DUBAI COLLEGE

A tradition of quality in education

Learning and Teaching Policy

Dubai College's vision is to be leading British education overseas, underpinned by four pillars of sporting, creative, philanthropic and academic endeavour. When it comes to academic endeavour we aspire to set the standard globally for inspirational and transformative learning and we are committed to developing future global leaders who see themselves as lifelong learners.

As part of our vision to be leading British education overseas, the DC Learner Profile embodies a holistic approach with thinking and wellbeing at its core. Students are encouraged to have a deep understanding of how they think, allowing them to capitalise on problem-solving opportunities through creative and critical thinking. We believe that our students will learn to innovate if they have curiosity, a willingness to take risks and if they make connections across a wide range of disciplines.

At Dubai College, we believe that global leaders who are resilient and motivated thinkers will have a positive impact on the world. As such, while we are consistently effective in helping our students to secure excellent examination results, we also want to produce students who can think critically, analytically and independently and we want them to acquire the confidence which comes from a rich diet of educational opportunities.

Responsibility for the effective implementation of this policy ultimately lies with the Headmaster who delegates responsibility to the Deputy Head: Learning and Teaching, Heads of Department and to the SLEs.

Aims and Philosophy

Our sole aim is to create an environment that nourishes a love of learning across all facets of the College, allowing teachers and students to work in partnership to design learning experiences that build on learner strengths and needs, create new knowledge using real-life problem solving and help all students identify their talents, purpose and passion.
Teachers at Dubai College should be activators of deep learning who draw on research and experience to create opportunities for the mutual discovery, creation and use of knowledge.

As a professional learning community we intend to nurture the following [these are both teacher and learner] skills within our classrooms:

- Creating opportunities to allow students to think critically and creatively.
- Encouraging students to ask questions to deepen conceptual links.
- Fostering analytical thinking through problem solving.
- Making time to allow students to create something completely new and to go beyond the curriculum.
- Explaining concepts well to enable students to realise how to use their skills with automaticity.
- Using enquiry as a means to develop inquisitiveness through collaboration and independent thinking.
- Creating a positive environment where students feel resilient enough to take risks in communicating their learning because teachers model that mistakes are a normal part of learning.

These dispositions form the basis of the Dubai College Teaching Standards which teachers are asked to use to evaluate their practice through a series of reflective questions:

In line with our status as a British School Overseas it should be noted that we preclude the promotion of partisan political views in the teaching of any subject in the school and where political issues are brought to the attention of students, they are offered a balanced presentation of opposing views.

DC Teacher Standards

	Questions to support reflection
Thinking	• Did the lesson contain open and challenging tasks that make students think deeply? • Do students of all abilities in your class have access to, and are challenged by, high-order, more open-ended tasks that allow students to think critically? • Is questioning used in the written and verbal feedback? Do you offer students DIRT time to develop their own thinking about how they can improve their work? • Is there a mixture of feedback given regularly to encourage students to think critically and independently about how they can improve their work? • Do students engage critically but constructively with each other's ideas and viewpoints? • Are there times in lessons that offer opportunities for students to work in collaborative groups?
Linking	• Are students making links with other topics, subjects or previously learned material to encourage thinking? • Do students have the opportunity to write or discuss matters seeing different viewpoints? • Are there opportunities that regularly encourage students to be aware that the judgments, interpretations and conclusions they make are based on the beliefs they have formed? • Are students critically questioning ideas and assumptions?
Analysing	• Are students taking opportunities to ask questions to help to progress their learning? • Can students critically analyse an argument through justifying their point of view? Are there opportunities for students to develop, justify, hypothesise and speculate? • Do students have opportunities to design their own enquiry and questioning? • When students have answered questions, does the teacher use their extensive subject knowledge to give further prompts to elicit extended answers? • Are students analysing feedback and acting on it to inform their learning?
Creating	• Are students aware of the theories/rules within your subject to enable them to play with them to give a range of outcomes? • Can students self-regulate to abandon one idea for a superior one and then go on to generate multiple solutions? • Are there regular opportunities to work creatively within the work set in lessons? • Are there opportunities for students to conceive something completely new and to go beyond the curriculum?
Realising	• Are concepts taught clearly so that students are able to group or classify things? • Do teacher explanations include examples, analogies, ideas, generalisations and key component concepts? • Once the skills have been taught, are students able to use their skills with automaticity? • Is there time for students to act on feedback? Are they encouraged to actively seek out feedback?
Enquiring	• Are there opportunities that allow students to develop the skills of independent thinking? • Is there a balance between closed (factual seeking) and open (enquiry based) type questions? • Are students trained in how to give effective feedback to one another? • Do students have regular opportunities to feedback on the learning and teaching in a variety of formats? • Do the students feel happy and safe to offer feedback on their teaching and learning opportunities? • Is there encouragement in the lesson for students to think for themselves or to ask their own questions? • Do students have opportunities to challenge themselves independently in a variety of situations?
Risk Taking and Resilience	• Is there a culture of success through allowing students to feel safe to take risks and perhaps fail? • Is there evidence of differentiated interventions with students in difficulty that help to develop their confidence? • Is the teacher's subject knowledge improving understanding, encouraging depth of thinking and/or modelling that mistakes are a normal part of learning? • Is assessment used to provide positive feedback, does it lead to students recognising their next steps and how to take them? • Is the classroom climate a positive one that encourages independence and optimism?

To achieve these aims we aim to develop and nurture our teachers' professional capacity in one of five main pedagogical areas:

- The Science of Learning: Creating metacognitive awareness to enhance self-regulation and higher order thinking.

- Harkness - Dialogic and Collaborative Learning: Creating an equitable classroom where students feel confident and challenged.
- Beyond the Curriculum: Creating opportunities for students to gain context to their learning and provide additional challenge.
- Digital Pedagogies: Offering opportunities for innovation in teaching and learning through designing digital learning activities.
- Optimising assessment: Ensuring assessments are strategically planned and their challenging success criteria are shared with students.

The pedagogies are driven through various professional learning opportunities but mainly through the Collaborative Learning Groups led by the Specialist Leaders in Education (SLEs). To ensure that we fulfil both our own strategic objectives as well as those of the UAE we have amalgamated the DC teacher standards, the KHDA inspection framework and the research from the Institute of Positive Education into a Grand Unified Theory (appendix).

Dubai College Collaborative Learning Groups: Innovative Pedagogies

Dubai College Pedagogies	Student Learning (Grand Unified Framework)	Digital Learning Acts (Luckin)
The Science of Learning: Creating metacognitive awareness to enhance self-regulation and high order thinking	Students are enthusiastic and take responsibility for their own learning in sustained ways. They focus well (fully immersed) and reflect on their learning to evaluate their strengths and weaknesses accurately. They take targeted actions to improve. Students consistently question themselves, one another and the teacher. Explicit instruction focuses on the learning process to facilitate critical thinking and problem solving skills which are intrinsic features of learning. Teachers use strategies that very successfully meet the individual needs of students. Teachers have high expectations of all groups of students. They provide very challenging work and excellent support.	Learning through Making: Digital technology offers a variety of creative outlets to enable students to enhance and share their understanding (dual coding, thinking maps, graphic organisers, wrappers). Learning with Others: Collaborating in virtual spaces to foster a mutual understanding when approaching a problem. Sharing knowledge with others to further build understanding and challenge them. Learning through Inquiry: Teachers and learners are able to curate research and collaborate to plan a route to enquiry. Learners are able to work collaboratively to ask and answer questions in creative ways with or without technology. Teachers and learners use technology to seek out new challenges and solve problems creatively.
Dialogic and Collaborative Learning: Creating an equitable classroom where students feel confident and challenged	Supporting students to build their confidence in communicating their learning very clearly. To encourage students to interact and collaborate very effectively in a wide range of learning situations to achieve agreed goals. They communicate their learning very clearly. To ensure students are compassionate in seeking and accepting help and support when collaborating. Students consistently question themselves, one another and the teacher. Critical thinking and problem solving skills are intrinsic features of learning. Teachers use strategies that very successfully meet the individual needs of students. Teachers have high expectations of all groups of students. They provide very challenging work and excellent support.	Learning from Experts: Technology can support dialogue between the learner and the teacher. Technology helps to support discussions and consolidate knowledge beyond the classroom. Learning with Others: Teachers used technology to flip learning to support students to interpret ideas and to create more time for facilitating questioning and in-depth discussions. Online group discussions should ensure all students participate to build a community of knowledge.
Beyond the Curriculum: Creating opportunities for students to	Stretching and challenging students beyond the specification when appropriate. Allowing the teacher to provide relevance to enable students to regularly make meaningful connections between areas of learning and relate these well to their understanding of the world.	Learning from Experts: Helps to support discussions and consolidate knowledge beyond the classroom through the use of visuals and videos to flip learning out of the classroom. Then creating more time for facilitating questioning and in-depth discussions.

gain context to their learning and provide additional challenge	Students consistently question themselves, one another and the teacher. Critical thinking and problem solving skills are intrinsic features of learning. Teachers use strategies that very successfully meet the individual needs of students. Teachers have high expectations of all groups of students. They provide very challenging work and excellent support.	Learning with Others: Collaborating in virtual spaces to foster a mutual understanding when approaching a problem. Sharing knowledge with others to further build understanding and challenge them. Learning through Inquiry: Teachers and learners are able to curate research and collaborate to plan a route to enquiry. Learners are able to work collaboratively to ask and answer questions in creative ways with or without technology. Teachers and learners use technology to seek out new challenges and solve problems creatively.
Assessment:	Assessment information is used skillfully and effectively to influence teaching and the curriculum in order to meet the learning needs of all groups of students and to optimise their progress. Teachers have in-depth knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of individual students. Teachers provide excellent personalised challenge and support. Feedback to students is comprehensive and constructive (active constructive feedback). Students are routinely involved in assessing their own learning.	Learning through Assessment: Technology can be used to support assessment in a variety of ways. It can be used to compile learning activities to enable teachers and learners to track the progress of learning. Data drawn can inform and suggest relevant interventions. Learning through Practising: Whatever is being learned, practice makes perfect. Technology can support practice and AI can offer personalised pathways, challenging problems and appropriate feedback to students instantly.

Building a research culture: Centre of Innovation in Learning and Teaching

Established in 2017, the Centre of Innovation in Learning and Teaching was built for students and staff to reflect on and evaluate their learning in a collaborative manner supported by evidence. Indeed Dubai College was among the first schools in the region to drive an evidence informed approach to learning, teaching and wellbeing. We are a school which is always keen to examine our current educational provision and ask difficult questions of ourselves and our students: are we genuinely preparing our students for the world of tomorrow? Are we in tune with the latest theories and debates within the wider world of education? Could we make more use of the educational research to improve the educational experience for all our students?

Our pioneering stance on education provides a wider field of influence via our work with the Oxford Educational Deanery and the Institute of Positive Education. Staff and students have access to research mentors when completing their individual research projects and are well versed in how to be good researchers. The benefits for both students and teachers in belonging to such a uniquely reflective and research informed school are incalculable to developing a learning community.

Dubai College is a national and international centre for educational thinking and debate. The school hosts an annual researchED conference, which focuses on innovation in education, addresses the leading educational issues of the day and has proved to be hugely successful, attracting hundreds of delegates from all over the world. In April 2019 speakers presented on a range of topics: the psychology and science of learning, AI in education and our role as educators in developing human intelligence, using research to lead and professionally grow a learning community, Harkness, evidenced informed Edtech, positive education, teacher retention, innovative ways of using data in schools, comparative judgement, leading inclusion and what makes great teaching. All of the learning over the course of the last three years is being embedded into classrooms to directly benefit students' learning.

The College will continue to work across the region to promote intellectual debate and fly the flag for evidence-informed professional learning. It will be one of four schools that forms the UAE's first Research Schools Network, further consolidating the work we have already published with the University of Oxford's Educational Deanery.

By constantly engaging with the outside world in such an extensive, open-minded and meaningful way, we hope to play an active and important role so that our own students will be the ultimate beneficiaries with a fresh and challenging education which prepares them for the world of tomorrow.

This is encouraged through a diverse and cutting edge professional learning menu where teachers can choose specific training that is relevant to them or for areas they would like to further develop.

Research, Enquiry and Professional Development at Dubai College

Evidence informed

Leadership Development
Leadership Development NPQs
Action Research
Collaborative Lesson Study

Continuous Professional Learning

Infinite Learning
COBIS
Chartered College
BSME
HMC

Research and Enquiry

UCL IOE
University of Oxford
University of Birmingham

Network Learning Communities

Partnership Projects
EEF and coaching
Abundance Project KHDA
UAE Research Schools Network
Not for profit schools

University based qualifications

Postgraduate Professional Development
MEd and MA

DC Learning and Teaching SLE Innovation Research

A Common Research Focus
Digital
Harkness
Metacognition
Beyond the Curriculum
Positive Ed and Wellbeing

Dubai College is a learning community that aspires to offer the very best of British education.

Continuous Professional Learning: Evidence Informed Learning Opportunities

To ensure that the learning potential of all students is maximised the College encourages an evidence informed approach to all professional learning opportunities. These focus on developing all areas of school life from leadership, wellbeing, pastoral, teaching, learning and leading research groups.

> *"In a school where research engagement and evidence-informed enquiry is well established, the process produces powerful insights that support positive measurable change."*
> (McAleavy, 2016 p34)

There are now a wide range of perspectives on research in schools – how research is used and carried out and for what purposes. Research engagement is defined as both engagement *in* and engagement *with* research (DfE, 2011):

Engagement in research – school-based research/practitioner enquiry/action research to interrogate and improve practice.
Engagement with research – schools' and practitioners' use of external research to inform pedagogy and drive school improvement.

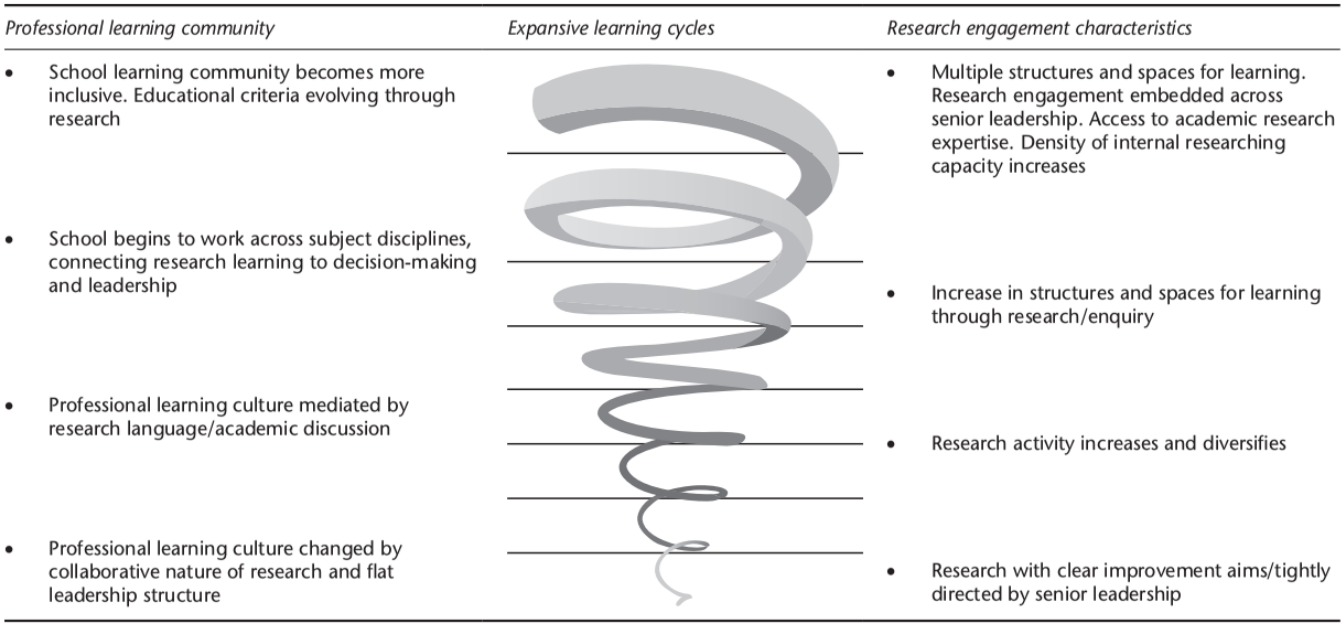

FIGURE 1.1 Developmental trajectory of a research-engaged school (Adapted from p. 282, Godfrey, 2016b)

Collaborative Learning Groups: Lesson Study

Staff are asked to reflect on an objective and are requested to focus their professional review on one of the five pedagogical areas of focus. The learning and teaching opportunities are mainly supported by the Specialist Leaders in Education and the Deputy Head: Learning and Teaching. They help to support the development of understanding in their specialist areas and explore these pedagogies through lesson study (joint practice development).

Teachers work with collaborative groups to share ideas and plan lessons collaboratively, joint observations are shared and ideas are brought to the groups. The Specialist Leaders in Education offer specialist advice, relevant research reading and coaching to all triads within their groups. The guiding principles of these collaborative groups are built on the foundation of the three Rs:

Respect: *respect is an attitude. It entails taking seriously and valuing what someone else or multiple others bring to an encounter. It demands openness and receptivity, it calls for willingness to consider experiences or perspectives that are different from our own, and it often requires a withholding of judgment.*

Reciprocity: *respect and reciprocity are closely connected and while respect is an attitude, reciprocity is a way of interacting. It is a process of balanced give-and-take; there is equity in what is exchanged and how it is exchanged.*

Responsibility: *when everyone within the learning community takes more responsibility for the educational project, teaching and learning become "community property", with all members recognised as active members of that community and collaborative partners equally invested in the common effort to engage in, and support, learning*

Drawn from Cook-Sather, Bovill, & Felten (2014) Engaging Students as Partners in Learning and Teaching: A Guide for Faculty, Jossey-Bass.

To ensure that the learning and teaching philosophy is fully embedded the development of the core pedagogical areas are further supported by the following professional learning opportunities:

- Lunch time Pedagoos: Lunch and learn focusing on short research informed CPD
- SPARKS: A range of staff deliver short 10 minute sparks to share best practice and evaluate its impact
- Professional Learning Days
- Leadership Training NPQs
- Oxford Educational Deanery Partnership supporting the work of the Collaborative Learning Groups
- Lesson Study: Collaborative Enquiry
- ResearchEd and Innovation Conference
- Part funded Masters Funding

References

Cook-Sather, Bovill, & Felten (2014) Engaging Students as Partners in Learning and Teaching: A Guide for Faculty, Jossey-Bass.
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Luckin, R., Bligh, B., Manches, A., Ainsworth, S., Crook, C. and Noss, R. (2012) Decoding Learning: The Proof, Promise and Potential of Digital Education, Nesta, London.
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