QUALITY TEACHING ACADEMY

QUALITY TEACHING

CLASSROOM PRACTICE GUIDE

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

CONTENTS

Introduction

While the term 'quality teaching' is extensively used in education, its meaning is widely contested. Developing a shared understanding of what constitutes quality teaching is critical to improving outcomes for all students. The Quality Teaching Model detailed in this Classroom Practice Guide is designed to empower teachers with the conceptual and practical tools for ongoing improvement.

The Quality Teaching Model

The Quality Teaching Model highlights three key dimensions of good teaching derived from decades of research: Intellectual Quality, Quality Learning Environment and Significance. Teaching that aligns with this Model has consistently been linked to improved outcomes for teachers and students.

The clear concepts and language of the Model help build a shared understanding of quality teaching on a school and/or system-wide basis. The Model offers a coherent vision of pedagogy relevant to all educational contexts, subject areas and year levels. It honours the complexity of teaching and respects what teachers already know and do.

As depicted below, each dimension of the Model is comprised of six elements.

Table 1. The three dimensions and 18 elements of the Quality Teaching Model

Intellectual Quality	
Intellectual Quality refers to pedagogy focused on a deep understanding of important, substantive concepts, skills and ideas. Such pedagogy treats knowledge as requiring active construction and engages students in higher-order thinking and communicating about what they are learning.	Deep Knowledge Deep Understanding Problematic Knowledge Higher-Order Thinking Metalanguage Substantive Communication
Quality Learning Environment	
Quality Learning Environment refers to pedagogy that creates classrooms where students and teachers work productively and are clearly focused on learning. Such pedagogy sets high expectations and develops positive relationships among teachers and students.	Explicit Quality Criteria Engagement High Expectations Social Support Student Self-Regulation Student Direction
Significance	
Significance refers to pedagogy that helps make learning more meaningful to students. Such pedagogy draws clear connections with students' prior knowledge and identities, with contexts outside of the classroom, and with multiple ways of knowing or cultural perspectives.	Background Knowledge Cultural Knowledge Knowledge Integration Inclusivity Connectedness Narrative

Quality teaching can be achieved regardless of the style of teaching or type of classroom environment. What matters is attention to the three dimensions of the Model, guided by careful consideration of these fundamental curriculum planning questions:

- What do you want the students to learn?
- Why does that learning matter?
- What are you going to get the students to do (or to produce)?
- How well do you expect them to do it?

The Classroom Practice Guide

This Classroom Practice Guide articulates the Quality Teaching Model, supporting teacher professional learning and dialogue. For the purpose of this guide, the term 'classroom practice' encompasses learning activities, a single lesson, sequences of lessons, units of work and teaching programs.

This guide is intended to structure planning, reflection and analysis in order to build capacity for quality teaching. Working individually and/or collaboratively, teachers use the guide to examine how each element of the Model informs their practice and contributes to the quality of every learning experience.

Quality Teaching Rounds

The Quality Teaching Model is at the heart of Quality Teaching Rounds, a high-impact form of professional development that has been shown to improve outcomes for students and teachers. The Classroom Practice Guide supports detailed collaborative analysis of observed lessons and is a constant reference point during Quality Teaching Rounds. For more information, see qtacademy.edu.au

Structure of the document

This guide explains the Quality Teaching Model's three dimensions and 18 elements. Each element is elaborated as follows:

Description – a succinct statement distinguishing high and low presence of the element
Notes – additional detail clarifying meaning and application of the element
Suggestions – ideas for enhancing practice
Coding scale – specified observable aspects of classroom practice on a 1-to-5 scale

It is important to reiterate that the purpose of this guide is to support teacher professional learning. The coding process described in this guide should only be used where teachers have agreed to its use in relation to their work. The guide should not be used for the purpose of teacher assessment. Any use for this purpose can undermine its value in supporting teacher professional learning and enriching student outcomes.

The coding scale

The coding scale for each element is designed to support teacher professional learning and collaboration by providing a starting point for reflection and discussion. Each coding scale is framed by a question to determine the extent to which the element is present. The 1-to-5 scale enables deep analysis of lessons and/or units of work, as well as rich discussions about teaching more broadly. The coding scales must be used in conjunction with the descriptions, notes and suggestions for each element.

Steps in the coding process

When coding classroom practice, the focus is on the teaching, not the teacher. Follow these three steps:

1. Have a copy of the Classroom Practice Guide, pen and paper for note taking and a coding sheet with you. A sample coding sheet is provided in the appendix.
2. Observe the lesson/watch the recorded lesson/read or reflect on the lesson or unit of work, taking detailed notes about what you see.
3. Use your notes and the details for each element provided in this guide to complete the coding sheet. Starting with deep knowledge, assign a code and provide supporting evidence for all 18 elements.

When coding, key points to remember are:

- Only code what you can see – you are capturing a moment in time
- Avoid making assumptions – you are coding this lesson, not what might have occurred in previous lessons or what you think the teacher intended
- Code all 18 elements – do not leave an element blank or use 'not applicable'
- Use whole numbers only – choose the most appropriate code based on evidence
- Ensure the evidence meets the criteria associated with a code, otherwise the lower code should be used
- Keep in mind the spirit of the element – the scale does not cover every possible way in which the element will be present in classroom practice.

Note: When planning for Quality Teaching the goal is to achieve high levels of Intellectual Quality, Quality Learning Environment and Significance in every lesson, while ensuring that all elements feature across a series of lessons or a unit of work. A single lesson is unlikely to code 5s across the board and a 1 will not necessarily reflect poor pedagogy, instead indicating simply that the particular element was not a feature of the lesson.

Dimension 1: Intellectual Quality

Intellectual Quality refers to pedagogy focused on a deep understanding of important, substantive concepts, skills and ideas. Such pedagogy treats knowledge as requiring active construction and engages students in higher-order thinking and communicating about what they are learning.

ELEMENTS
1.1 DEEP KNOWLEDGE
1.2 DEEP UNDERSTANDING
1.3 PROBLEMATIC KNOWLEDGE
1.4 HIGHER-ORDER THINKING
1.5 METALANGUAGE
1.6 SUBSTANTIVE COMMUNICATION

1.1 DEEP KNOWLEDGE

Description

Knowledge is deep when it concerns the central ideas or concepts of a topic, subject or learning area and when the knowledge is judged to be crucial to the topic, subject or learning area. Deep knowledge is evident when either the teacher or the students provide information, reasoning or arguments that address the centrality or complexity of a key concept or idea, or when relatively complex relations are established to other central concepts.

Knowledge is shallow when it does not concern significant concepts or key ideas of a topic, subject or learning area, or when concepts or ideas are fragmented and disconnected from a central focus. Knowledge is also shallow when important ideas are treated superficially by the teacher or students, or when there is no clear focus on an important idea or concept. This superficiality can arise from trying to cover large quantities of fragmented information that results in the content covered remaining unconnected to central ideas or concepts.

Coding Scale

To what extent is the knowledge being addressed focused on a small number of key concepts and the relationships between and among concepts?

DEEP KNOWLEDGE

5 Knowledge is deep because focus is sustained on key ideas or concepts throughout the lesson.

4 Most of the content knowledge of the lesson is deep. Sustained focus on central concepts or ideas is occasionally interrupted by superficial or unrelated ideas or concepts.

3 Knowledge is treated unevenly during instruction. A significant idea may be addressed as part of the lesson, but in general the focus on key concepts and ideas is not sustained throughout the lesson.

2 Some key concepts and ideas are mentioned or covered by the teacher or students, but only at a superficial level.

1 Almost all of the content knowledge of the lesson is shallow because it does not deal with significant concepts or ideas.

Notes

1. The essential difference between deep knowledge and deep understanding is that deep knowledge is about how content is presented in a lesson, while deep understanding is about the learning students demonstrate. It is possible for deep knowledge to be presented (by the teacher, students or guest speakers), but for students to demonstrate only superficial understanding, or vice versa.

2. In curriculum debates, a strong distinction is often made between depth and breadth of knowledge, which at times pits one against the other. It is important to recognise that substantial syllabus content coverage (some breadth) is necessary in order to achieve depth of knowledge. Consequently, depth cannot be achieved simply by focusing on less content.

3. The main issue related to deep knowledge is one of quality. Deep knowledge requires relevant syllabus content to be organised and taught in such a way that a small number of key ideas or concepts are clearly established as the intended learning for the lesson. Depth is present if the content of a lesson is structured such that the central focus brings coherence and purpose to the lesson.

Suggestions

- Identify and review students' prior knowledge as a starting place for addressing deep knowledge.
- Identify significant concepts in syllabuses by reviewing components such as objectives, outcomes and content.
- Reflect on how syllabus content can explicitly illustrate the concepts.
- Identify the key concepts and relationships to be addressed by asking the questions: What do I want the students to learn? and Why does that learning matter?
- Check that you have identified the key concept or relationship by asking the question: How well does the concept or relationship draw the content together?
- Ensure the learning goals of each lesson focus on key concepts and the relationships between them. Unpack these with students and clearly connect learning activities to the key ideas or concepts.
- Map outcomes and content during unit planning so that each lesson focuses on illustrating significant concepts while addressing manageable amounts of content.
- Connect key concepts being addressed from lesson to lesson.
- Provide opportunities for students to connect, identify and clarify knowledge, using graphic organisers such as concept maps, Venn diagrams and flow charts, which explain relationships within a complex issue or topic.
- Select specialised resources carefully to build deep knowledge. These could include field experts, the local community and services, online resources, multimedia and out-of-school visits.
- Provide unit overviews for students so that they can see how the concepts fit into the overall picture.

1.2 DEEP UNDERSTANDING

Description

Deep understanding is evident when students demonstrate their grasp of central ideas and concepts. Students demonstrate deep understanding when they explore relationships, solve problems, construct explanations and draw conclusions in relatively systematic, integrated or complex ways.

Understanding is shallow or superficial when students present ideas in a limited or narrow way. Shallow understanding is evident when students present misinformation, repeat fragmented pieces of information or routine tasks, or provide limited interpretations without making clear distinctions or demonstrating complex understandings.

Coding Scale

To what extent do students demonstrate a profound and meaningful understanding of central ideas and the relationships between and among those central ideas?

DEEP UNDERSTANDING

5 Almost all students demonstrate deep understanding throughout the lesson.

4 Most students provide information, arguments or reasoning that demonstrate deep understanding for a substantial portion of the lesson.

3 Deep understanding is uneven. Students demonstrate both shallow and deeper understanding at different points in the lesson. A central concept understood by some students may not be understood by other students.

2 For most students, understanding is shallow during most of the lesson, with one or two minor exceptions.

1 Students demonstrate only shallow understanding.

Notes

1. Deep understanding is about the extent to which students demonstrate a grasp of the key concepts or ideas addressed in a lesson. It is possible for deep knowledge to be presented in a lesson but for students to demonstrate a superficial understanding. Similarly, it is possible for students to demonstrate a deep understanding of key concepts that have been presented in a superficial manner.

2. Understanding can be demonstrated in oral, written, symbolic or performance modes. What is important is that opportunities for students to actively engage with the knowledge are built into the lesson, providing the teacher with insights useful for formative assessment. Students can demonstrate their understanding in activities that require them to explore relationships, solve problems, construct explanations and draw conclusions.

3. Observing and coding lessons for deep understanding may require depth of knowledge of the specialist content on the part of the observer. Contextual information may sometimes be valuable for all elements; it is particularly so when coding for deep understanding (and for knowledge integration).

Suggestions

- Provide models or examples of work that demonstrate deep understanding.

- Incorporate regular and formative assessment of student understanding in unit planning.

- Plan for sufficient time in a lesson or across a sequence of lessons for students to demonstrate deep understanding.

- Provide a range of opportunities within the lesson and the unit for all students to demonstrate deep understanding, e.g.

    - problem solving in a group

    - developing or answering challenging questions, think-pair-share activities

    - providing reasoned arguments for a point of view.

1.3 PROBLEMATIC KNOWLEDGE

Description

Knowledge is treated as problematic when it involves an understanding of knowledge not as a fixed body of information, but rather as socially constructed, and hence subject to political, social and cultural influences and implications. Multiple, contrasting and potentially conflicting forms of knowledge are presented and recognised as constructed and open to question.

Knowledge is not treated as problematic when it is presented only as fact, a body of truth to be acquired by students, or is treated as static and open to only one interpretation.

Coding Scale

To what extent are students encouraged to address multiple perspectives? To what extent are students able to recognise knowledge as constructed and therefore open to question?

PROBLEMATIC KNOWLEDGE

5 Knowledge is seen as socially constructed, with multiple and/or conflicting interpretations presented and explored to an extent that a judgement is made about the appropriateness of an interpretation in a given context.

4 Knowledge is seen as socially constructed and multiple perspectives are not only presented, but explored through questioning of their basic assumptions.

3 Knowledge is treated as open to multiple perspectives, seen as socially constructed and therefore open to question.

2 Some knowledge is treated as open to multiple perspectives.

1 All knowledge is presented only as fact and not open to question.

Notes

1. Treating knowledge as problematic requires students to explore the political, social and cultural assumptions underpinning particular viewpoints. Arguing or debating a point of view can assist in demonstrating that knowledge is problematic. However, it does not necessarily lead to understanding the problematic nature of knowledge unless opposing views are analysed in a way that interrogates the knowledge claims on which the views are based.

2. Similarly, the expression of personal opinions or differing views do not in themselves demonstrate high levels of problematic knowledge unless the knowledge on which these views or opinions are based is open to query, and analysed as constructed and open to question.

3. Imagining or speculating about the future is not in itself treating knowledge as problematic. While students in undertaking such activities are constructing knowledge (i.e. higher-order thinking), unless they explore the assumptions underpinning their constructions, they are not treating knowledge as problematic.

4. It is important to recognise that understanding knowledge as problematic is not restricted to more mature students. Kindergarten students can be introduced to the idea of knowledge as problematic. For example, in talking about *my family*, they can see that families mean different things to different people and that the notion of family depends on the circumstances.

5. Critical thinking skills are enhanced when knowledge is treated as open to question and judged/explored to greater depth.

Suggestions

- Identify and discuss how knowledge is viewed or constructed differently over time and by different groups. Depending on the context, ask students questions such as: What is this about? What does the author want us to know? Why is this so? Whose point of view is expressed? Whose knowledge is this? Who is advantaged? Who is disadvantaged? How has this view changed over time?

- Identify and explore the assumptions underpinning a variety of perspectives when presenting a theme or topic. Support students to challenge and question knowledge in order to identify assumptions.

- Explore what a central concept of the unit may mean to a range of cultural and social groups, and how that meaning may have changed over time. Strategies for exploring these ideas could include well-informed role-playing and debate.

- Examine the social construction of knowledge. For example, in mathematics consider representations of data and the development of measurement systems. Support students to question how the knowledge was constructed, by whom and for what purpose.

- If it is difficult to see how the knowledge of your subject area is problematic, look at its history. In some areas, such as in secondary science, historical dimensions of scientific knowledge have become part of the formal curriculum and help students recognise that scientific knowledge is open to social and historical dynamics. In other subjects, however, it may be necessary for the teacher or students to interrogate the historical background behind the knowledge presented in a topic.

1.4 HIGHER-ORDER THINKING

Description

Higher-order thinking requires students to manipulate information and ideas in ways that transform their meaning and implications. This transformation occurs when students combine facts and ideas in order to synthesise, generalise, explain, hypothesise or arrive at some conclusion or interpretation. Manipulating information and ideas through these processes allows students to solve problems and create new (for them) meanings and understandings. When students demonstrate higher-order thinking, they may also generate unexpected concepts, ideas and products which can take the learning in new directions.

Lower-order thinking occurs when students are asked to deal only with factual information or to engage in repetitive activity or rote learning. Students are exposed to pre-specified knowledge ranging from simple facts and information, to more complex ideas or concepts, through instructional processes that simply transmit knowledge or require practice of procedural routines. Lower-order thinking is evident when students are asked to recall information, define, describe, identify, list, reproduce or state given content knowledge.

Coding Scale

To what extent are students regularly engaged in thinking that requires them to organise, reorganise, apply, analyse, synthesise and evaluate knowledge and information?

HIGHER-ORDER THINKING

5 All students, almost all of the time, demonstrate higher-order thinking.

4 Most students demonstrate higher-order thinking in at least one major activity that occupies a substantial portion of the lesson.

3 Students primarily demonstrate routine lower-order thinking a good share of the lesson. There is at least one significant question or activity in which most students perform some higher-order thinking.

2 Students primarily demonstrate lower-order thinking, but at some point, at least some students perform higher-order thinking as a minor diversion within the lesson.

1 Students demonstrate only lower-order thinking. They either receive or recite pre-specified knowledge or participate in routine practice, and in no activities during the lesson do students go beyond simple reproduction of knowledge.

Notes

1. Lower-order thinking is essential to build the foundations for understanding. However, unless there are opportunities to engage in higher-order thinking, it is unlikely that students will achieve deep understanding of a concept.

2. Processes or tools for higher-order thinking result in deep understanding only if the ideas being addressed are substantive and relevant to the purpose of the lesson.

3. Thinking does not necessarily become higher-order just by increasing the complexity of the task. Lower-order thinking can still be the focus of complex activities if, for example, students only need to follow pre-specified steps and routines, employ algorithms or write variations on sentence patterns, in a rote fashion.

4. Rehearsal or practice (e.g. of performances, role-plays, moves in sport or ways of operating machinery) will involve higher-order thinking if students are required to problem-solve in order to create a different or improved result.

Suggestions

- Refer to Bloom's Taxonomy in order to frame higher-order questions and tasks.
- Provide opportunities for students to:
  - construct meaning from information (by classifying, summarising, inferring, comparing, explaining, exploring or creating)
  - separate information, procedures or techniques into parts and determine how the parts relate to one another and/or how they relate to an overall purpose or structure (such as when students analyse, compare, contrast, organise, distinguish, examine, illustrate, point out, relate, explain, differentiate or organise content)
  - make judgements based on criteria and/or standards (such as when students evaluate, comment on, check, criticise, judge, critique, discriminate, justify or interpret content)
  - put components together to form a coherent or functional whole, or reorganise into a new pattern (such as when students combine, create, design, plan, rearrange, reconstruct, generate or produce).
- Pose questions that can have multiple answers or possibilities and ask students to justify their responses and/or evaluate information from a variety of sources.
- Extend student thinking beyond recall by using follow-up questions such as: Why do you say that? How does this compare with previous comments? and What might be the result if we changed the context?
- Provide opportunities for students to evaluate, manipulate and transform information (e.g. by developing a new product, text, scenario or artistic composition).
- Plan at least one significant question requiring higher-order thinking in relation to each lesson activity.
- Connect higher-order thinking with key concepts and ideas to increase its value and enrich student learning.

1.5 METALANGUAGE

Description

Lessons high in metalanguage have high levels of talk about language and about how texts work. Teachers or students frequently take the opportunity to draw attention to particular aspects of texts (e.g. words, images, symbols) either at a key point in the lesson, or when students are obviously having difficulties in interpretation. Such discussion will often focus on: pointing out how sentences, texts, discourses and symbolic representations actually work; comparing and contrasting texts; and showing how language and symbols can be used to construct texts, meaning, knowledge and power.

Lessons low in metalanguage have no explicit talk about language and language use or about how texts work. Language is simply used without taking time to question its structure and function. Using specialist terminology of learning areas and subjects without explaining its use is not metalanguage.

Coding Scale

To what extent do lessons explicitly name and analyse how language functions? To what extent do lessons provide frequent commentary on language and its use in varying contexts?

METALANGUAGE

5 High use of metalanguage. The lesson proceeds with frequent commentary on language use.

4 Periodic use of metalanguage. The teacher or students provide commentary on aspects of language at several points during the lesson.

3 Some use of metalanguage. At the beginning of the lesson, or at some key juncture, the teacher or students stop and explain or conduct a 'mini-lesson' on some aspect of language, for example genre, vocabulary, signs or symbols.

2 Low metalanguage. During the lesson, terminology is explained or either the teacher or students stop to make value judgements or comment on language. There is, however, no clarification or assistance provided regarding the language.

1 No metalanguage. The lesson proceeds without the teacher or students stopping to comment on the language being used.

Notes

1. The specialist terminology of subject areas is not in itself metalanguage unless its use is explained in non-specialist terms.

2. Simple explanations of language, such as giving definitions and using them in context, are a basic form of metalanguage. More advanced uses of metalanguage would include consideration of how the language (or symbol system) being analysed works to structure meaning in particular ways. High levels of metalanguage in language lessons, for example, are evident when the translation process goes beyond simple 'word-for-word' translations. In visual literacy activities, high metalanguage could be achieved when decoding visual texts to uncover meaning and how it is constructed.

3. It is important to note that symbol systems (e.g. musical notation, punctuation, scientific and mathematical equations, colour and emojis) operate as forms of language when they structure meaning. Language about, or commentary on, how these symbolic systems function can be considered metalanguage.

4. Jokes, puns, idioms and ironic comments can be indicators of metalanguage when understanding them requires access to the subtleties of the language by which the humour is conveyed.

Suggestions

- Identify the language or symbolic features that are essential for developing deep understanding of key concepts. Clarify meanings and definitions with students and examine different usages in different contexts (where applicable).

- Use and unpack the specialist language of the subject, building on known language and appropriately pacing the introduction of new language and usage. For example, students might develop word banks or subject glossaries, compare multiple meanings of a word in different subjects and contexts, or identify key words and alternative words/phrases when using search engines.

- Explicitly discuss the way language works in the context of the lesson or activity. For instance, this may mean looking closely at the differences that words, symbols or their sequencing make. Some examples are:
  - Consider the difference in meaning between: In your report list everything that occurred as the experiment proceeded; and In your report list everything that you saw or heard as the experiment proceeded (The second instruction highlights the role of observation in the construction of scientific knowledge).
  - Explore symbols used in mathematics, for example the placement of brackets in algebraic equations, and various representations of numerals and fractions.
  - Examine the language of gesture in sport, the arts and multimedia (e.g. in refereeing sports: What are the attributes of the gestures and symbols used? What is the relationship between the sound (whistle) and the gesture? How important is speed? Why is accuracy of gesture so important)?

- Consider using etymology and the history of language in your subject area to build students' understanding of the concepts of the lesson.

1.6 SUBSTANTIVE COMMUNICATION

Description

Classes high in substantive communication have three characteristics:

- there is **sustained** interaction
- the communication is focused on the **substance** of the lesson
- the interaction is **reciprocal**.

This element identifies the quality of communication (oral, written or symbolic) required to promote coherent shared understanding.

In classes where there is little or no substantive communication, teacher-student interaction typically takes the form of the teacher delivering information and asking routine questions and the students giving very short answers. Discussion tends to follow the typical 'initiate–respond–evaluate' (IRE) pattern with low level recall, fact-based questions, short utterances or single word responses, and other simple questions and/or teacher evaluation statements (e.g. "yes", "good"). This is a routine, teacher-centred pattern that requires students to 'fill in the blank' or 'guess what's in the teacher's head'.

Coding Scale

To what extent are students regularly engaged in sustained conversations (in oral, written or artistic forms) about the ideas and concepts they are encountering?

SUBSTANTIVE COMMUNICATION

5 Substantive communication, with sustained interactions, occurs throughout the lesson, with teachers and/or students scaffolding the communication.

4 Substantive communication, with sustained interactions, occurs over approximately half the lesson with teacher and/or students scaffolding the conversation.

3 Substantive communication among students and/or between teacher and students occurs occasionally and involves at least two sustained interactions.

2 Substantive communication among students and/or between teacher and students occurs briefly.

1 Almost no substantive communication occurs during the lesson.

Notes

1. Substantive communication can be oral, written, or symbolic.

2. Substantive communication has the following characteristics:

   - It is **sustained**; that is, the communication continues a thought or idea beyond the simple IRE (initiate–respond–evaluate) pattern by either:

     (a) logical extension or synthesis where the flow of communication carries a line of reasoning

     (b) building a dialogue where the flow of ideas is not scripted or controlled by one party. This could include using extended statements, direct comments, questions on statements from one participant to another, or the sharing of ideas through the selection or redirection of speakers.

   - The communication is focused on the **substance** of the lesson. It moves beyond mere recounting of experiences, facts, definitions or procedures and encourages critical reasoning such as making distinctions, applying ideas, forming generalisations and raising questions.

   - It is **reciprocal**; that is, the content of one person's contribution is taken up by others and the overall flow of information and ideas is at least two-way in direction.

3. IRE (initiate–respond–evaluate) refers to a format where the teacher asks a question, a student responds, the teacher makes evaluative comment indicating correct or incorrect response and then moves on to next question or lesson segment. This is in contrast to a question that initiates extended dialogue on the topic or issue.

4. Having students work in groups does not guarantee substantive communication. Students need to have sufficient content and process knowledge with which to engage substantively in collaborative activities.

Suggestions

- Frame questions that facilitate reciprocal interaction, rather than mere error correction.
- Teach and model skills and protocols for substantive communication, for example active listening, turn-taking, open-ended questioning, Socratic dialogue, giving constructive feedback to peers, debating and using body language.
- Encourage students to generate questions about the topic for research and discussion and use these as the basis for lesson development.
- Frame questions that require more depth in response from students than the IRE (initiate–respond–evaluate) format does. Encourage students to extend their responses to make thinking and understanding explicit. Ask students: Why do you think that? How did you get to that solution or viewpoint? How is this like or different from? Can you say more about that?
- Develop opportunities and structures for substantive communication (e.g. in pairs, small-group discussions, cooperative and project-based learning activities) to allow students to share substantive ideas about the lesson topic.
- In creative arts classes, provide opportunities for students to communicate substantively through group devised work and performance. In language classes, provide opportunities for students to use the target language for purposeful communication.

Dimension 2:
Quality Learning Environment

Quality Learning Environment refers to pedagogy that creates classrooms where students and teachers work productively and clearly focused on learning. Such pedagogy sets high expectations and develops positive relationships among teachers and students.

ELEMENTS
2.1 EXPLICIT QUALITY CRITERIA
2.2 ENGAGEMENT
2.3 HIGH EXPECTATIONS
2.4 SOCIAL SUPPORT
2.5 STUDENTS' SELF-REGULATION
2.6 STUDENT DIRECTION

2.1 EXPLICIT QUALITY CRITERIA

Description

High explicit quality criteria is identified by frequent, detailed and specific statements about the quality of work required of students. Explicit quality criteria become reference points when the teacher and/or students use the criteria to develop and check their own work or the work of others.

Low explicit quality criteria is identified by an absence of written or spoken reference to the quality of work expected of students. Reference to technical or procedural requirements only (such as the number of examples, length of an essay or the duration of a presentation) is not evidence of explicit quality criteria.

Coding Scale

To what extent are students provided with explicit criteria for the quality of work they are to produce? To what extent are those criteria a regular reference point for the development and assessment of student work?

EXPLICIT QUALITY CRITERIA

5 Detailed criteria regarding the quality of work are made explicit or reinforced throughout the lesson and there is consistent evidence of students examining the quality of their work in relation to these criteria.

4 Detailed criteria regarding the quality of work are made explicit or reinforced during the lesson and there is evidence of some students, some of the time, examining the quality of their work in relation to these criteria.

3 Detailed criteria regarding the quality of work are made explicit during the lesson, but there is no evidence that students are using the criteria to examine the quality of their work.

2 Only general statements are made regarding the desired quality of the work.

1 No explicit statements regarding the quality of work are made. Only technical and procedural criteria are made explicit.

Notes

1. Designating what students are to do in order to complete a task does not by itself clarify what counts as high quality work. Merely outlining or providing a checklist of what students are supposed to complete is procedural. Explicit quality criteria, on the other hand, clarify for all students what the teacher expects in terms of high quality completion of a task, or 'what makes a good one'.

2. In some lessons and activities, explicit quality criteria should not be pre-specified, but rather allowed to develop as students create their own work. When observing these lessons or activities, the question of explicit quality criteria relies on whether you can see students interacting with the quality criteria as they develop.

3. While the coding scale places value on the articulation of detailed criteria, simply listing detailed criteria may not give a full picture of what constitutes high quality work. For instance, at times when the 'whole is greater than the sum of the parts', it may be useful to clarify the difference between a holistic impression of a piece of work in contrast to a point by point analysis, for example by discussing how the sophistication, coherence or effectiveness of a piece of work might be judged.

Suggestions

- Ask the questions: What do I expect the students to produce? and How well do I expect them to do it?

- Collaboratively develop criteria with students, discussing 'what makes a good one'.

- Provide students with clear criteria that explicitly describe the quality of work expected. This could be developed with the class through initial brainstorming and then discussion and refinement or through the development of an assessment rubric. Unpack key terms used in criteria to ensure shared understanding and minimise ambiguity and subjectivity.

- Assist students to clarify the criteria to reach a shared understanding of what is expected, for example by having students re-state in their own words what is meant by the criteria and identify examples of the criteria in their work and the work of other students.

- Assist students to use the quality criteria to reflect on and modify their work as it develops. This can assist students to develop skills in self-assessment.

- Use the criteria to assess student work and to provide explicit, timely, understandable and actionable feedback during development, as well as on completion of the task. Avoid feedback on unspecified criteria because it can cause confusion, limit student achievement and reinforce inequalities.

- Provide annotated exemplars, work samples or models (including work from past and current students) that illustrate high quality student performance based on the criteria.

2.2 ENGAGEMENT

Description

High engagement is identified by on-task behaviours that signal a serious investment in class work. These behaviours include sustained interest and attentiveness, individual focus on work, showing enthusiasm for the work, and taking the work seriously. High engagement may also be evident when students take the initiative to raise questions, contribute to group tasks and help peers.

Low engagement or disengagement is identified by off-task behaviours that signal boredom, a lack of effort by students or effort directed into non-class activities. These behaviours include disrupting the class, talking to peers about non-class matters or inappropriate use of technology. Such behaviours often indicate that students are not taking the substantive work of the lesson seriously.

Coding Scale

To what extent are most students, most of the time, seriously engaged in the lesson? To what extent do students display sustained interest and attention?

ENGAGEMENT

5 Serious engagement. All students are deeply involved, almost all of the time, in pursuing the substance of the lesson.

4 Widespread engagement. Most students, most of the time, are on-task pursuing the substance of the lesson. Most students seem to be taking the work seriously and trying hard.

3 Variable engagement. Most students are seriously engaged in parts of the lesson, but might appear indifferent during other parts and very few students are clearly off-task.

2 Sporadic engagement. Most students, most of the time, either appear apathetic and indifferent or are only occasionally active in carrying out assigned activities. Some students might be clearly off-task.

1 Low engagement or disengagement. Students are frequently off-task, perhaps disruptive, as evidenced by inattentiveness or serious disruptions by many. This is the central characteristic during much of the lesson.

Notes

1. Student engagement is central to learning and, in this sense, is fundamental to the work of teachers. Beyond students simply being on-task, the question becomes one of trying to gauge just how seriously invested students are in the work of a lesson.

2. Overt expressions of enthusiasm, or clear demonstrations of trying hard, provide some insight for teachers. Serious engagement, however, often lacks demonstrable forms. It is worth keeping in mind that the coding scale is designed to be based only on what is visible within the coding period.

3. Teachers who are familiar with the behaviour of individual students may be the best judges of student engagement. For instance, behaviour that may typically be considered evidence of low engagement (e.g. a student gazing out the window or doodling on a page) may be known by the teacher as that student's behaviour when engaged.

Suggestions

- Promote student ownership of their learning and include student interests, background knowledge and cultural understanding in learning activities.

- Where appropriate, consider negotiation of learning activities. Negotiations can be open-ended or can allow the students choice or control regarding aspects such as the mode of presentation, topic, sequencing and pacing of the lesson, possible sources of information and assessment criteria.

- Challenge students and build success by appropriately structuring learning (e.g. by providing scaffolding for students who need more support and designing open-ended tasks that enable a range of responses or a variety of pathways).

- Connect learning to what is meaningful and interesting to particular students (e.g. by relating the significant ideas to, and including, people with expertise in the field, community events, issues or trends in popular and youth culture).

- Negotiate varied roles within groups to enhance inclusion and support for all students and joint ownership of tasks.

2.3 HIGH EXPECTATIONS

Description

Expectations are high when teachers (or students) communicate the expectation that all members of the class can learn important knowledge and skills that are challenging for them. Students are encouraged and recognised for taking conceptual or other risks in learning. Expectations are also high when students at all levels are expected, and try, to master challenging work whether the challenge is intellectual, physical or performance-based.

Expectations are low when little is asked of students in terms of conceptual challenge or risk-taking. They are also low when teachers (or students) communicate that they do not expect some students to be able to do the work.

Coding Scale

To what extent are high expectations of all students communicated? To what extent is conceptual risk-taking encouraged and rewarded?

HIGH EXPECTATIONS

5 All students participate in challenging work throughout the lesson. They are encouraged (explicitly or through lesson processes) to try hard and to take risks and are recognised for doing so.

4 Most students participate in challenging work during most of the lesson. They are encouraged (explicitly or through lesson processes) to try hard and to take risks and are recognised for doing so.

3 Many students participate in challenging work during at least half of the lesson. They are encouraged (explicitly or through lesson processes) to try hard and to take risks and are recognised for doing so.

2 Some students participate in challenging work during at least some of the lesson. They are encouraged (explicitly or through lesson processes) to try hard and to take risks and are recognised for doing so.

1 No students, or only a few, participate in any challenging work.

Notes

1. The coding scale emphasises that the element of high expectations is not about how many students are participating in the lesson, but how many students are participating in challenging work.

2. Teachers who view intelligence as dynamic and fluid, rather than static and unchanging, are less likely to have rigid preconceived notions about what students will or will not be able to achieve.

3. The idea of risk-taking involves students going beyond what they already know and do. Conceptual risk-taking requires students to explore challenging ideas and perspectives and is likely to be heightened when shared.

4. High expectations will not always be communicated explicitly in each lesson, especially when such expectations have previously been set. However, whether or not students are working toward high expectations should be evident.

5. When teachers and school leaders maintain high expectations, they challenge and support students to take risks and aim high rather than merely get by. To expect less is to do students a disservice, not a favour.

6. Research has shown that teachers' expectations for students tend to be self-fulfilling. Teachers should treat students as enthusiastic learners if they want them to become enthusiastic learners.

HE

Suggestions

*   Ask yourself: What do I want the students to do to achieve deep understanding or to demonstrate their learning? and How well do I expect them to do it?

*   Refer to the standards articulated in syllabus outcomes, content and stage statements, and review student work samples, to deepen your understanding of the expectations for the students' current stage, and for the stage beyond.

*   Identify the prior learning of students and monitor their progress in order to support the development of appropriately challenging work for all students.

*   Consider the goals and expectations the student and their families have for the student and incorporate these into plans for the student's learning.

*   Reflect on and challenge your own assumptions and preconceptions about the capacities of individual students to engage in challenging work.

2.4 SOCIAL SUPPORT

Description

Classrooms high in social support for student learning encourage all students to try hard and risk initial failure in a climate of mutual respect. Classrooms high in social support are characterised by teacher and student behaviours, comments and actions that encourage and value effort, participation, and the expression of one's views in the pursuit of learning. If disagreement or conflict occurs in the classroom, it is resolved in a constructive way for all concerned.

Classrooms low in social support are characterised by teacher or student behaviours, comments and actions that discourage effort, participation and taking risks to learn or express one's views. For example, teacher or student comments that belittle a student's response, and efforts by some students to prevent others from taking an activity seriously, serve to undermine support for learning. Social support can also be absent in a class when no overt acts like the above occur, but the overall atmosphere of the class is negative.

Coding Scale

To what extent is there strong positive support for learning and mutual respect among teachers and students and others assisting students' learning? To what extent is the classroom free of negative personal comments or put-downs?

SOCIAL SUPPORT

5 Social support is strong. Supportive behaviours or comments from students and the teacher are directed at all students, including soliciting and valuing the contributions of all.

4 Social support is clearly positive. Supportive behaviours and comments are directed at most students, including clear attempts at supporting reluctant students.

3 Social support is neutral or mildly positive. While no undermining behaviours are observed, supportive behaviours or comments are directed at those students most engaged in the lesson, rather than those students who are more reluctant.

2 Social support is mixed. Both undermining and supportive behaviours or comments are observed.

1 Social support is low. Actions or comments by the teacher or students result in 'put-downs', and the classroom atmosphere is negative.

Notes

1. The teacher has the responsibility for setting the tone in the classroom by creating and maintaining a mutually respectful environment. The core business of the classroom is student learning, and this will be most productive in an atmosphere that is both supportive of students and supportive of their learning.

2. A behaviour in and of itself may be either negative or supportive, depending on the context and power dynamics within the particular classroom.

Suggestions

*   Model language and behaviour that demonstrates respect for others' ideas, opinions and work.
*   Teach skills in teamwork, consensus-building, active listening and positive feedback.
*   Use strategies and structures that enable all students to contribute and collaborate (e.g. through cooperative learning, think-pair-share and jigsaw activities).
*   Instil a sense of ownership and group solidarity, which moderates classroom behaviour (e.g. by developing class rules in a collaborative fashion).
*   Provide opportunities for you and your students to know, understand and value each other through discussions, multiple groupings, peer support networks and participation in community events.
*   Design flexible learning tasks that enable all students to experience success.
*   Celebrate success in appropriate ways.
*   Focus on acknowledging appropriate behaviours, rather than inappropriate behaviours.

SS

2.5 STUDENTS' SELF-REGULATION

Description

High student self-regulation is evident when the lesson proceeds without interruption and when students demonstrate autonomy and initiative in relation to their own behaviour in ways that allow the class to get on with learning. There is virtually no time spent, or need for time to be spent in the lesson on disciplining students' behaviour or regulating student movements.

Low self-regulation is evident when teachers devote a substantial amount of classroom time to regulating and disciplining behaviour and movement, either in response to student misbehaviour or through their own attention to behavioural matters.

Coding Scale

To what extent do students demonstrate autonomy and initiative so that minimal attention to the disciplining and regulation of student behaviour is required?

STUDENTS' SELF-REGULATION

5 All students, almost all of the time, demonstrate autonomy and initiative in regulating their own behaviour and the lesson proceeds without interruption.

4 Most students, most of the time, demonstrate autonomy and initiative in regulating their own behaviour and there is very little interruption to the lesson. Once or twice during the lesson, teachers comment on or correct student behaviour or movement.

3 Many students demonstrate autonomy and initiative in regulating their own behaviour and the lesson proceeds coherently. However, teachers regulate behaviour several times, making statements about behaviour to the whole class, or perhaps focusing on students who are acting inappropriately.

2 Some students demonstrate autonomy and initiative in regulating their own behaviour, but there is still substantial interruption to the lesson for disciplinary and/or regulatory matters, as an attempt to avert poor behaviour, correct past behaviour or as an immediate reaction to poor student behaviour.

1 Few students demonstrate autonomy and initiative in regulating their own behaviour. Teachers devote more time to disciplining and regulating student behaviour than to teaching and learning.

Notes

1. When students are self-regulated, they:

   - understand and have internalised the standards of behaviour required in the class

   - have the maturity to meet those requirements without prompting, thus showing their autonomy

   - have an understanding of when it is appropriate to make and act on decisions about procedural matters in the classroom, thus showing their initiative.

2. Teachers' reinforcement of desirable behaviours, framed in a positive way without interrupting the flow of the lesson, does not necessarily mean students are not self-regulating.

3. A silent classroom is not necessarily a sign of high self-regulation and, conversely, a noisy, active classroom may rate high on self-regulation if the students' activity and noise are associated with a particular learning experience.

4. The teacher–student relationship will have an effect on the degree of students' self-regulation. This relationship will be shaped by a host of factors, including the length of time the teacher has taught the class and the teacher's status and authority within the school community.

Suggestions

- Ensure activities are purposeful and interesting with clear goals that students perceive to be worthwhile.

- Provide adequate and relevant learning resources that offer students choice and the motivation to participate.

- Negotiate a shared understanding of expectations and acceptance of responsibilities and rights within the classroom (e.g. collaboratively develop a code of conduct or provide choice and decision-making opportunities for students).

- Encourage student self-evaluation of progress and achievement on learning tasks.

- Ensure students understand the consequences of choices and of their behaviours.

SSR

2.6 STUDENT DIRECTION

Description

Classrooms with high student direction see students exercising control over one or more of the following aspects of a lesson:

- **choice** of activities
- **time** spent on activities
- **pace** of the lesson
- **criteria** by which they will be assessed.

When students assume responsibility for the activities in which they engage, and/or how they complete them, the activities are likely to be student-centred (e.g. group work, individual research and practical investigation projects).

Classrooms with low student direction do not see students exercising control over class activities. Instead, the teacher explicitly determines what activities students do and how and when they are to do them. The nature and appropriateness of an activity is thus decided by the teacher.

Coding Scale

To what extent do students exercise some direction over the selection of activities related to their learning and the means and manner by which these activities will be done?

STUDENT DIRECTION

5 High student direction. Students determine many significant aspects of the lesson either independent of, or dependent on, teacher approval.

4 Substantial student direction. Some deliberation or negotiation occurs between teacher and students over at least some significant aspects of the lesson.

3 Some student direction. Students exercise some control in relation to some significant aspects of the lesson.

2 Low student direction. Although students exercise some control over some aspect of the lesson (choice, time, pace, assessment), their control is minimal or trivial.

1 No evidence of student direction. All aspects of the lesson are explicitly designated by the teacher for students.

Notes

1. The element of student direction is not about teachers relinquishing their responsibility for students' learning. Rather, this element acknowledges the importance of teachers providing genuine opportunities for students to exercise control over one or more of four aspects:

   - **Choice** of activities: Students have opportunities to select from a range of activities, or to choose the topic or focus of an activity, or the way in which they undertake an activity, the sources of information they draw upon or the method of presentation.

   - **Time** spent on activities: Students exercise control over the time spent on activities when they can decide and negotiate how much time they require to complete an activity.

   - **Pace** of the lesson: Students exercise control over how quickly they complete their work.

   - **Criteria** by which they will be assessed: Students have opportunities to negotiate or contribute to determining the criteria by which they will be assessed.

2. Teachers will have different scope to provide opportunities for students to exercise control over these four aspects depending on the subject they are teaching or the stage of their students. For example, while teachers of senior secondary subjects may not have much latitude in determining the content and assessment criteria, there are still ways in which students can take responsibility for time dedicated to particular topics, overall pacing, or in deciding the form of learning activities and assessment tasks. On the other hand, where student safety is a concern, opportunities for student direction are likely to be limited.

Suggestions

- Incorporate scaffolded choices within class learning activities (e.g. tiered activities with multiple entry and exit points) so that students can determine where they begin and what challenges they can meet.

- Negotiate learning tasks and be open to ideas suggested by students for learning activities. Ask students: What could we do to help us understand this? How could we go about learning this? What will we produce as a result of this learning?

- In order to judge the appropriateness of providing students with opportunities to exercise control, teachers need to monitor and evaluate student participation in learning activities.

- Provide multiple pathways for students to demonstrate and teachers to assess learning outcomes (e.g. logbooks, presentations, performances, reflective journals, portfolios, models and online products).

SD

Dimension 3:
Significance

Significance refers to pedagogy that helps make learning more meaningful to students. Such pedagogy draws clear connections with students' prior knowledge and identities, with contexts outside of the classroom, and with multiple ways of knowing or cultural perspectives.

ELEMENTS

3.1   BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE

3.2   CULTURAL KNOWLEDGE

3.3   KNOWLEDGE INTEGRATION

3.4   INCLUSIVITY

3.5   CONNECTEDNESS

3.6   NARRATIVE

3.1 BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE

Description

High background knowledge is evident when lessons provide students with opportunities (or they take opportunities) to make connections between their knowledge and experience and the substance of the lesson. Background knowledge includes prior school knowledge and out-of-school knowledge such as local knowledge, cultural knowledge, personal experience and knowledge of media and popular culture.

Low background knowledge is evident when lessons address new content, skills and competencies without any direct or explicit exploration of students' prior knowledge of the topic and without any attempt by the teacher or students to provide relevant or key background knowledge that might enhance students' comprehension and understanding of the 'new'.

Coding Scale

To what extent do lessons regularly and explicitly build from students' background knowledge, in terms of prior school knowledge, as well as other aspects of their personal lives?

BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE

5 Students' background knowledge is consistently incorporated into the lesson, and there is substantial connection to out-of-school background knowledge.

4 Students' background knowledge is mentioned or elicited several times, is connected to the substance of the lesson, and there is at least some connection to out-of-school background knowledge.

3 Students' background knowledge is mentioned or elicited briefly, is connected to the substance of the lesson, and there is at least some connection to out-of-school background knowledge.

2 Students' background knowledge is mentioned or elicited, but is trivial and/or not connected to the substance of the lesson.

1 Students' background knowledge is not mentioned or elicited.

Notes

1. Students' background knowledge can come from just about anywhere—from their individual experiences, prior learning (in or out of school), knowledge from their own families and communities and from their experiences of the world of work. The main focus of this element is whether or not the background knowledge of students in the class is valued and linked with the substance of the lesson.

Suggestions

- Identify and acknowledge background knowledge by assessing prior school knowledge (e.g. by pre-testing, or brainstorming to generate ideas about a topic or mind maps for describing what is known).

- Identify and acknowledge the out-of-school background knowledge of students by communicating with students' families and gaining familiarity with students' interests and the community in which they live.

- Use identified prior school knowledge and out-of-school background knowledge as a starting point for planning lessons and units of work.

- Incorporate background knowledge in learning activities through reference to family, community, previous experience, contemporary issues and popular culture.

BK

3.2 CULTURAL KNOWLEDGE

Description

Cultural knowledge is high when there is an understanding, valuing and acceptance of the traditions, beliefs, skills, knowledges, languages, practices and protocols of diverse social groups. Cultural knowledge is high when the lesson recognises and values claims to knowledge from multiple social groups in an authentic, detailed and profound manner. Different social groupings are identified in relation to the dominant culture and are distinguished by characteristics such as:

- age
- disability
- ethnicity
- gender
- language

- race
- religion
- sexuality
- socioeconomic status

Cultural knowledge is low when there is little or no understanding, valuing and acceptance of the knowledge, skills and understandings of diverse social groups. Cultural knowledge is also low when it is used simply to compare social groups based on superficial characteristics.

Coding Scale

To what extent do lessons regularly incorporate the cultural knowledge of diverse social groupings?

CULTURAL KNOWLEDGE

5 Substantial cultural knowledge is recognised and valued throughout the lesson and this knowledge is accepted as equal to the dominant culture.

4 Substantial cultural knowledge is recognised and valued in the lesson with some challenge to the framework of the dominant culture.

3 Some cultural knowledge is recognised and valued in the lesson, but within the framework of the dominant culture.

2 Some cultural knowledge is evident in the lesson, but it is treated in a superficial manner.

1 No explicit recognition or valuing of non-dominant cultural knowledge is evident in the substance of the lesson.

Notes

1. The element of cultural knowledge refers to recognising and valuing of the knowledge of different social groups, whereas the element of inclusivity refers to recognising and valuing students from diverse social groups in the class.

2. Cultural knowledge defines features of social groups that people sometimes use to identify themselves as part of a particular social group. While some social groups experience prejudice and disadvantage, cultural knowledge is not an indicator of disadvantage, but rather a valuable resource upon which teachers can build learning. For example, embedding Indigenous cultural knowledges and perspectives strengthens the understanding by all students that social groups represent knowledge in different rather than 'lesser' ways.

3. The term culture is used here in a broad sense to include markers of cultural difference within society. In this sense, it would be possible to consider more groups than those listed above as being sources of cultural knowledge. For example, people living with mental health issues have unique knowledge of society that is recognisable as cultural knowledge.

4. There are different opportunities to incorporate cultural knowledge within subject areas. Recognising and valuing cultural knowledge can strengthen the substance of a lesson. However, tokenistic or contrived inclusions of cultural knowledge should be avoided as they can be self-defeating.

Suggestions

- Develop an understanding of diversity by using a range of resources (human and material) within and across social groups. Where they are available, use the resources created by or endorsed by social groups.

- Consider the cultural perspectives in syllabus documents and learning materials and draw on resources that reflect diversity and value intercultural understanding. Where appropriate, include members of the community from diverse cultural backgrounds as a resource in lessons. Incorporate practices and events of local communities.

- Provide opportunities for students to look beyond stereotypes used to describe different social groups.

- Consider ways of embedding a variety of learning experiences that recognise and value the achievements of non-dominant groups. Explore diverse cultural perspectives to move students beyond their lived experience and encourage them to be more open to the experiences of others.

CK

3.3 KNOWLEDGE INTEGRATION

Description

High knowledge integration is identifiable when meaningful connections are made between different topics and/or between different subjects. For instance, when students address themes or problems that require knowledge from multiple topics or subject areas, knowledge integration will be high.

Low knowledge integration is identifiable when no meaningful connections are made between different topics and/or between different subjects. In the extreme, strong subject boundaries can prevent or 'get in the way of' student learning because opportunities to make meaningful connections are missed.

Coding Scale

To what extent do lessons regularly demonstrate links between and within subjects and key learning areas?

KNOWLEDGE INTEGRATION

5 Meaningful connections are regularly made between topics or subject areas by the teacher and/or the students.

4 Several meaningful connections are made between topics or subject areas by the teacher and/or the students.

3 At least one meaningful connection is made between topics or subject areas by the teacher and/or the students.

2 Some minor or trivial connections are made. Knowledge is mostly restricted to that of a specific topic or subject area.

1 No meaningful connections. All knowledge is strictly restricted to that explicitly defined within a single topic or subject area.

Notes

1. It is important to recognise that the element of knowledge integration assumes that teachers will be building from different disciplinary bases. To say that meaningful connections are made between subject areas implies that subject knowledge must be present. That is, while integration of subjects is a means for developing significance, it is important not to lose sight of just what is being integrated. Integration of knowledge, understandings and skills from other subject areas will enhance learning only if it contributes to the deep understanding of core concepts.

2. Thematic or problem-based curricula do not necessarily produce knowledge integration. They can result in a series of loosely collected activities, which neither deepen the understanding of particular subjects nor illuminate the connections between them.

3. The mandates of cross-curriculum perspectives and policies such as Aboriginal education, intercultural understanding, gender equity, environmental education, literacy and numeracy, provide explicit contexts in which knowledge integration can be explored.

4. To see evidence of meaningful connections within a subject may require a depth of specialist knowledge of the subject on the part of the observer. While this is sometimes true for all elements, it is particularly so when coding for knowledge integration (and for deep understanding).

Suggestions

- Plan to make connections between topics explicit by using themes or complex problems to strengthen the learning of key concepts.

- Plan an integrated unit of work using identified syllabus outcomes from more than one subject area, where appropriate. This would involve identifying the significant concepts of each syllabus and ensuring students are provided with opportunities to demonstrate achievement of all identified syllabus outcomes.

- Collaboratively plan and/or teach units of work and learning activities in cross-subject teams (e.g. map common outcomes across learning areas in a grade to promote links between subjects or lessons).

KI

3.4 INCLUSIVITY

Description

High inclusivity is evident when all students, from all cultural or social backgrounds, participate in the public work of the class and when their contributions are taken seriously and valued. High inclusivity is evident when the classroom is free from negative forms of prejudice and discrimination, and thus all individuals, regardless of their social grouping, feel encouraged to participate fully in the lesson.

Low inclusivity is evident when students from a particular group are excluded (or exclude themselves) from class activities, such as asking and answering questions and participating in discussions, demonstrations or group work. Low inclusivity is also evident when the genuine contributions of some students are devalued.

Coding Scale

To what extent do lessons include and publicly value the participation of all students across the social and cultural backgrounds represented in the classroom?

INCLUSIVITY

5 Students from all groups are included in all aspects of the lesson and their inclusion is both significant and equivalent to the inclusion of students from other social groups.

4 Students from all groups are included in a significant way in most aspects of the lesson, but there still appears to be some unevenness in the inclusion of different social groups.

3 Students from all groups are included in most aspects of the lesson, but the inclusion of students from some groups may be minor or trivial relative to other groups.

2 Some students are excluded, or exclude themselves, from the majority of lesson activities except for minor forms of inclusion in one or two instances during a lesson.

1 Some students are excluded, or exclude themselves, from lesson activities throughout the lesson.

Notes

1. The element of inclusivity refers specifically to recognising and valuing students from diverse social groups who are in the class, whereas cultural knowledge refers to recognising and valuing the knowledge of social groups that may or may not be represented in the class.

2. The coding scale for this element focuses on the extent to which students participate in a class, particularly those from social and cultural backgrounds recognised as being educationally or socially disadvantaged in society. As with the element of cultural knowledge, these groups include those identified by age, disability, ethnicity, gender, language, race, religion, sexuality and socioeconomic status.

3. Active self-exclusion, such as not turning up to class or school, is a major issue, but difficult to address using this guide. However, if the observer knows that only 15 out of 25 students attending class is a common occurrence, this could indicate that the missing students feel excluded by aspects of the classroom or the school.

4. While coding this element, it may be difficult to note the subtle ways in which a specific group is excluded without planning more detailed observation strategies beforehand. For example, to determine if gender is an issue in a classroom, the observer may need to note specific instances of the different treatment of students (e.g. boys and girls) in a systematic way throughout the lesson.

Suggestions

- Know and value the social and cultural backgrounds of the students in your class.
- Make greater use of the cultural knowledge of the groups represented in the class in the design and development of learning activities.
- Encourage students to examine the concepts of inclusion and exclusion themselves, particularly when they are embarking on group projects and group work.
- Reflect on and consider ways of including those students who are passively disengaged in the public work of the class.
- Create opportunities for students from all social groups to take active roles in learning activities by using cooperative strategies such as home group-expert group, think-pair-share and group roles.

3.5 CONNECTEDNESS

Description

High connectedness is evident when learning has value and meaning beyond the classroom and school. Lessons exhibit high connectedness by addressing either a public problem or actual experiences or situations that students will confront. High connectedness is also evident when there are attempts to interact with an audience beyond the classroom by communicating knowledge to others (including within the school), advocating solutions to social problems, providing assistance to people, or creating performances or products and exploring their utilitarian or aesthetic value.

In a class with little or no connectedness, activities are deemed important for success only in school (now or later), but for no other aspects of life. Student work has no impact on others and serves only to certify their level of competence or compliance with the norms and routines of formal schooling.

Coding Scale

To what extent do lesson activities rely on the application of school knowledge in real-life contexts or problems? To what extent do lesson activities provide opportunities for students to share their work with audiences beyond the classroom and school?

CONNECTEDNESS

5 Students recognise and explore connections between classroom knowledge and situations outside the classroom in ways that create personal meaning and highlight the significance of the knowledge. This meaning and significance is strong enough to lead students to become involved in an effort to influence an audience beyond the classroom.

4 Students recognise and explore connections between classroom knowledge and situations outside the classroom in ways that create personal meaning and highlight the significance of the knowledge. There might be an effort to influence an audience beyond the classroom.

3 Students recognise some connection between classroom knowledge and situations outside the classroom, which might include sharing their work with an audience outside the classroom, but they do not explore implications of these connections, which remain largely abstract or hypothetical.

2 The teacher or students try to connect what is being learned to the world beyond the classroom, but the connection is weak and superficial or trivial.

1 The lesson has no clear connection to anything beyond itself. Neither the teacher nor the students offer any justification for the lesson beyond the school.

Notes

1. Connectedness is higher when students not only share their work with an audience beyond the classroom and the school, but explore the meaning and significance of having that audience or the meaning of their work for that audience.

2. Influencing an audience beyond the classroom does not mean simply exhibiting students' work outside the classroom. Authentic examples of influencing an audience include: writing letters to the school principal, editors of papers or government representatives; presenting submissions and reports to local government or senate inquiries; and undertaking community projects such as environmental recycling projects, or designing health promotion programs for members of the local school community.

Suggestions

- Ask questions of students such as: When would you need to know this? Why are we studying this? Who might be an appropriate audience for our work?

- Make explicit and have students explore the link between their context and significant concepts being investigated.

- When possible, select topics more readily applied to contexts outside of school.

- Link learning to and encourage discussion about current issues in the local community, media or popular culture.

- Incorporate resources beyond the classroom (e.g. subject matter experts, online research, local people and resources, and the media).

- Create opportunities for students to experience working in the same way as those in the world beyond the classroom (e.g. as artists, historians, tradespeople, scientists, engineers, chefs, authors, sports commentators and composers).

- Plan opportunities for students to show and share their work (e.g. displays, websites, apps, exhibitions and performances) and encourage them to talk about classwork at home.

3.6 NARRATIVE

Description

Use of narrative is high when the stories written, told, read, viewed or listened to help illustrate or bring to life the knowledge that students are addressing in the classroom. Narratives may include personal stories, biographies, historical accounts, case studies, literary and cultural texts and performances. Narrative does not increase significance if the stories used are unconnected to the substance of the lesson or unproductive in terms of student learning. Narrative may be high if there is only one narrative present in the lesson, as long as that narrative enhances the significance of the substance of the lesson.

Use of narrative is low when no stories are used in the lesson or when the stories used are disconnected to the substance of the lesson. Use of narrative will also be low if stories are used in ways that detract from the substance of the lesson.

Coding Scale

To what extent do lessons employ narrative to enrich student understanding?

NARRATIVE

5 Narrative is used throughout the lesson to enhance the significance of the substance of the lesson.

4 Narrative is used for a substantial portion of the lesson to enhance the significance of the substance of the lesson.

3 Narrative is used at several points in the lesson to enhance the significance of the substance of the lesson.

2 Narrative is used on occasion as a minor part of the lesson and/or is loosely connected to the substance of the lesson.

1 Either narrative is used at no point in the lesson or the narratives used are disconnected or detract from the substance of the lesson.

Notes

1. Lessons can employ narrative as content (e.g. when students are reading or listening to stories) or as process (e.g. when students are writing or telling stories).

2. The use of narrative as a label for this element differs from the use of the term 'narrative' as a text type. When used to define a text type, narrative refers to the structures and functions of a particular use of language. As used here, narrative refers broadly to the use of stories to help bring alive the substance of the lesson.

3. Narrative is a powerful tool for learning when used by either the teacher or students. Teachers and/ or students can provide a narrative that aptly illustrates a key concept of the lesson and can be referred to throughout the lesson. Students can demonstrate their understanding by structuring their own experiences or newly acquired knowledge in a narrative form. To be significant, however, the narrative must connect to and support the key concepts of the lesson.

4. Encouraging the use of relevant personal experience or imagined story can assist those students who are less skilled in using abstract constructs to demonstrate their understanding.

Suggestions

- Recognise and use (where appropriate) multiple sources of stories such as histories, biographies, autobiographies, documentaries, personal accounts, case studies, field reports and guest speakers and ensure they are related to the substance of the lesson.

- Position students in scenarios to enhance their understanding of key concepts, e.g. "you are the mayor of a town addressing water saving strategies" when learning about sustainability.

- Plan a variety of opportunities for students to construct their own stories related to the substance of the lesson, for example journal writing, portfolios, email, podcasts, scenarios, case studies and performances.

Coding for Quality Teaching

Use this coding sheet to record a code (1-to-5) and summarise your supporting evidence for each of the 18 elements following a lesson observation or review of a lesson plan/unit of work. The second column can be used to record agreed codes in the process of Quality Teaching Rounds.

Key points to remember are:

- When coding classroom practice, the focus is on the teaching, not the teacher
- Only code what you can see – you are capturing a moment in time
- Avoid making assumptions – you are coding this lesson, not what might have occurred in previous lessons or what you think the teacher intended
- Code all 18 elements – do not leave an element blank or use 'not applicable'
- Use whole numbers only – choose the most appropriate code based on evidence
- Ensure the evidence meets the criteria associated with a code, otherwise the lower code should be used
- Keep in mind the spirit of the element – the scale does not cover every possible way in which the element will be present in classroom practice.

Quality Teaching Coding Sheet

Element	Evidence	Code	
Intellectual Quality			
Deep Knowledge			
Deep Understanding			
Problematic Knowledge			
Higher-Order Thinking			
Metalanguage			
Substantive Communication			
Quality Learning Environment			
Explicit Quality Criteria			
Engagement			
High Expectations			
Social Support			
Students' Self-Regulation			
Student Direction			
Significance			
Background Knowledge			
Cultural Knowledge			
Knowledge Integration			
Inclusivity			
Connectedness			
Narrative			