



**BRITISH SCHOOL  
OF GENEVA**

# TEACHING & LEARNING HANDBOOK

**Implementation Date – September 2022**

**Review Date – May 2023**

**“Every teacher needs to improve, not because they are not good enough, but because they can be even better.”**

**DYLAN WILLIAM**

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## 1. Definition of learning

At BSG, learning is the process of building new concepts, skills and understanding through a variety of experiences. The process of learning is challenging but empowering, accompanied by a positive sensation of getting better. We are an inclusive school who operate on the principle of the three-way partnership of school – student – parent.

The British School of Geneva embraces the individuality of every learner. We support student learning through a robust, children-focused curriculum, and enriching extra-curricular programs. We focus relentlessly on each child's ability to amaze. Whether through mentoring, enrichment or personalised study, we recognise and nurture each student's gifts and talents so that they amaze themselves and inspire others.

**“Amazing learning is central to everything we do at the British School of Geneva.”**

We are a lively, busy, happy and hardworking school where we support our students to develop a love of learning and achieve to the best of their ability. Through our enriched and flexible international British curriculum, our teachers work continuously to inspire children.

## 2. Our values

At BSG, we want our students to be....



Our school values



### 3. Teaching and learning aim

We want every student to experience **amazing learning**, in every lesson, every day. We want our students to have a **good struggle**, to feel challenged yet supported. As teachers, it is important that our curriculum planning, assessment strategies, feedback and reporting allow all students to move forward.

A **good struggle** is when the process of learning is challenging but empowering, accompanied by a positive sensation of getting better at our desired goals and outcomes. When we're experiencing a good struggle, we *want* to learn.

A **bad struggle** is when the challenge is too great, and the learning process feels overwhelming, confusing, stressful and frustrating. A bad struggle can make us want to give up and avoid learning altogether.

**Knowledge** is the *facts and concepts we know and retain in long-term memory*. Knowledge precedes deep learning in skills and understanding. Therefore, knowledge is essential; it's where the process of learning begins.

**Skills** are the *physical and cognitive actions we are able to do*. Skills are highly dependent on context and relevant knowledge – the transfer of skills to another context is not automatic. Skills get better over time through practice and take longer to get better at, as they are about the application of knowledge to demonstrate understanding.

**Understanding** concerns *the interplay between knowledge and skills to drive deep reflection on and personalisation of learning*. For this reason, it typically comes later in the learning process and takes considerable time. As we combine, apply, experiment and play with what we know and what we are able to do, our understanding is constantly shifting and evolving. Although there may be a finite number of facts, concepts, and skills we want learners to develop, there is an infinite number of ways to combine, comprehend, and utilize them: and this is the key to understanding.

Understanding is often the gateway to **amazing learning** – combining, applying and exploring what we know and are able to do in deeply personal ways can create transformative 'threshold' moments for our learning; moments which quite simply amaze us.

Phases of learning	
New Learning	Consolidating
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Asking open questions</li> <li>○ Engaged and concentrating</li> <li>○ Focused on task</li> <li>○ Excited</li> <li>○ Some hesitancy</li> <li>○ Some confusion</li> <li>○ Needing support and reliant on information source</li> <li>○ Annotating</li> <li>○ Making mistakes</li> <li>○ Excited and smiling</li> <li>○ Needing time</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Thinking about connections</li> <li>○ Making up questions</li> <li>○ Engaged and concentrating</li> <li>○ Focused on task</li> <li>○ Helping others</li> <li>○ Confident, feeling secure</li> <li>○ Sense of success</li> <li>○ Independently learning</li> <li>○ Asking connecting questions</li> <li>○ Practicing</li> <li>○ Answering with confidence</li> <li>○ Able to share and explain to others</li> <li>○ Increased fluency</li> <li>○ Adapting or Evaluating</li> <li>○ Engaging in extension tasks</li> <li>○ Mastering the content</li> </ul>

## 4. BSG Principles of teaching

### 1. Daily Review

We begin every lesson with a review of previous learning. This can be a Starter or Do Now activity. Daily review helps to strengthen the connections of the material learned and consolidate learning. Techniques such as retrieval practice will allow for effective consolidation.

### 2. New material in small steps

Our working memory is small, only handling a few bits of information at once. We present new learning in small steps, proceeding only when the first steps are mastered.

### 3. Ask Questions

The most successful teachers spend more than half the class time lecturing, demonstrating and asking questions. Our use of questions allow us to determine how well material has been learned. Techniques such as cold calling ensure that all students participate.

### 4. Provide models

We use modelling, worked examples and teacher thinking out-loud to help clarify the specific steps involved. This may be done with the use of visualisers and the I Do/We Do/You Do approach.

### 5. Guide student practice

We allow time for students to rephrase, elaborate and summarise new learning in order to store it in their long-term memory. "Say it again but better" form the basis of this approach.

### 6. Check students understanding

We check on the understanding of all students in the classroom by questioning, asking students to summarise or repeat directions or procedures. We ask students to think aloud when solving problems or planning essays.

### 7. Obtain high success rates

We aim to challenge all students in the classroom. New learning is delivered in small steps and students are given sufficient time to practice on each part before proceeding to the next step.

### 8. Scaffolds for difficult tasks

We model success and provide scaffolds for students to succeed. Scaffolds include modelling, thinking aloud, cue cards, checklists, worked or faded examples. Our scaffolds are tailored for the class and/or student.

### 9. Independent practice

We build in time in lessons for independent practice. Independent practice allows for consolidation to occur. This ensures no overloading of students' working memory.

### 10. Weekly and monthly review

We continually review material, asking students to recall recently-learned information, embedding it in long-term memory. Our formative and summative assessment approaches allow for this.

*Suggested reading:*

Principles of Instruction: Research-based strategies that all teachers should know:

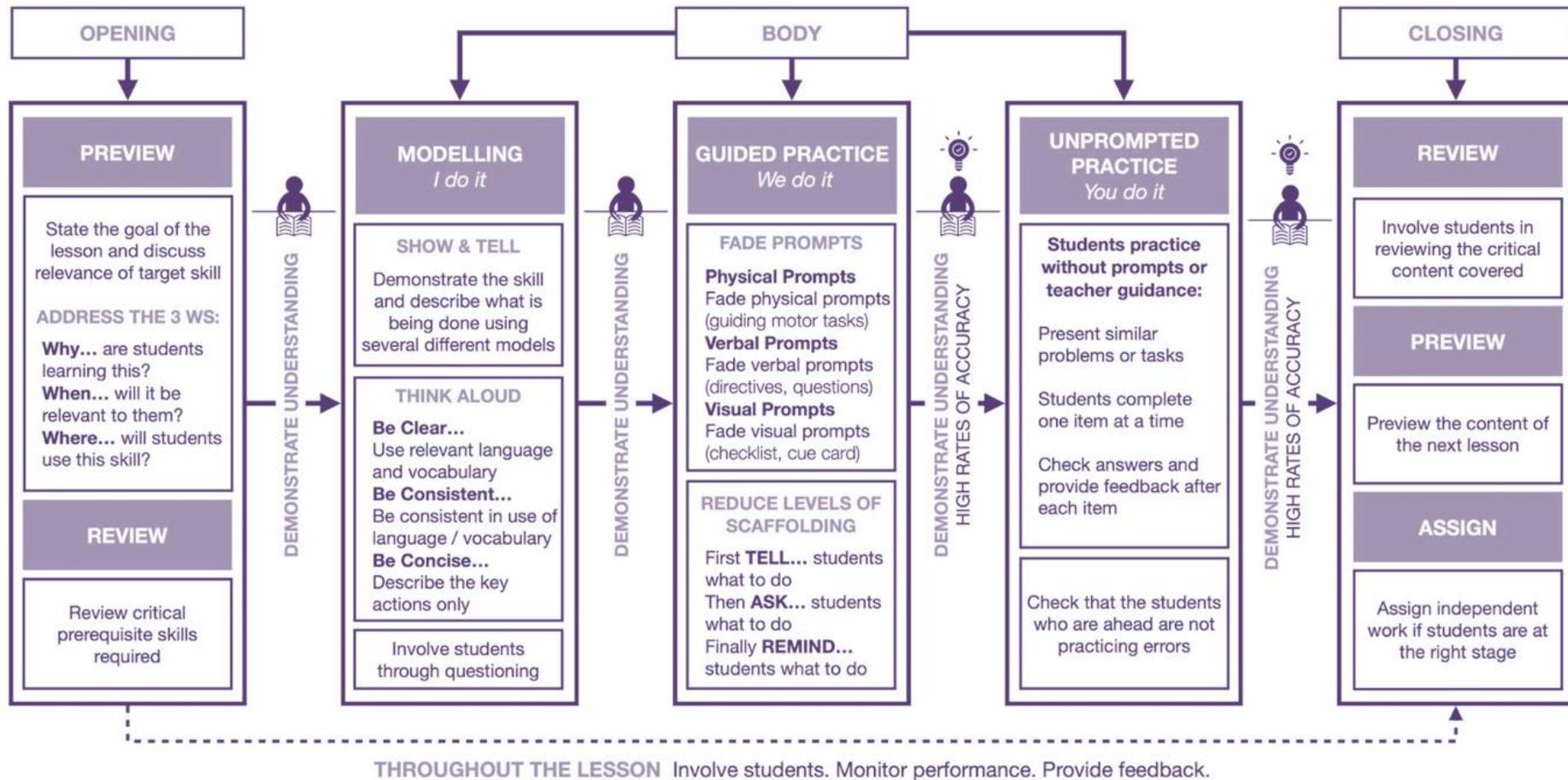
<https://www.aft.org/sites/default/files/periodicals/Rosenshine.pdf>

The great teaching toolkit evidence review June 2020:

[https://assets.website-files.com/5ee28729f7b4a5fa99bef2b3/5ee9f507021911ae35ac6c4d\\_EBE\\_GTT\\_EVIDENCE%20REVIEW\\_DIGITAL.pdf?utm\\_referrer=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.greatteaching.com](https://assets.website-files.com/5ee28729f7b4a5fa99bef2b3/5ee9f507021911ae35ac6c4d_EBE_GTT_EVIDENCE%20REVIEW_DIGITAL.pdf?utm_referrer=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.greatteaching.com)

## 5. Lesson expectations

As a school we do not have a set lesson plan template and do not expect lesson plans, teachers are free to plan their lessons as they see fit. We do ask however that teachers consider the diagram below when planning, and follow the scheme of learning (SoL) produced for their individual subject.

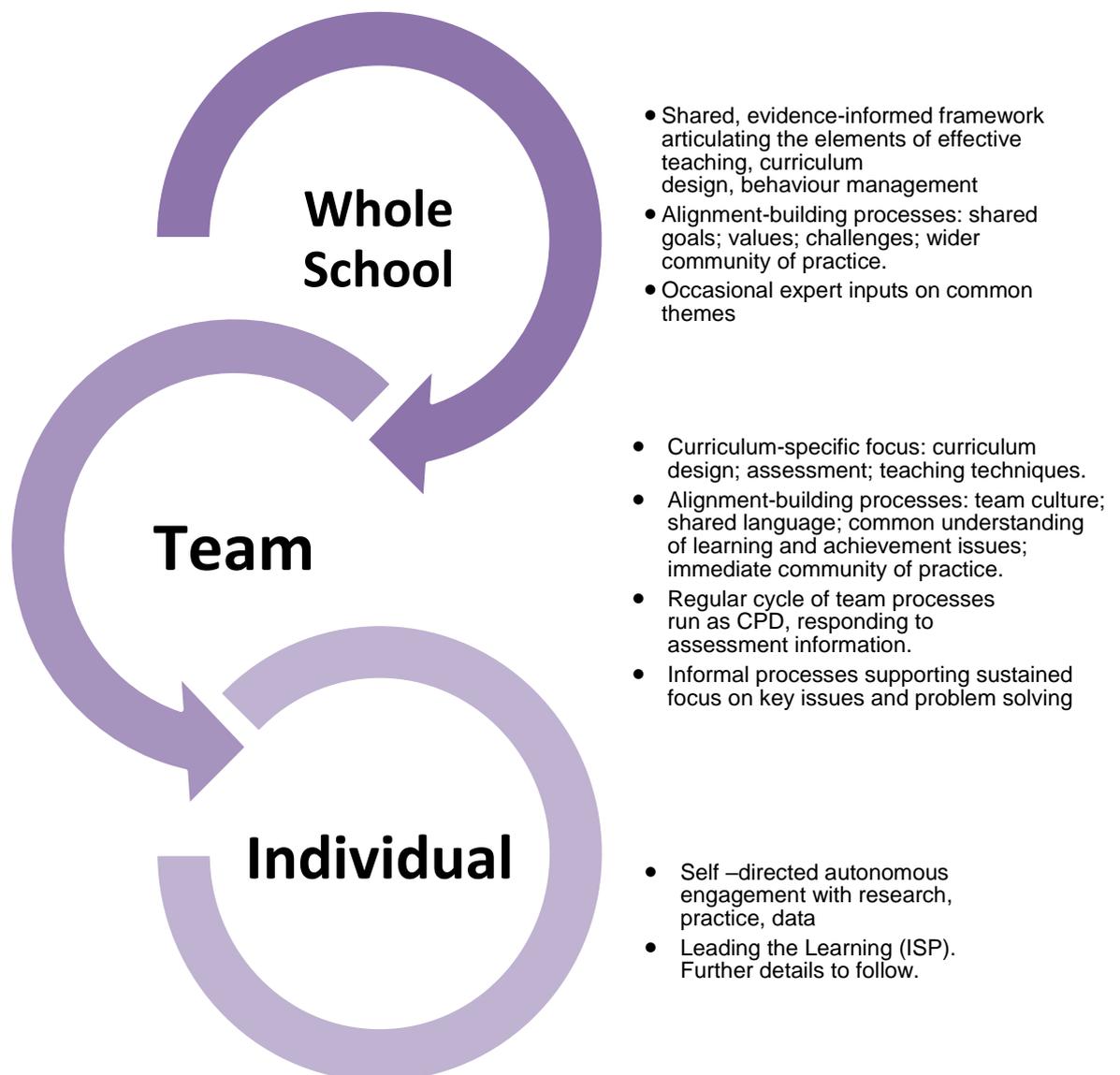


## 6. Professional learning

### Our Aim

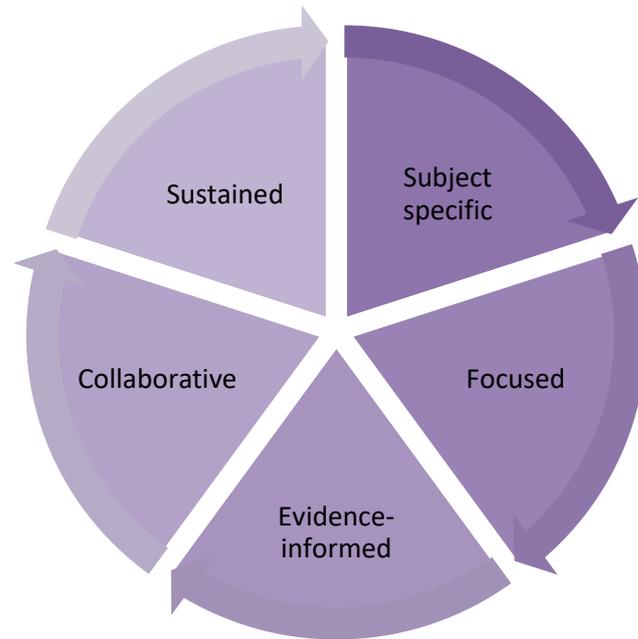
Very simple: allow our teachers to be the best they can be, share their experience and continue to learn using an evidence-informed approach .

**Structure** Our professional learning programme is divided into 3 levels: whole school, teams and individuals. All 3 form part of an integrated whole which will lead teachers to improve their practice leading to improved student learning and achievement.



## Professional Learning Working Parties

As a teaching staff we are committed to developing continual professional development. Our approach involves using educational research to improve our use of evidence-informed teaching across all subject areas. Research has demonstrated that effective CPD is:



Our teaching and learning working parties will meet regularly to discuss educational research. They will develop best practice and share this across the school at a whole school, team and individual level. These groups will lead our professional learning programme.

### What is evidence-informed practice?

Some educational policy-makers, politicians and teachers use the term 'evidence-based' when they speak of instruction and teaching, while others use the term 'evidence-informed'. Is there a difference and, if so, what is it? There is a distinction, albeit sometimes subtle, between *evidence-based* and *evidence-informed* in terms of practice in education. An *evidence-based practice* is an approach to practice that focuses practitioner attention on sound empirical evidence in professional decision-making and action. *Evidence-informed practice* is still based on empirical evidence but acknowledges the fact that it's harder for real classroom practice to determine what works for whom under which circumstances. What seems to work in one classroom does not always work in another classroom.

## Why is evidence informed practice so important?

- The quality of teaching can have the largest impact on pupil learning, progress and outcomes.
- CPD which is evidence-informed has been shown to have the largest impact on teacher quality.
- Being evidence-informed enables us to dispel learning myths which have long impacted classroom practice but have no basis in evidence. Examples include the 'learning pyramid' which has prevented the use of teacher-led explanations and instruction and 'learning styles' which resulted in lesson activities being tailored to these perceived ways of learning.
- It ensures that we base our decisions about which practices to use on evidence rather than hunches. Doing this allows us to improve teaching, learning and pupil outcomes, making the biggest difference possible to pupils' life chances.
- Evidence-informed teaching also enables us to reduce workload. In a profession that has long relied on teachers working in their evenings and at weekends, and now suffering from a huge recruitment and retention crisis, it is crucial that we make teaching a sustainable profession. Evidence-informed teaching can allow us to do this by identifying those practices that have a large impact on workload but little impact on learning.



## Professional Learning Google Classroom

Our Professional Learning Classroom contains 11 sections, which are designed to support staff and aid in the sharing of good practice. Sections include:

1. BSG: Our vision for learning
2. ISP Learning and innovation strategy
3. WP1 Retrieval practice
4. WP2 Questioning
5. WP3 Sequencing learning
6. WP4 Feedback
7. SEN and EAL
8. Book Reviews
9. For the curious
10. ISP The learning hub
11. CPD log

The Professional Learning classroom can be accessed using the details below.

<https://classroom.google.com/c/MzKxMjkzNzIzNjA4?cjc=zs33oq4>

Class Code: zs33oq4

### CPD Log

So that as a staff we can share best practice and learn from each other, we ask that all staff make a record of any CPD or training throughout the academic year in the CPD log.

[https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1G\\_3yrhUiZ8RnjAizZRgJ5AXRKOJcOrszZtPNAUP7Wc/edit?usp=sharing](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1G_3yrhUiZ8RnjAizZRgJ5AXRKOJcOrszZtPNAUP7Wc/edit?usp=sharing)

### *Suggested reading:*

Planning professional learning: One system; three streams:

<https://teacherhead.com/2021/02/21/planning-professional-learning-one-system-three-streams/>

Embedding an evidence-informed culture:

<https://mrspearce865924391.wordpress.com>

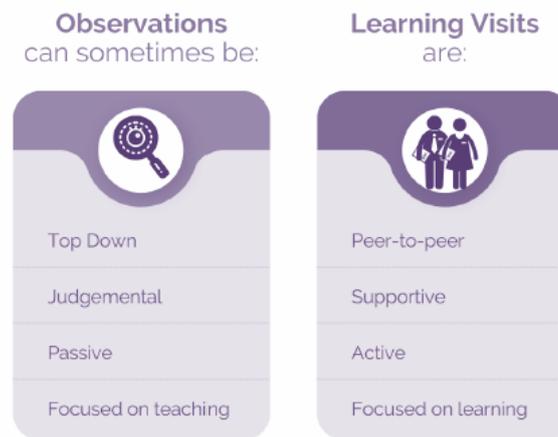
Evidence-informed pedagogy:

<https://impact.chartered.college/article/evidence-informed-pedagogy/>

## 7. Learning visits

### What are learning visits?

Learning Visits are visits to any classroom or learning space with the aim of gathering evidence of student learning in real-time and using this evidence to improve learning *and* teaching. All staff are expected to undertake learning visits with colleagues **at least once a term**.



### Pre-visit steps

#### 1 Initiate

Before a Learning Visit takes place, you need to initiate one -with the purpose of gathering evidence of learning to support your Design or Inquiry (why).

#### 2 Identify the focus

Using evidence from your ongoing reflections, observations, conversations, and evaluations of student learning, identify an explicit and specific focus for the visit (what, who, when).

#### 3 Invite

Invite a trusted colleague to participate in the visit.

#### 4 Set time

Arrange a time to lead the pre-visit conversation to outline the purpose and focus with your colleague.

#### 5 Schedule post-visit

Outline some possible times to meet after the visit for the post visit conversation (teachers tell us it's best to do this before the visit otherwise it can get overlooked - and the sooner you can arrange to meet the

## Tips for teachers participating in a visit

Here are some useful Pre-Visit conversation prompts for teachers participating a Learning Visit

- Can you clarify the purpose and focus for me again?
- Can you give me a bit of context about the students and their learning?
- How can I be most supportive?
- What would you like to find out about their learning?
- What part of the lesson would you like me to visit?
- When would you like the visit(s) to take place?
- Who would you like me to talk to?
- How many students would you like me to talk to?
- How long would you like me to spend with them?
- What kind of questions do you specifically want me to ask?
- What do you want me to look/listen out for?
- Which of the learning questions are the most important for you for this visit?
- What types of evidence do you want me to focus on?
- What is the best way of gathering/recording/documenting the evidence for you?
- Do you have any evidence/examples that might be helpful for me to look at before the visit?
- Is it useful for me to have a copy of your current Learning Design/Inquiry?
- Do you have any recent/relevant examples of student learning that would be useful for me to see before the visit?
- Is there anything else that would be useful for me to know/use/bring/think about?
- When would you like to meet to review the evidence?

## Post-Visit Tips for both teachers

The following questions can help to **scaffold** the **Analyse and Use** parts of the posit visit conversation:

- What kind of questions does the evidence make us ask?
- Does the evidence confirm or challenge what we think we know about learners and learning? In what ways?
- Is any of the evidence surprising or unexpected? In what ways?\*
- What patterns do we notice in the evidence?(eg. are there differences between students/outcomes/processes?)
- What does the evidence make us want to inquire into and learn more about?
- How does our evidence and outcomes compare with that from Learning Designs or Inquiries in other classes/year groups/subjects/contexts?
- Does anything need to be changed, adapted or clarified for the next Learning Design or Inquiry?
- Do we need to arrange another Learning Visit to test or confirm the evidence?
- What can we highlight and celebrate that's working well?
- Who else might need to know about the outcomes of this Learning Design or Inquiry?
- What's helping to impact and improve learning - and how can we do more of it, and share our learning with others

Learning visit template

Learning Visit Template – Gathering Evidence in *Real Time*

This template can be used by both the teacher and visitor



Purpose of Visit (Why?):  Design  Inquiry  Drop in  Other Initiated by:  Teacher  SLT  Other.....

Year Group & Class:  Subject:  Date:  Teacher:  Visitor:

Is there a focus for this visit? (What? Who? When?)

Evidence: Are students learning? How do we know? Use the grid to capture any numerical, perception or observational evidence that helps to answer these questions.

	New Learning	Consolidating	Treading Water	Drowning
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Asking open questions</li> <li>Engaged and concentrating</li> <li>Focused on task</li> <li>Excited</li> <li>Some hesitancy</li> <li>Some confusion</li> <li>Needing support and reliant on information source</li> <li>Annotating</li> <li>Making mistakes</li> <li>Excited and smiling</li> <li>Needing time</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Thinking about connections</li> <li>Making up questions</li> <li>Engaged and concentrating</li> <li>Focused on task</li> <li>Helping others</li> <li>Confident, feeling secure</li> <li>Sense of success</li> <li>Independently learning</li> <li>Asking connecting questions</li> <li>Practicing</li> <li>Answering with confidence</li> <li>Able to share and explain to others</li> <li>Increased fluency</li> <li>Adapting or Evaluating</li> <li>Engaging in extension tasks</li> <li>Mastering the content</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Procrastinating</li> <li>Bored</li> <li>Off-task</li> <li>No questions</li> <li>Not engaged</li> <li>Misbehaving</li> <li>Can answer without thinking</li> <li>Finishes quickly</li> <li>Distracted</li> <li>Not getting better</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Off task</li> <li>Distracted</li> <li>Trying to 'hide'</li> <li>Day-dreaming</li> <li>Anxious</li> <li>Low productivity</li> <li>Asking repeated questions</li> <li>Not getting better</li> <li>Dependent upon others Copying</li> <li>Making the same mistakes</li> <li>Frustrated</li> <li>Giving Up</li> </ul>
Understanding Skills Understanding	<i>Good Struggle</i>		<i>No Struggle</i>	<i>Bad Struggle</i>
				Remembering Practicing Reflecting

## Post-Learning Visit Template – Sharing, Organising, Analysing and Using Evidence in *Real Time*

In most cases, this process is guided by a post-visit conversation between the teacher and visitor, during which they will share their evidence and collaboratively document the outcomes.



Are there any internal and/or external **factors affecting learning**? E.g. *Language barrier for Jose. How could the learning be scaffolded? How could the room be configured to allow for a more supportive and collaborative approach to learning?*

**What went well?**

**Even better if?**

**Targets and Action Steps:**

**BSG Values**

Were the BSG values evident during this lesson? (Tick one or more)  **Successful Learners**       **Confident Individuals**       **Responsible Citizens**

Give an example:

## 8. Literacy in the classroom

When it comes to teaching, learning and student development, it is important to stress that literacy underpins all learning and therefore is fundamental to achieve **amazing learning**. Access to words and language through reading, writing and speaking are vital for students to make the necessary progress to achieve and engage in a **good struggle** across the curriculum. Literacy can be viewed as the following four aspects of communication:

Receptive Skills

1. Reading
2. Listening

Productive Skills:

3. Writing
4. Speaking

Vocabulary is fundamental for all four aspects.

Much research has proven the direct correlation between student success and high levels of literacy. As teachers, our job is to foster a love of reading in our students as well as understand how literacy translates to our own subject (or discipline). Over the course of the year, within departments and whole school CPD, we will continue to develop strategies for improving literacy levels across the school with a particular focus on the following areas:

### Key Areas for Development

1. Reading for Pleasure
2. Disciplinary Literacy
3. Extended Writing and Writing in Subject Disciplines
4. Vocabulary and Development
5. Oracy and Presentation Skills (Speaking and Listening)

Below are some brief definitions and a non-exhaustive list of strategies and ways to support students within each department. Please examine the suggested reading below and speak to SLT if you wish to explore any of these areas further or to make them a focus during learning visits.

### Key Areas for Development

#### 1. Reading for Pleasure and Wider Reading

**Definition:** Encouraging students to read a wide range of genres which challenge and interest them. From fiction, which is age-appropriate, to non-fiction that relates to different subject disciplines.

**Departmental Strategies:** Create an extended reading list of fiction, non-fiction books as well as articles related to your subject or discipline; share book or article recommendations in class and/or as displays; use carefully selected extracts in class to spark interest; use the information and data from the National Group Reading Tests (NGRT) to ensure that you are pitching texts appropriately for your classes and their reading levels; read aloud in class; choose stimulating extracts for discussion as thought prompts (do not feel every reading exercise requires a comprehension or more laboured task); ask students what they are reading and encourage them to share with others; visit and utilise the library.

#### 2. Disciplinary Literacy

**Definition:** This is the union of content knowledge, experiences, and skills merged with the ability to read, write, listen, speak and think critically in a way that is meaningful within the context of a given subject area or discipline. Eg. In English you must learn how to do a close reading of poetry whereas in Mathematics you learn to close-read a graph or a question in the form of a word problem. In Science you must be able to read and interpret a scientific paper or lab report, whereas in Geography it would be a case study or the close-reading of a map. The receptive skills, such as reading, vary across subject disciplines much like the productive literacy skills so each department must establish the core literacy skills necessary in their subject.

**Departmental Strategies:**

Establish which reading skills are necessary to access the learning in your subject (**skimming aka. reading for gist, scanning, synthesising, summarising, visualising, inferring, making connections, predicting, close-reading or determining importance**) and ensure that these skills are built into the Schemes of Learning for students to practise in your subject area; create a list of the keywords necessary for your subject, namely Tier 2 and Tier 3 (see below); ensure that students are being exposed to the range of genres necessary in your subject for both reading and writing eg. If you ask students to write a biography of a historical figure, ensure that they are aware of the conventions of a biography and have seen some biographies in the context of the subject.

**3. Extended Writing and Writing in Subject Disciplines**

**Definition:** Providing students with the opportunity to write for extended periods of time in the form of stories, essays, longer answer questions and reports to ensure that they practise extended writing and can succeed in your subject.

**Departmental Strategies:** Writing strategies such as 'Everybody Write' so that students know that they are expected to write a longer form answer; indicating the space required on a worksheet or number of lines in their books for writing; using writing frames and sentence stems; for writing in a different discipline, graphic organisers for different writing genres eg. a lab report, a newspaper article etc. Using class time for extended writing; group writing with different students contributing each sentence; redrafting and editing time both in and out of the classroom.

**4. Vocabulary Building and Development**

**Definition:** Providing students with key vocabulary as well as challenging them with lower frequency words and academic language that they will encounter in further education. Additionally, providing opportunities for vocabulary development and encouraging students to build on their prior lexical knowledge in class when reading and speaking.

**Departmental Strategies:** Establish a clear list of keywords for your subject discipline and topics; Used Tiered Vocabulary (see resource below) to differentiate between Tier 1,2 and Tier 3 words ( Tier 1= high frequency words such as common nouns,verbs and adjectives, Tier 2= lower frequency nouns, verbs and adjectives which lend themselves more to academic reading, writing and speaking and finally Tier 3= Specialised, subject specific language);

Eg: Tier 1: show      Tier 2: demonstrate      Tier 3: photosynthesis

For Do Now Activities/Starters transformation tasks of Tier 1 words to Tier 2; Spelling tests and anagrams of Tier 2 and 3 words; when speaking use 'Taboo' strategies to limit the use of certain words such as 'nice' or 'bad' as descriptive adjectives; Display words in the classroom; Use speaking frames which include key vocabulary; Nominalisation; Exploring synonyms and antonyms; EAL strategies for

teaching vocabulary; Word of the Week; For Primary, spelling tests with key words; Root word flowers.

## 5. Oracy and Presentation Skills (Speaking and Listening)

**Definition:** Students are able to speak fluently, articulately and in an engaging manner when sharing ideas, viewpoints or when presenting to a larger group. It is also important that students can engage in an effective question and answer process, demonstrating an ability to listen to and understand questions and then respond in an appropriate manner.

**Departmental Strategies:** Speaking frames; full sentence answers; memorisation activities for longer pieces of prose/poetry/extracts/quotes/lines; teaching and embedding presentation skills in class; paired and group presentations; reading aloud in class; teaching pronunciation with new vocabulary.

### *Suggested reading:*

For a range of evidence-based/informed resources in Primary and Secondary:

[National Literacy Trust](#)

Disciplinary literacy:

[https://cedar.education.ufl.edu/cems/disciplinary-literacy/#:~:text=Disciplinary%20literacy%20refers%20to%20the,Shanahan%20%26%20Shanahan%2C%202012\).](https://cedar.education.ufl.edu/cems/disciplinary-literacy/#:~:text=Disciplinary%20literacy%20refers%20to%20the,Shanahan%20%26%20Shanahan%2C%202012).)

The Importance of Reading:

<https://readingagency.org.uk/about/impact/002-reading-facts-1/>

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/409409/Reading\\_the\\_next\\_steps.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/409409/Reading_the_next_steps.pdf)

Tiered Vocabulary:

[Tiered Vocabulary: Narrowing Your Instructional Focus - Center for the Professional Education of Teachers \(columbia.edu\)](#)

Presentation Skills:

<https://www.ocr.org.uk/Images/168829-the-ocr-guide-to-presentation-skills.pdf>