
LEARNING & TEACHING POLICY AND PRACTICE

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Aims & Objectives

We believe that learning can be maximised through effective and high-quality teaching. Pupil learning is the core purpose and function of CATS London. Central to this policy is the principle of aiming to create independent, lifelong learners who can take ownership of their learning and enjoy it. We aim to create a supportive, stimulating and inclusive environment for learning, designed to maximise student progress and attainment.

Teaching and learning are the core activities of the College; all staff engagement with pupils should positively support learning and teaching and the College's Values. Learning and teaching at CATS London are based on high expectations and positive relationships which show mutual respect, trust and a desire to achieve the very best. The College aims to be a purposeful and happy place where everyone is actively engaged in, and stimulated by, the process of learning. The College seeks to demonstrate an awareness that everyone learns in a variety of different ways, and that learning is a life-long experience.

Principles of Learning & Teaching at CATS London

In order to be successful, we need to adopt the following approach to learning and teaching at CATS London:

- Employ methods which demonstrate good subject knowledge, clear planning, knowledge of prior attainment and individual needs and abilities, management of time and use of available resources.
- Enable pupils to acquire new knowledge and make good progress according to their ability and English level, so that they increase their understanding and develop their skills across the curriculum.

- Employ effective assessment processes to give pupils a clear understanding of their current strengths and areas of development and positively encourages them to develop their abilities and talents.
- Foster in our pupil body the ability of self-motivation, the application of intellectual, physical and creative effort, interest in study and the ability to think and learn for themselves.
- Encourage pupils to enjoy the learning process and to fulfil their potential in every aspect of the curriculum.
- Uphold fundamental British values of democracy, rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.
- Recognise that the CATS London values of 'CARE' and the promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development underpin all aspects of school life.
- Informs, inspires and instils appropriate skills to help pupils become life-long learners.
- Develop an effective partnership between the College, the pupil, and the pupil's home, which recognises and promotes the love of learning for learning's sake.
- Establish pupil ownership of learning and celebration of the student voice.

Teaching Essentials

It is important to set high standards and expectations from the start of the year. All teachers should think clearly about the teaching pedagogies that they use and seek to develop these skills during their time at the College. The College promotes a standardised approach to learning and teaching that ensures cross curriculum consistency, standards and high expectations.

The subject teacher is responsible for the progress of every pupil in their class. As a result, lessons should:

- Be planned as part of a sequence (as laid out in schemes of work).
- Have stated learning objectives and/or outcomes.
- Have a clear structure, with a variety of activities and progress checks (formative and summative)
- Show a good understanding of the aptitudes, needs and prior attainment of all pupils.
- Be differentiated for all abilities and promote the progress of each child, enabling each pupil to participate.
- Contain a variety of activities or phases, which will allow all pupils to access the material in a range of different ways. Work and tasks set should stimulate and challenge pupils in the class and should take note of different ability levels in the room with appropriate extension work for the most able.

Language Development

CATS College London is an international college and with this in mind, all teachers need to cater for their students' language needs in class. All teachers must understand the importance of exploiting language development opportunities as much as possible in their subject classes. Teachers must strive to strike a balance between teaching content to a high standard whilst making sure that students have an appropriate grasp of the language involved and are able to successfully associate it with the taught content. This will ensure that students are able to access syllabus and specification fully. Teachers are supported in this by the English Department, through ongoing advice and INSET sessions organised

throughout the year. Departmental training via sharing good practice will also take place to demonstrate possible ways in which to implement language into classes.

Lesson Observations

Learning from observing and being observed is a right and privilege for all teachers. At CATS London we hope that all teachers will learn from all observations and help to create a flourishing learning community. Peer observations, faculty lesson observations and SLT/ CD learning walks take place to help us all develop as learners for the benefit of the students and betterment of the College. Feedback will be provided formally and informally to members of staff in the spirit of positivity, development and promoting staff reflection. Where concerns and/or underperformance is detected, this will be followed up by management and where appropriate, use of the Performance Improvement Policy (PIP) will be implemented as measures of support to staff members.

Work Scrutiny

The purpose of work scrutiny, carried out at a whole-college and faculty levels, is to share good practice between teachers and departments and to monitor the quality of teaching and learning in the interests of our students. This will be made up of two parts: faculty work evaluation and student evaluation.

Faculty work evaluation will be conducted by CDs with support from the Assistant Principal. Two faculty work evaluations will take place during an academic year. CDs and the APA will review a sample of folders across all subject areas for the relevant programme of study.

Student evaluations will consist of questionnaires on their learning experiences in their subjects of study and PoS twice during the academic year. In addition, the Student Council will be asked to comment on the learning experiences of students throughout the year through student representatives.

Comments from the faculty work evaluation and student evaluation, as well as any follow-up, will be passed to the SLT and used to maintain and improve the high standards of teaching and learning.

The Learning Environment

The classroom should be a place conducive to learning where students desire to learn and are motivated by their surroundings. The classroom teacher is responsible for maintaining an environment which fosters students' interest in their subject. Classrooms need to be neat and tidy, following housekeeping standards in promoting a positive learning environment. Classroom displays should be appropriate and updated on a regular basis.

Use of ICT

The College promotes the use of BYOD (bring your own device) to all pupils in supporting individual learning needs. However, it is at the teacher's professional judgement and discretion on how these are used in class whilst adhering to standards and ICT etiquette.

The College uses Canvas as our VLE (virtual learning environment) where learning materials are uploaded to support and engage pupils outside of scheduled lessons. This includes the use of PowerPoint presentations, worksheets, articles, weblinks to useful websites and extension reading

items. Homework can also be posted, collected and marked on Canvas where applicable, at the teacher's professional judgement and discretion.

Assessments

Homework is an integral part of the learning process. The idea that homework is integral to learning and that revision and/or preparation for the next lesson is vital for individual progress, should be part of the learning culture of the College. The purpose of homework is:

- To reinforce the work covered in class.
- To extend the pupils' knowledge/understanding of work covered in class.
- To practise a skill learnt in class.
- To assess the level of understanding of work covered.
- To allow the pupil to prepare for an activity in the next lesson ('flipped' lessons).
- To encourage responsible and independent learning.

Please note that not all homework can be formally assessed, but teachers must check that homework has been done.

Half termly cycle test assessment is rigorous summative assessment which is a cornerstone of high-quality teaching to ensure pupil progress. It is a measure of pupil attainment and it also provides an indication of the effectiveness of classroom practice. Marks should be awarded in line with the specific examination board mark scheme and assessment objectives. Swift teacher feedback is encouraged as a regular practice, alongside with opportunities for pupils to act on feedback given. Such marking should identify what the pupil has done well and their areas of development. As a result, pupils know how to improve and make progress.

General conduct

Teachers are role models for students; the general conduct of staff has immense influence on the quality of learning in the College. All teaching staff need to subscribe the British requirements of the [DfE's National Teaching Standards](#). Where concerns and/or underperformance is detected, this will be followed up by management and where appropriate, use of the Performance Improvement Policy (PIP) will be implemented as measures of support to staff members. In addition:

- We endeavour to create a positive and happy environment where mutual respect and trust are evident will promote learning. It is the teacher's responsibility to foster such an environment.
- Teachers should expect courtesy at all times (both to themselves and between pupils), and as such should not talk over a class, but wait for silence before addressing the whole class.
- Praise and encouragement should be the norm in, and about, the College. Pupils should feel both physically and emotionally safe, so that they can be fully engaged in any learning activity and extend themselves; this requires positive, supportive and encouraging relationships with staff. Such an atmosphere would be characterised by regular praise and a belief in the capacity of pupils to reflect on and respond constructively to their learning experiences.
- A teacher's punctuality to lessons, good record-keeping, assessment marking, meeting faculty and whole school deadlines and consistent treatment/ communication/ expectations of pupils with respect to behaviour are essential in setting high standards for all.

USEFUL RESOURCES

INDEPENDENT AND EFFECTIVE LEARNERS: HOW TO RECOGNISE

Developing Effective Learners ([DfES – Unit 17 Pedagogy and Practice](#)) identifies the following skills.

Effective learners can:

- organise and sequence their work;
- solve complex problems;
- appreciate when they need to seek help or ask questions;
- read and gather information and take notes;
- share ideas or work in a group;
- appreciate the purpose of what they are doing and make connections with other work;
- evaluate their work and plan what they can do.

PRINCIPLES OF INSTRUCTION

Barak Rosenshine (2012) identified 10 [research based principles of instruction](#) and classroom practice in order to maximise learning:

- Begin a lesson with a short review of previous learning.
- Present new material in small steps with student practice after each step.
- Ask a large number of questions and check the responses of all students.
- Provide models.
- Guide student practice.
- Check for student understanding.
- Obtain a high success rate.
- Provide scaffolds for difficult tasks.
- Require and monitor independent practice.
- Engage students in weekly and monthly review.

QUALITIES OF AN EXCELLENT TEACHER

John Hattie (2012) identified several [key qualities for teachers](#) to have, which impact student learning the most:

- Are passionate about helping their students learn.
- Monitor their impact on students' learning, and adjust their approaches accordingly.
- Are clear about what they want their students to learn.
- Forge strong relationships with their students.
- Adopt evidence-based teaching strategies.
- Actively seek to improve their own teaching.

Feedback, for example, is one of the single most powerful influences on student achievement. For feedback to be effective, Hattie argues that it needs to:

- Be clear and mindful of students' prior knowledge

- Be directed at the right level, so it can assist students to comprehend, engage, or develop effective strategies to process the information intended to be learnt. Feedback works powerfully when there is a lot of challenge in the task.
- Relate to the learning intention and success criteria
- Occur as the students are doing the learning
- Provide information on how and why the student has or has not met the success criteria
- Provide strategies to help the student to improve

SOLO TAXONOMY

SOLO stands for the '[Structure of Observed Learning Outcomes](#)' (Biggs and Collis, 1982). It takes a hierarchal approach in helping learners to reflect on next steps in their learning and helping teachers to design effective learning experiences for their students. The model is:

- Pre structural level- students have no idea of their learning.
- Uni structural level- students have one idea of their learning.
- Multi structural level- students have many ideas of their learning.
- Relational level- students can relate and connect their learning to other topics.
- Extended abstract- students can transfer their learning beyond the level and content taught.

SOLO taxonomy can be a useful approach to deeper plenary assessments with regards to assessing progress of students.