Team Statement that represents an opinion everyone in the group agrees with relative to the topic.

After this, (some or all, depending on class size) groups in the class share their team statements orally, or in writing, with the rest of the class. One simultaneous method of reporting, called Blackboard Share, is a structure that can be used at this stage. Blackboard Share requires the teacher to section off portions of the blackboard equally for groups to use. After groups write their Team Statements on the board, these can be viewed/discussed by the entire class.

If not all teams share (such as in very large classes), one technique is for the teacher to randomly choose only some teams to share. Since no team knows in advance which teams will share, all prepare in the event they are called on to share.

Team Statements is designed to give students practice in self-expression, consolidating views, and reaching a consensus despite differing opinions. Blackboard Share can be used to have students simultaneously summarize any individual or team view or result in writing for the whole class.

(5) Draw a Gambit

A "gambit" is a sentence or expression that can be used orally during a face-to-face interaction. "Draw a Gambit" can be used to help students learn and practice social skills (in a native or foreign language). In a foreign or second language course, expressions socially acceptable in the target culture could be the focus of instruction.

Students, or the teacher, can create expressions to be used in interactions focusing on a specific skill, such as showing interest in what is being said, disagreeing politely, or praising the speaker. These expressions are then written down on strips of paper by students (for example, after being copied off the blackboard), and placed in a deck or pile. Students, in pairs, or groups, then have a conversation. While listening, listeners draw expressions from the deck and use them during the interaction in ways they think are appropriate. Teachers or peers can monitor this as desired; for example, through real time observation followed by commentary, or responding after listening to or watching audio- or video-taped exchanges.

This structure helps students practice socially acceptable language. The goal is to help create a positive ethic in the class by having students practice skills such as praising (being verbally supportive), or disagreeing politely (avoiding threatening or non-peaceful manners of communication), etc. This instruction can be combined with teaching socially acceptable body language, for example, modelled by the teacher, practiced in groups, and monitored by other learners and the teacher.

(6) Paraphrase Passport; Rally Robin

Paraphrase Passport requires students engaging in a group discussion to paraphrase what others have said. Before a student can go on to offer their own opinion or input, they must paraphrase what was last said. The

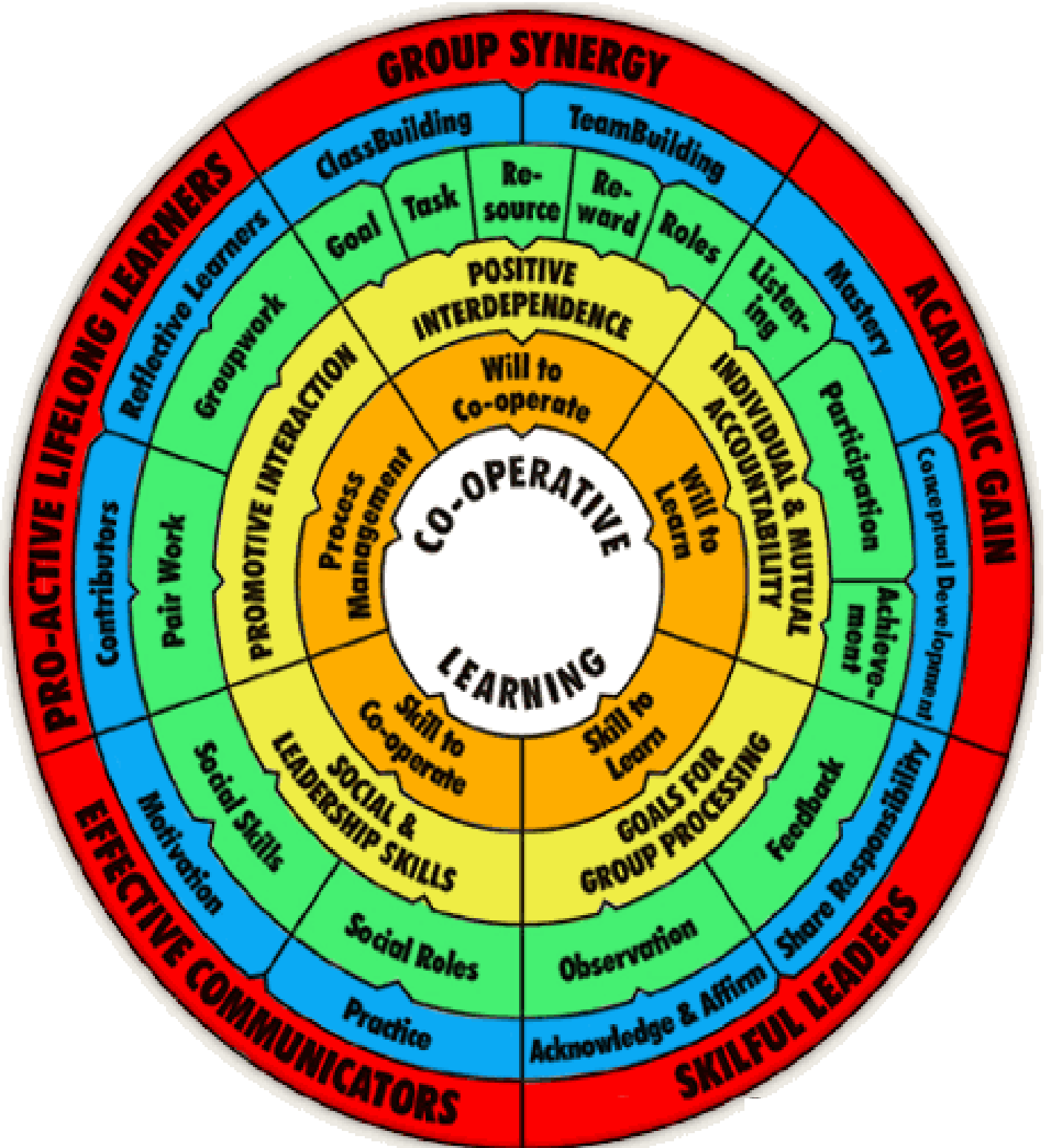


person whose statement was paraphrased indicates whether the speaker has correctly captured their meaning. Once the speaker is satisfied that she or he has been accurately paraphrased, the discussion continues with the next speaker's comments. Thus, each person taking a conversational turn must paraphrase the prior speaker's comments before giving their own ideas.

This structure aims to give all speakers in the group a chance to be heard and feel understood. It is also a useful device for checking comprehension in a language class. It can be combined with other structures such as Rally Robin. Rally Robin is a structure requiring students to alternate speaking in a set order. It is used so that all students take turns speaking, so that everyone will receive an equal chance to participate.

The "PIES" concept

More than just clever classroom routines, each Kagan structure is based on four factors that Dr. Kagan considers essential to his structural approach to cooperative learning: (P) positive interdependence; (I) individual accountability; (E) equal participation; and (S) simultaneous interaction.





Learning Styles and Multiple Intelligences

Many people recognize that each person prefers different learning styles and techniques. Learning styles group common ways that people learn. Everyone has a mix of learning styles. Some people may find that they have a dominant style of learning, with far less use of the other styles. Others may find that they use different styles in different circumstances. There is no right mix. Nor are your styles fixed. You can develop ability in less dominant styles, as well as further develop styles that you already use well.

Using multiple learning styles and multiple intelligences for learning is a relatively new approach. This approach is one that educators have only recently started to recognize. Traditional schooling used (and continues to use) mainly linguistic and logical teaching methods. It also uses a limited range of learning and teaching techniques. Many schools still rely on classroom and book-based teaching, much repetition, and pressured exams for reinforcement and review. A result is that we often label those who use these learning styles and techniques as bright.

a

Those who use less favored learning styles often find themselves in lower classes, with various not-so-complimentary labels and sometimes lower quality teaching. This can create positive and negative spirals that reinforce the belief that one is "smart" or "dumb".

By recognizing and understanding your own learning styles, you can use techniques better suited to you. This improves the speed and quality of your learning.

The Seven Learning Styles

- **Visual (spatial):** You prefer using pictures, images, and spatial understanding.
- **Aural (auditory-musical):** You prefer using sound and music.
- **Verbal (linguistic):** You prefer using words, both in speech and writing.
- **Physical (kinaesthetic):** You prefer using your body, hands and sense of touch.
- **Logical (mathematical):** You prefer using logic, reasoning and systems.
- **Social (interpersonal):** You prefer to learn in groups or with other people.
- **Solitary (intrapersonal):** You prefer to work alone and use self-study.



The Multiple Intelligences (MI) Chart

Verbal/linguistic intelligence

- using language to present your ideas, to express your feelings or to persuade others

Logical/mathematical intelligence

- reasoning, logical thinking; handling mathematical problems

Visual/spatial intelligence

- creating and interpreting visual images; thinking in three dimensions

Bodily/kinesthetic intelligence

- feeling and expressing things physically; doing hands-on work

Musical/rhythmic intelligence

- creating and feeling a rhythm to express a mood; detecting and analysing musical themes

Intrapersonal intelligence (within the self)

- understanding your own interior thoughts and feelings in a very clear way

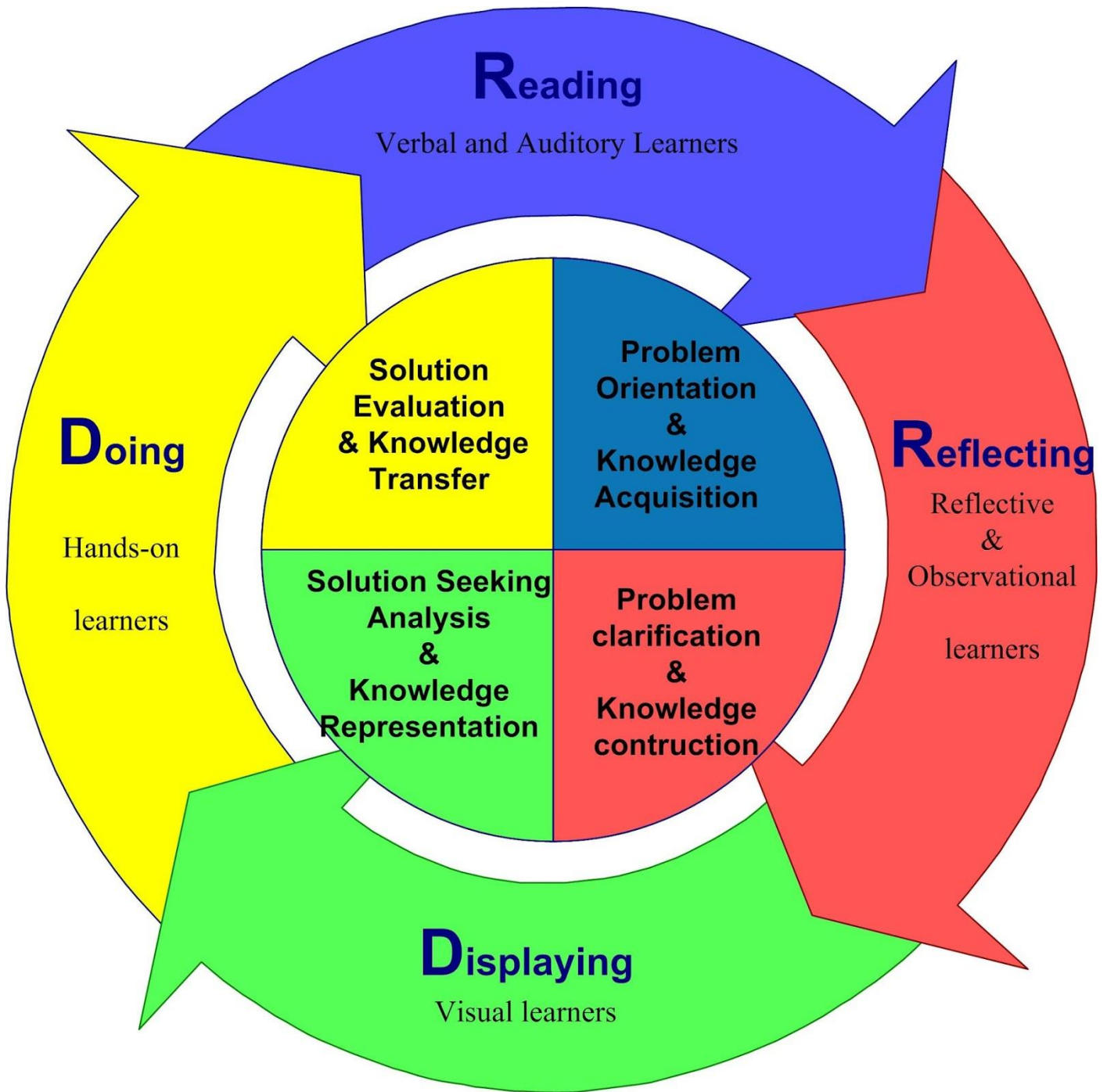
Interpersonal intelligence (between people)

- understanding the feelings, needs and purposes of others

Naturalist intelligence

- understanding nature, seeing patterns in the way nature works; classifying things







Strategies for Differentiation

In parallel with differentiating content, there are multiple ways for differentiating the process and the product. Match each instructional strategy in Column A with the corresponding definition in Column B.

Peer Teaching	Teacher stops any time during the lesson and gives teams three minutes to review what has been said, ask clarifying questions, or answer questions.
Tiered Activities / Assignments	Students solve problems first as a team, then with a partner, and finally on their own. This is useful to motivate students to tackle and succeed at problems which are initially beyond their ability.
Three-Minute Review	Involves a three-step cooperative structure.
Adjusting Questions	Allows students to avoid labelling another student's ability as challenged or inappropriate.
Team-Pair-Solo	A student may require help beyond his/her needs in the form of one-on-one instruction or to be paired with another student who has mastered the concepts.
flexible Grouping	During large group discussion activities, teachers direct the higher level questions to the students who can handle them and modify questions accordingly for students with greater needs.
Think-Pair-Share	A series of related tasks of varying complexity. All these activities relate to essential understanding and key skills that students need to acquire.



Nine Ways to Begin Differentiating Instruction

(Adapted from The Differentiated Classroom: Responding to the Needs of All Learners —Carol Ann Tomlinson)

1. Take notes on your students each day. Be conscious of what works and what does not work for which learners.
2. Assess students before you begin to teach a skill or topic. Study the results of your pre-assessments and their implications on you and your students.
3. Look at all work students do (discussions, journal entries, centers, products, quizzes, group tasks, homework) as indicators of student achievement and need. Numbers and letters in a grade book are not enough.
4. Try creating one differentiated lesson per unit.
5. Differentiate one product per grading period.
6. Find multiple resources for a couple of key parts of your curriculum. For example, consider using several texts, supplementary books at varied readability levels (from basic to quite advanced), videos, or audiotapes that you or volunteers make over time.
7. Establish class criteria for success with products. Then, work with students to add personal criteria to their lists. You add one or two for each student based on what you know of the student's strengths and needs.
8. Give students more choices about how to work, how to express learning, or which homework assignment to do. (Generally, structured choices work best.)
9. Develop and use a two-day learning contract the next grading period, a four-day contract the next grading period, and so on until you have a wide array of written agreements for students to sign and use.



Formulating Effective Questions

In formulating questions during classroom discussions, each teacher should make sure that these questions:

1. Map onto all six levels of Bloom's Taxonomy
2. Make sure the six levels are adapted to the level of student abilities
3. Assess student mastery of or progress towards attaining learning objectives

Below are few helpful questioning tips:

1. Remember wait time: Provide at least three seconds of thinking time after a question and after a response. (maximum is 30 seconds with helpful hints from the teacher).
2. Utilize the strategy: Think-Pair-Share.
3. Instead of responding to the question, respond to student answers in a non-evaluative fashion.
4. Ask "follow-up" questions: Why? Do you agree? Can you elaborate?
5. Encourage students to think aloud: Describe how you came up with this answer
6. Survey the class: "How do people agree with the author's point of view?" (Thumbs Up, Thumbs Down)
7. Ask for a summary (to promote active listening): "Could you please summarize Ahmad's point?"
8. Play "Devil's Advocate"
9. Cue student responses: "There is not a single correct answer for this question. I want you to consider alternatives."
10. Allow for student questioning, let the students develop their own questions.
11. Allow for students calling: "Omar, will you please call on someone else to respond?"
12. Call on students randomly — not just those with raised hands.
13. Never call on a student before asking a question irrespective of the situation.



I Remember...

name

define

recall

describe

identify

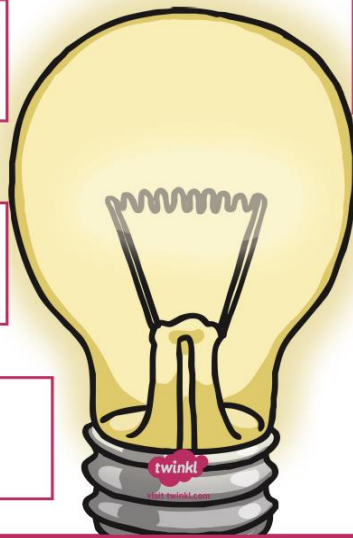
What...?
Where does ... come from?
Where...?

What does ... look like?
How...?
What is it called?

Can you describe...?
When...?
Where does it say...?

Which...?
What do you know about...?
When did it happen?

Why...?
Who...?
Do you remember...?



I Understand...

interpret

predict

recall

describe

identify

What...?
Can you give a reason for...?
Why did this happen?

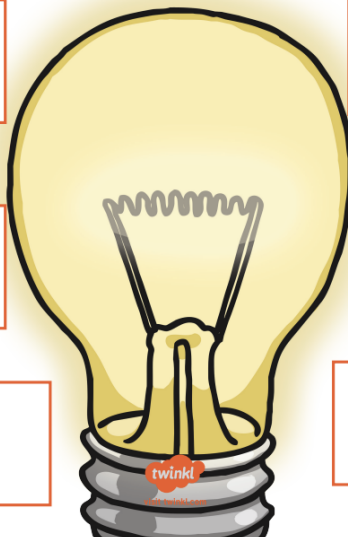
What is going to happen in the
next sequence?
Can you give a reason for...?

Can you explain what happened?
Where does it say...?
How is ... feeling?

Which word tells you...?
What does this mean?
Why...?

When...?
Which word tells you...?
Who...?

What are the key features?
How can you compare?
What is the main idea?





I Can Apply...

use

demonstrate

relate

transfer knowledge

show

Can you think of something similar?
What could you use this for?

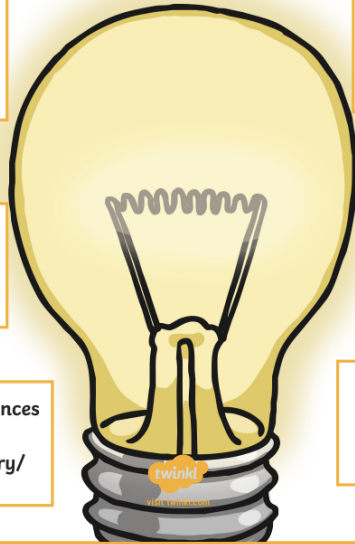
How can you organise the information to share it with someone else?

Which facts can you use to show that ... ?
Which elements can you change?

How can you use what you have learnt?
Can you demonstrate ... ?

Can you use any of these sentences in your own writing?
Can you think of another story/situation that is similar?

What would you have done in the same situation?
What might happen next?



I Can Analyse...

infer

select

investigate

classify

examine

What evidence can you find?
How could you group/sort/classify the information?

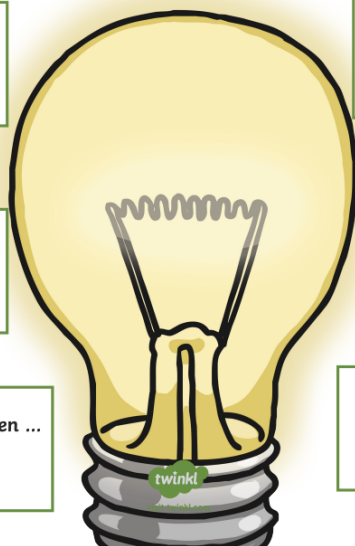
Can you select the important information?
Can you examine the motives?

Can you investigate the differences between...?
Can you infer what happened?

Can you see a pattern?
What makes you think that?

What is the relationship between ... and ...?
What makes you think...?

Which information backs up your opinion?
Is there a common theme?





I Can Evaluate...

assess

judge

compare

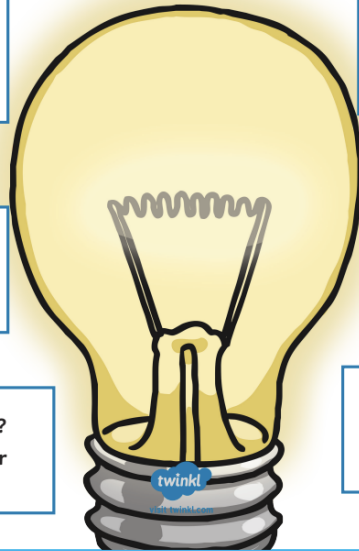
criticise

recommend

What would you recommend?
How would you rate it?

What did you find out?
How can you decide whether it
worked or not?

How does it compare to ... ?
What would your points for
improvement be?



What made this successful? Why?
Would it be better if...?
What was less successful?

Can you summarise the main
points?
What judgements have you made?

What would you do differently?
What went well?

I Can Create...

plan

design

compose

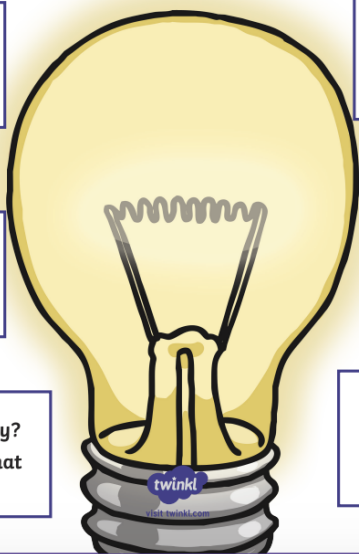
imagine

construct

Which parts can you improve?
What would you do differently next
time?

Is there anything you would
remove?
Can you make changes to get
around the problem?

Could you alter the plan/story?
Can you write a report on what
you have found out?



Can you think of a better way to...?
Could you design a new way to...?
What would you have done to...?

What is your opinion? What
evidence supports your view?
Can you write your own?

What would you add?
Is there a test you can design to
find the answer?
Has this affected your views?



"Must-Have's" in Lesson Plans

- I wrote my feedback on each lesson plan to ensure implementation of all items in the 'plans; which would constitute an important reference for substitution anchor inspection purposes.
- I specified the grade level, topic, period, date, and week number.
- I indicated the standard(s) and benchmark(s) as mentioned in the curriculum.
- I wrote the objective(s) in the specified section, and I made sure that these objectives are clear, concise, observable and measurable.
- While designing my instructional planning and procedures — in the sections: Checking Prior Knowledge, Presentation, Modelling, Practice, Assessment), I made sure that I included all the following items:
 - ✓ Specific Verbs in the Bloom's Taxonomy Sheet for both Teacher's Role and Student's Role
 - ✓ A Clear Purpose
 - ✓ Instructional Strategies, Methods, and Skills
 - ✓ Grouping Strategies
 - ✓ Learning Activities
 - ✓ Differentiated Instruction Strategies
 - ✓ Assessment Activity (as a closure of the lesson)
- I included the assignments that my students will have to do outside the classroom.
- I mentioned resources that are useful for my lesson.
- I stated references and recommended readings.
- I e-mailed all my lesson plans, study guidelines, and activities to the Subject Leaders and the Director of Curriculum Design and Implementation on the designated time.
- I glued all me lesson plans in the Plan Book which is ready to be submitted to the Head of Department and the Director of Curriculum Design and Implementation on the designated time for further inspection and study.



Analysis of Student Performance Data

Constant Conversation Questions for Student Benefit: Framework to Guide Thinking

The sub-questions represent only one way to think through the processes that will lead to a clear and usable plan focused on student benefit.

1. What does data tell us about our student learning needs?

- What data do we collect?
- How do we collect and analyze data to determine prioritized student learning needs?
- What did we learn through this data analysis?
- From the data analysis, what are our prioritized student needs?
- How will we develop goals and actions based upon the prioritized needs?

2. What do/will we do to meet student learning needs?

- What long-range goals have been established to support prioritized student needs?
- What process will be used to determine what we will do to meet the long-range goals?
- What is our current practice to support these long-range goals?
- How is our current practice aligned with or supported by the research base?
- What gaps exist between our current practice to support long-range goals and the research base (include curriculum and instruction)?
- What actions/activities will we use to address prioritized needs, established goals, and any gaps between current and research-based practice?
- How will we support implementation of the identified actions?

3. How do/will we know that student learning has changed (student data)?

- How will we know student learning has changed over time in relation to our long-range goals?

4. How will we evaluate our programs and services to ensure improved student learning (implementation data)?

- What strategies/process will we use to evaluate how well the activities included were implemented?
- What implementation data will we collect, analyze, and use to determine how well each program/service selected has been implemented to support our goals?

Defining Components of the Professional Development Program in our Department

1. Collecting and Analysing Student Data

Identifying student need is the first step in designing professional development intended to improve student learning. Collecting and analyzing information about student performance in areas of interest enables a district and/or school to set priorities. If professional development is to impact student learning, it must precisely align with student needs.

2. Goal Setting



Clear statements of expectations regarding student learning allow schools and districts to focus professional development resources and energy on achievable goals. To meet the goals identified in a Comprehensive School Improvement Plan, the intent of professional development is to increase the learning of all students while attending to the learning needs of subgroups of students. If professional development content is to accomplish the desired increases in student learning, the goals for student learning must be explicit and concrete.

3. Selecting Content

Content selected for collective study by schools and districts must be supported by evidence that it can accomplish the goals set for student learning. A district should be confident that the content they choose to study has been found to improve student achievement. A process for selecting content will include:

- A review of research on curricular and instructional innovations with a history of success in the areas identified for student improvement
- A review of current knowledge and practices in the district/school
- Alignment with the Maine's Teaching Standards
- Documentation that the practices are supported by scientifically-based research

4. Designing the Process

The professional development process must ensure that teachers have adequate opportunities to learn and implement new curricula, instructional strategies, and assessments. Teachers need to have sufficient workshop and workplace supports to develop a deep understanding of the theory of the strategy/model they are learning. Professional development design will build in time for teachers to learn together and to collaborate with each other. If teachers have opportunities to learn new content and implement it in their classrooms, the investment in professional development will pay off in increased student learning. If professional development is based on powerful and proven content and implemented as designed, students will benefit.

5. Ongoing Cycle

Professional development is a continuous process rather than a one-time event. To be able to transfer new learning into the classroom, teachers need multiple opportunities to see demonstrations; plan together, work out problems, rehearse new lessons, develop materials, engage in peer coaching, and observe each other. The collaborative routines needed for supporting these actions must be planned for, supported and monitored. What staff developers learn from the study of implementation will inform decisions about future training, the need for support, and adjustments in the learning opportunities. If new content is to be learned and implemented in classrooms so that students benefit, teachers need ongoing training, the collegiality of peers as they plan and develop lessons and materials and study their implementation, and interim measures to judge the success of their efforts.

6. Program (Summative) Evaluation

The effectiveness of professional development is judged by student learning outcomes. Determination of the efficacy of a professional development program is based on two factors: whether or not the content was implemented as planned and whether or not students acquired the desired knowledge/skills/behaviors. This judgment is based on both formative and summative evaluation data. The quality of the evaluation is contingent upon having clearly stated goals that target an improvement in student performance. A professional development program is successful when it achieves its student learning goals.



Protocols of Conversation

The Classroom-Focused Improvement Process is a data conversation protocol. This section explains how each component is essential for its success.

Data

Data are observations, facts, or numbers that, when collected and organized, become information and, when used productively in context, become knowledge. Data are merely numbers or words and, alone, have no intrinsic meaning. It has been said that data do not laugh or cry. Individuals or groups give meaning to data by organizing, analysing, interpreting, and using them. Our context and prior experiences have a major influence on the meaning we derive from the data we collect.

Conversation

In the best-selling leadership text *The Fifth Discipline*, Peter Senge noted that, through a conversation, a group accesses a larger 'pool of common meaning,' which cannot be accessed individually. . . . The purpose of a conversation is to go beyond any one individual's understanding. Through conversation, people gain new insights that simply could not be achieved individually. . . . We are not trying to win in a dialogue. We all win if we are doing it right."

Hence, the major characteristics of a professional conversation are:

- Making known the assumptions that underlie our perspectives.
- Inquiring into and examining the assumptions of others.
- Remaining open to the perspectives of others and willing to be influenced and to change our thoughts and actions because of them.
- Suspending judgment until all relevant data have been shared.
- Respecting differences of opinion as a healthy characteristic of a team.
- Suspending role and status distinctions.
- Sharing responsibility and leadership.
- Speaking to the group as a whole, as opposed to holding side conversations.
- Practicing empathy.
- Holding assumptions loosely, as opposed to "the truth".
- Listening carefully to what is being said without interrupting others.
- Refraining from offering comments, commiseration, or offers of assistance, until they are appropriate.
- Instituting periods of silence at contentious points in meetings in order to calm emotions and provide participants with time to reflect on what is being said and on their current points of view.

Protocol

A protocol consists of agreed-upon guidelines for conversation — which everyone understands and has agreed to — that permit a certain kind of conversation to occur, often a kind of conversation which school team members are not in the habit of having.

Protocols can help teams to navigate difficult and uncomfortable conversations by providing:

- A logical series of questions for team members to discuss sequentially.
- A template on which to record conclusions.
- The opportunity for all team members to become actively involved.



- A comprehensive analysis that will lead to definitive actions.

Mc Donald, et al., have noted that, "In some educational organizations, protocols may at first seem foolish — an unwarranted interference in ordinary business. The more dysfunctional the organization, the stronger the negative reaction may be.... One could argue that communication precision, faithful replication, and scripts would prove counterproductive here. Don't we learn best by just talking with each other?"

They conclude, however, that "Among educators, especially, just talking may not be enough. The kind of talking needed to educate ourselves cannot rise spontaneously and unaided from just talking. It needs to be carefully planned and scaffolded. Protocols force transparency. Protocols make clear the differences between describing and judging, between talking and listening, and between proposing and giving feedback."

Protocols may be hard to stick to at first. They may seem strange and stilted. We tend to want to take the conversation in other, more natural, directions. But this can be counter-productive and not lead to definitive actions. For the dialogue to be effective, we should "trust the protocol" and let it work. In time, the questions will seem much more natural, and we will become more comfortable with them. In time, too, we may see opportunities to modify the protocol and perhaps eliminate components or combine questions. But for the first few times we try it, we should strive to be true to the process.

Conversation Protocol Phases

Protocol Phase	Duration	Guidance to Participants
Introduction	2 minutes	The facilitator reminds the group of the norms: no fault, collaboration, or consensus. The teacher providing the student work gives a very brief statement of the assignment and refrains from characterizing the student or the quality of the work samples.
Describing the Student Work	10 minutes	The group gathers as much information as possible from the student work. Group members describe what they see avoiding judgments about quality or interpretations of what the student was doing, if judgments or interpretations do arise, the facilitator would ask the person to describe the evidence on which they are based.
Interpreting the Student Work	10 minutes	The group tries to make sense of what the student was doing and why. The group should try to find as many different interpretations as possible and evaluate them against the kind and quality of evidence. From the evidence, group members try to infer what the student was thinking, did and did not understand, was most interested in, and how the student interpreted the task at hand.
Implications for Classroom Practice	10 minutes	Based on the group's observations and interpretations, discuss any implications this work might have for teaching and assessment in the classroom.
Reflect on the Process	10 minutes	Reflect on how the process worked. Share any new insights you have gained about the students, about you colleagues, about yourself, about your practice.



Peer Learning Community

As members of the community of DIPS-G teachers, the daily schedule at our school has offered great opportunities to practice the experience of a Peer Learning Community; where we have the chance to discuss educational articles and educational newsletters during at least once-per-week sessions of Department Meetings. These sessions are chances where members of our team can network and exchange ideas for growth and insights about the teaching-learning process and the academic performance of our students. For the busy teaching staff, just the time alone to sit and reflect with colleagues comes as a luxury both rare and valuable. We're able to think about the larger issues. It's something we really need but rarely have time for.

During such sessions, all teachers collaborate and learn from one another's experiences while sharing strategies and tips on everyday matters that many find to be universal. In reflecting upon his/her participation in the Peer Learning Group, everybody can benefit from hearing different perspectives on things and are always left having more tools in my toolbox. Often, what participants find most beneficial is the perspective they gain on their own development when they see that others have faced similar challenges along the way. Such interactions really validate own experiences without feeling alone when teachers see that others have had similar problems.

Our Peer Learning Community develops its practice through a variety of activities. The following table provides a few typical examples:

Problem Solving	"Can we work on this plan and brainstorm some ideas; I'm stuck."
Seeking Experience	"Has anyone dealt with a student in this situation?"
Visits	"Can we come and see your lesson plan? We need to establish something similar."
Requests for Information	"Where can I find a reliable source on Differentiated Instruction?"
Coordination and Synergy	"Can we combine our ideas to design the progress test?"
Discussing Developments	"What do you think of the new planning template? Does it really work?"
Documentation Projects	"We have faced this problem five times now. Let us write it down once and for all."
Mapping Knowledge and Identifying Gaps	"Who knows what we are missing? What other forms of analysing data should we work on?"
Reusing Assets	"I have a proposal for helping low-achievers who have poor self-esteem. I can send it to you and you can easily tweak it to suit us."



Guidelines for Premium Instruction that Implements the NCLB Act (No Child Left Behind)

1. Instigating a sense of humor with a great deal of energy to grab students' attention and increase their attention span throughout the teaching-learning process. Further, focusing on "interactive games" during instruction will facilitate students' acquisition of concepts because students usually learn easily when they are offered opportunities for "Learning by Doing".
2. Writing clear, observable, and measurable objectives on the board during each session. These objectives should be identical to those in the plan book and should be written according to the KUD approach; where "K" stands for what students should "KNOW", "U" stands for what students should "UNDERSTAND", and "D" stands for what students should "DO".
3. Registering the classwork and homework activities together with absent students in the "Class Record Book" on daily basis.
4. Implementing the different active strategies, methods, skills, and methodologies; such as Kagan's Cooperative Learning Structures (especially Jigsaw), Bloom's Taxonomy, Debono's Six Thinking Hats, and McREL's Nine Strategies as well as active (folder paper organizer) and grouping and sub-grouping techniques. Employing drama in teaching should also be implemented for effective classroom instruction.
5. Employing "Differentiated Instruction" through classroom activities, homework assignments, formative assessments, summative evaluations, and end of term exams.
6. Documenting students' work in the "Active Learning Copybook". This copybook is checked by the English Language Coordinator on a weekly basis.
7. Marking students' academic progress by registering miscellaneous marks in the marking booklet in each session on daily basis. Then, these mark booklets must be weekly submitted to the coordinator to be checked as a proactive technique to monitor students' academic achievement. Next, these marks will be entered into the software in the English Subject Leader's Office.
8. Rewarding students' academic achievement through the "Reward Bank System" and behavioral performance through the "Reward Chart" which should be posted in each classroom.
9. Specializing sessions where students receive Differentiated Instruction in both reading and writing. This means that each teacher must put into action all the tiered activities in both reading and writing which are available in the pocket charts.
10. Encouraging students to continuously read newspapers and magazines and to use different kinds of resources: Thesaurus, Dictionary, Idioms Dictionary, etc... in all classroom activities; namely during essay writing.
11. Abiding by the policy and guidelines which are set and decided upon by DIPS-G administration.



Criteria for Evaluating Teacher's Overall Performance

- Professionalism
- Abiding by all guidelines and regulations in the department
- Commitment and punctuality in submitting all assigned tasks
- Walkthroughs
- Mini Observations
- Diagnostic Classroom Observations
- Summative / Formal Classroom Observations
- Peer Observations
- Student Interviews

