

A COLLABORATIVE APPROACH TO CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT & TEACHING PRACTICE

PREAMBLE

We have established a clear, common educative purpose for East Doncaster Secondary College:

To develop passionate learners who are critical thinkers with the confidence and capability to engage in the global community

Our intended curriculum and pedagogical practice should reflect our commitment to be true to this purpose.

EDSC THEORIES OF ACTION

Theories of Action underpin our intent and provide a common reference point. A theory of action proposes a link between cause and effect – if we take a particular action, then we expect the action to have specific effects. These theories are not unique to EDSC or necessarily original. However, they are consistent with our beliefs.

1. If schools and teachers prioritise high expectations and authentic relationships, then curiosity will flourish.

High expectation students achieve at or near potential; low expectation students gain less than they would if they were taught differently. The expectation effect of the teacher must be emphatically positive. The confidence of the learner is affected by the learning task and the behaviour, intent and relationship with their teacher.

2. If we adopt consistent teaching protocols, then student behaviour, engagement, learning and curiosity will be enhanced.

These protocols relate to planning as well as practice in the classroom. Teaching protocols are a set of guidelines for observing, analysing, discussing and understanding teaching. Protocols are used to improve student learning. Because they represent an agreed purpose and approach, they create an explicit professional practice within the school, and a common discipline and focus among educators.

3. If we adopt consistent learning protocols in all classes, then students will experience enhanced capacity to learn, and to develop skills, confidence and curiosity.

Powerful learning refers to the ability of learners to respond successfully to the tasks set. It comprises the ability to integrate prior and new knowledge, acquire and use a range of learning skills, solve problems individually and in groups, think carefully about successes and failures, evaluate conflicting evidence and think critically, and to accept that learning involves uncertainty and difficulty. It requires a shared language amongst teachers and students.

Creating a Culture of Curiosity

FRAMEWORK IN COLLABORATIVELY DEVELOPING A COURSE OF STUDY

A. Establish a Learning Continuum for each subject – a developmental approach

i.e. to be successful in VCE Units 3 & 4 of this study, students must be able to

Years 12 back to Year 7 – allowing for some students to require skills/understanding at levels below Year 7. How?
Using Aus VELs and VCE Study Design

B. Develop a series of coherent units (topics) of study within each year level to enable the key elements to be learnt.

What are we teaching?

- i. Identify the Key Expectations/Skills/Understandings – students must be able to (i.e. Learning Goals)
- ii. Identify the Key Knowledge and content that is needed to support this learning

How do we know students are learning? We are striving to develop “assessment capable students”

- iii. Devise the Learning Tasks & Assessment Tasks that will show whether the students have achieved what is expected (i.e. met the identified learning goals), and the Assessment Criteria that will show how well this learning has occurred

How are we teaching?

- iv. Identify the preferred Instructional Practices that are needed to enable students to succeed in the learning and assessment tasks; i.e. what scaffolding of learning is needed to build the capacity and confidence of students for success in these tasks – this should include at which stages of learning formative (or diagnostic) assessments (also known as assessment for teaching) will occur. ***This incorporates our identified focus areas and our protocols for teaching practice.***

C. Establishing practices for validation of Assessments

Agreement is reached on the process of validating, moderating and ranking assessments.

D. Feedback to Students

Agreement is reached on the most effective and timely methods of feedback on the assessment to students.

E. Reflection and Review of the Teaching and Learning Process – linked to preferred Instructional Practice

Discussion occurs about the teaching & learning process and the related assessment practices to decide what adjustments are needed for the future. i.e. has the teaching maximised student learning. These agreed adjustments are documented.

F. Review of how well we work together as a Professional Learning Team

Creating a Culture of Curiosity

Detailed Explanation:

PREAMBLE

We have established a clear, common educative purpose for East Doncaster Secondary College:

To develop passionate learners who are critical thinkers with the confidence and capability to engage in the global community

Our intended curriculum and pedagogical practice should reflect our commitment to be true to this purpose. We aim to develop and sustain practices that maximise student outcomes and minimise the variation and chance factor from class to class.

At EDSC we believe the outcomes of learning for our students are a reflection on the whole teacher cohort and not simply the individual. Hence, we believe discussion on all elements of the teaching experience between teachers is the best way to ensure our desired outcomes are achieved.

Convention might regard teaching as an individual achievement. The weakness in this approach is that even when practice is individually excellent, it is implicit and often unarticulated. This means it can't be shared with the whole school – a consistent teaching and learning culture or ethos can't be created and sustained.

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i.e. to be successful in VCE Units 3 & 4 of this study, students must be able to

Years 12 back to Year 7 – allowing for some students to require skills/understanding at levels below Year 7. How? Use the AUSVELs Learning Continuum template as a guide, and then use VCE Study Design to identify Key Learning (skills/knowledge) in Units 3 & 4 of each subject, and then work back to lead in subjects at 11, then 10, then 9, then 8, then 7.

N.B. This should include preparation for the full breadth of VCE studies within a Learning Domain. E.g. for Science it would include Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Psychology. It doesn't preclude learning in other disciplines like earth sciences that are not explicitly taught at EDSC in VCE. From the continuum it is important to identify areas of "must do" as well as "may do"

B. Develop a series of coherent units (topics) of study within each year level to enable the key elements to be learnt.

What are we teaching?

- (i) Identify the Key Expectations/Skills/Understandings – students must be able to (i.e. Learning Goals)
- (ii) Identify the Key Knowledge and content that is needed to support this learning

This would entail the actual material that is used in teaching (e.g. the specific text), the nomenclature, definitions etc, as well as the structural elements that are essential in developing meaningful understanding (In English this might be the grammar, punctuation, essay style; in Maths it might be the way the solutions to problems are recorded, graphs or diagrams labelled)

How do we know students are learning? We are striving to develop "assessment capable students"

- (iii) *Devise the Learning Tasks & Assessment Tasks that will show whether the students have achieved what is expected (i.e. met the identified learning goals).

This does not mean all students must do the identical tasks. However, the tasks developed should be comparable for different classes e.g. 8A & 8C.

There may be tasks developed specifically for groups of students below, at or above the expected levels of achievement. This is particularly relevant for development tasks (assessment for teaching) that would shape what and how the next learning activities might be, and what is required to embed and extend the understanding of the students

It is critical that the tasks have the capacity to differentiate between levels of achievement and progress made unless the tasks are intended for mastery learning.

**Where there is to be overall term, semester or annual assessment, and subsequent reporting, agreement on the nature and details of this assessment and the way it is to be reported must be agreed at this stage or earlier but not later. What needs to appear on the reports; how best do we describe achievement; how best do we provide advice to students on what they need to do to improve. Not all feedback must be included in Summative Reports.*

- (iv) Devise the Assessment Criteria that will show how well this learning has occurred
This may entail an assessment/marking scheme or rubric. In the case of a rubric the individual components of the rubric should show explicit developmental expectations relating to the learning goals and not generic words such as high, medium low. Our challenge will be how best to provide feedback that promotes a growth mindset, focussing on progress and actions rather than on people and innate qualities.

How are we teaching?

- (v) Identify the preferred Instructional Practices that are needed to enable students to succeed in the learning and assessment tasks; i.e. what scaffolding of learning is needed to build the capacity and confidence of students for success in these tasks – this should include at which stages of learning formative (or diagnostic) assessments (also known as assessment for teaching) will occur. ***This incorporates our identified focus areas and our protocols for teaching practice.***

C. Establishing practices for validation of Assessments

Agreement is reached on the process of validating, moderating and ranking assessments via cross marking (sharing papers amongst the teachers), group marking (marking together), targeted or sample marking (sharing selection of high, medium, low performances to validate marking). Again this must relate to the identified learning goals.

It must involve a collaborative discussion looking at the student work itself. It would be advantageous for teachers to look at a range of exemplar, competent and below expectation performances together. Each of these practices helps teachers gain a common understanding of the meaning and expectations of assessment criteria.

D. Feedback to Students

Agreement is reached on the most effective and timely methods of feedback on the assessment to students.

Discussion of the assessment outcomes with students is essential. It should include what future action is needed including elements of the learning that requires further attention for some or all students. Hence, focussing on the relative progress being made should prove valuable in the feedback

Apart from the written feedback on a particular learning/assessment task, it is recognised that the best methods of feedback are rarely providing explanations to all students at the same time. At VCE the use of Examiners reports are important.

E. Reflection and Review of the Teaching and Learning Process – linked to preferred Instructional Practice

Discussion occurs about the teaching & learning process and the related assessment practices to decide what adjustments are needed for the future. i.e. has the teaching maximised student learning. These agreed adjustments are documented.

On-going Peer Observation, and subsequent discussion, as a regular practice will increase the likelihood of teachers developing a common understanding of what are the most effective instructional practices. This minimises the chance of inference rather than evidence being used in judgement of what works best.

F. Review of how well we work together as a Professional Learning Team

Discussion about how successful the collaborative process of teachers working as a Professional Learning Team in this unit/topic has been. What adjustments in their process should occur for future work as a team? Have we minimised variations of practice between teachers? Adjustments to the process are documented.

Creating a Culture of Curiosity