



Bucks University Technical College

Teaching and Learning Policy

2017-18

Responsible Officer: Principal
Date: August 2016
Review date: August 2019
Procedure available: Website/Reception/Learning Centre
Authorised by: Governing Body

Teaching and Learning Policy 2016/17

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Dissemination of the Policy

This policy is available on the school website, on request to parents, the LA and OFSTED through the Principal.

Date approved by governors: September 2016

Date for review: September 2019

1. SUMMARY

- This policy explains Bucks UTC's approach to all aspects of teaching and learning and aims to enhance the quality and consistency of the learning experience for all students
- It applies to all staff and to all students, from entry in Year 10 to year 13
- It links closely with recommended good practice and provides both structure and opportunities for innovation
- The responsibilities of staff in the management and development of teaching and learning are outlined

2. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to ensure the quality and consistency in teaching and learning at Bucks UTC.

This document applies to all staff and students at the UTC.

3. RESPONSIBILITIES

3.1 The Governing Body has responsibility for:

- Ensuring that this policy is in place, monitored continually and reviewed periodically
- Ensuring that any complaint arising from the operation of this policy is dealt with in accordance with the Bucks UTC Complaints Policy.
- Encouraging, supporting and acclaiming good practice.

3.2 The Principal is responsible for:

- Implementing this policy throughout the college
- Evaluating the quality and consistency of teaching and learning throughout the college.
- Working with BLT , the data dashboard group and subject leaders
- Ensuring staff, students and parents are aware of their responsibilities within this policy,
- Monitoring the implementation of the document and reporting termly to the Governors' Teaching & Learning sub group.
- Encouraging, supporting and acclaiming good practice.

3.3 The Vice Principal is responsible for:

- Ensuring staff, students and parents are aware of their responsibilities within this policy, eliciting their support for it and allowing them an opportunity to comment on its effectiveness.
- Providing training for those with responsibilities within this policy.
- Ensuring that staff are aware of recommended good practice in terms of teaching, learning and assessment
- Providing opportunities for colleagues to share and celebrate good practice.
- Communicating with new staff to highlight teaching and learning policy and practice.

3.4 Subject leaders are responsible for:

- Monitoring and supporting the implementation of this policy by teachers working in the subject.
- Regularly discussing items relating to teaching and learning at departmental meetings
- Highlighting and disseminating effective teaching and learning practice both within and across departments
- Evaluating the quality and appropriateness of work set in their department and making changes accordingly.

3.5 Subject teachers are responsible for:

- Ensuring lessons are planned and structured effectively in order to accommodate the needs of all students
- Keeping updated regarding latest developments in terms of effective pedagogy and practice
 - Planning for innovative practice to enable all students to access planned learning objectives
- Developing student potential by setting realistic and challenging targets to move students on to the next level of learning

4. IMPLEMENTATION

4.1 Introduction

Teaching and learning are core functions of our college. Our primary focus is to ensure that students make at least good progress in their lessons. We aspire to promote an active and inclusive culture of learning, ensuring that students are inspired and fully involved in developing their skills, knowledge and understanding across all subject areas. It is our aim to motivate all students to have high aspirations and a desire to fulfil their potential both in and out of lessons.

We aim to develop independent and creative learners by encouraging teachers and students to work in partnership to create an active and stimulating learning environment. Parents are encouraged to take an active role in their child's learning and are supported in doing so.

Our key learning and teaching themes are:

- Active learning
- Differentiation
- Higher order questioning/thinking
- Assessment for Learning

These themes are regularly incorporated into lessons and help to facilitate the progress of all our students.

4.2 Active Learning

In Bucks UTC, active learning is valued and promoted. Students do not learn merely by sitting in class listening to teachers, memorising pre-packaged assignments, and regurgitating answers. They must talk about what they are learning, write about it, relate it to past experiences, and apply it to their daily lives. They must make what they learn part of themselves.

Student-led tasks are prominent and “hands on” activities are encouraged to ensure full student engagement. Ideally, an 80/20 percentage balance between student activity and teacher talk is aimed for, in favour of student-led learning. This balance is, however, acknowledged as aspirational and not all lessons will lend themselves to this percentage breakdown. Tasks are challenging and relevant to learning objectives. Many activities, particularly in Computing and Construction, are open in nature. Students are actively engaged in activities that make them think about and comment upon information presented, rather than simply listening to the teacher talking. Students will analyse, synthesise and evaluate information through working regularly with other students.

Co-operative learning is a form of active learning where students work together to perform specific tasks in pairs or small groups (e.g. “think / pair / share”) and this style of learning is prominent in our work.

Paired work is used regularly in Bucks UTC and this presents significant learning opportunities through the use of dialogue. Students are encouraged to actively listen to the viewpoints of others and to offer their own opinions. They are expected to challenge each other constructively and to share, evaluate and develop individual and collective ideas.

Group work is encouraged across all levels of ability, supported by teacher intervention as appropriate to maintain momentum. Students are able to explore and develop their understanding of key issues and are able to develop their social and team-working skills. Students are provided with opportunities to practise and learn from each other and to extend their decision-making and problem-solving skills. They are able to develop a sense of empathy and to understand the views of others.

Group work is fully inclusive and groupings should be flexible and usually defined by the teachers to suit specific tasks. Students should be familiar with clear structures, rules and procedures and are aware that contributions are made, and listened to, by all group members.

The level of teacher talk should be at a minimum. Whole-class teacher explanations should be concise and used to present key concepts and ideas and to demonstrate skills and processes. Effective explanation skills are used to engage and support students in active learning and higher order thinking. Teacher talk is used to establish interactive dialogue in which the teacher and students articulate ideas to develop knowledge and understanding, creating an appropriate level of challenge to enable all students to make good progress.

4.3 Differentiation

Staff use differentiated activities to ensure that all students make progress in their learning. Individuality is recognised and the challenge of managing diversity is embraced. Differentiation addresses the individual needs of students through an appropriate range of resources and strategies. Teaching assistants and other adults must be actively involved in planning and differentiating lesson activities.

Student targets underpin teaching and learning in lessons. Teachers must be aware of individual student needs and aim to match learning objectives, success criteria and lesson

tasks to these needs. Differentiation strategies will be varied and based on assessment information.

Lesson activities should be varied to take account of different preferred learning styles. A range of resources should be used to support and motivate all types of learner, including reading, writing and drawing tasks, ICT, music and role plays.

Data-led classroom based interventions are the first strategy used to address under-achievement. Strategies used should initially focus on support within the classroom where a guided learning approach is encouraged, whereby small groups of students are targeted within a larger class. Teaching Assistants, where available, are used to facilitate this guided learning process. Teachers plan carefully to ensure that lessons fit into existing schemes of learning and enable the whole class to progress, not just the targeted group.

Teaching assistants are valued as an integral part of the lesson and their role is focussed on developing learning. Teachers and teaching assistants work in partnership to ensure that learning objectives are achieved by all groups of students. Teaching assistants are involved by teachers in the planning, preparation of work.

4.4 Higher Order Thinking and Questioning

This aspect of our work and practice will evolve in 2016/17 in the light of our CPD with both Elevate and Elkan in the Autumn Term.

Questioning is used regularly during all phases of lessons to promote higher order thinking skills. While many questions are planned, both individually and in sequences, some may be intuitive in response to a particular aspect of the lesson, or in order to address a perceived weakness during a lesson. Teachers move around to ask questions so that all students come within their range of vision. "Bloom's Taxonomy" is used to promote understanding at all levels, ranging from closed, factual questions to more divergent, stretching questions. At Bucks UTC, there is a focus on higher order questions in order to extend students by offering challenge and by presenting increased cognitive demands.

Students are encouraged to develop their own questioning skills and to regularly ask questions of both their teachers and peer group. A climate is created where students feel safe to make mistakes and take risks in answering questions.

A range of strategies are used to ensure a fully inclusive approach to questioning. Techniques can include:

- Hands/No hands rule
- Pair / Share
- "Phone a Friend"
- Wait time

4.5 Assessment for Learning (AfL)

Formative assessment is an integral part of lesson delivery. Assessment for Learning is used regularly in lessons at Bucks UTC to promote student progress and to ensure that every student knows how they are performing and understands what they need to do to improve further. Through regular and targeted feedback parents / carers also know how their child is performing, the required improvements and how they can support their child in achieving their targets.

Six characteristics of AfL are evident in all our classrooms:

- **Learning objectives are shared with students**

Learning objectives are presented in student-friendly language and are embedded within lesson planning. Objectives should be used as a basis for questioning and feedback during plenaries throughout a lesson. All students must be clearly aware of the required learning in each lesson and can articulate this confidently and accurately when questioned. Students will know and recognise the standards they are aiming for.

- **Targets are aspirational in order to stretch students from the very start of their education at Bucks UTC**

Students will be aware of their current and their targeted performance in all subjects (level of grade) and have clear success criteria. Students should be familiar with subject level descriptors and mark scheme criteria.

- **Students are involved in peer and self-assessment**

Students should be actively encouraged to reflect upon their work and to identify their personal strengths and weaknesses. They are encouraged to work closely with their peers (either in paired or group work activities) and to assess the performance of each other. Students focus on how to improve and analysis is based on clearly defined assessment criteria. Students are given time to reflect upon their learning.

- **Students are provided with feedback which leads to them recognising their next steps in learning and how to take them**

AfL is provided using both verbal and written feedback which presents personalised information to enable all students to progress their learning. Feedback is supplied throughout lessons and provides constructive, specific guidance explaining what each student has done well, how to improve further and what needs to be done to make the required improvements.

- **Confidence is promoted that every student can improve**

Teachers have high expectations of all their students and aim to build confidence and self-esteem by identifying small steps to enable students to see their progress. Students should be encouraged to explain their thinking and reasoning within a secure classroom ethos.

- **Both staff and students are involved in reviewing and reflecting on assessment information**

Robust assessment data will be used consistently to inform learning and progress judgments. Assessment data will also be shared regularly with students and used to identify areas of strength and weakness. Data will be used precisely to target the required next steps in learning. Where possible, assessment information should be shared on a one-to-one basis with students. As a result of reflective assessment practices, planning can be adjusted and tasks evaluated to ensure maximum impact.

4.6 The Learning Environment

We aim to offer an inspirational and stimulating learning environment for all our students.

Our classrooms and work areas should be fully inclusive, recognising the abilities and aptitudes of each individual student. Students should feel empowered to make positive contributions to each lesson and genuinely believe that their contributions

are valued. Students must not be afraid to take risks in their learning and will be encouraged to do so. Students should enjoy their lessons and have fun in the process of learning. Classroom displays will be up-to-date, relevant and accessible, designed to capture attention and generate interest. Students will be encouraged to produce their own work for display purposes.

Teachers, where practical, should meet and greet students at the start of each lesson.

Classroom management procedures must be firmly established and students will be fully aware of classroom guidelines and routines; consequences and rewards should be used consistently and appropriately reflecting Bucks UTC's BfL Policy (finalised w/c 19th September). Seating plans, where appropriate, should be carefully considered to maximise learning potential, and these will be open to change to accommodate different types of work (e.g. group work) and individual student needs.

4.7 Lesson Planning

Teachers are responsible for planning their lessons in order to maximise learning. A standard lesson planning template should be used for all observed lessons. Similarly a standard lesson observation form is used for all formal observations.

Lesson plans must include learning objectives and intended learning outcomes for different groups of students (PP/SEND/Gifted/Talented). Groups of students should be clearly identified on lesson plans and seating plans and opportunities for differentiation and assessment must be identified.

4.8 Lesson Structure

Lessons in Bucks UTC must have a clear and appropriate structure. Differentiated learning objectives will be highlighted within the lesson so that all groups of students are clear regarding the learning outcomes. Objectives will be shared with students in student- friendly language and referred to at an appropriate point during lessons.

Where appropriate, lessons will have an engaging starter activity which is used to establish the pace of the lesson. Starters should be interactive wherever possible and fully inclusive, enabling learners to link prior and future learning. Reflective plenaries should take place at appropriate points during lessons to assess learning and provide time for immediate reflection of key Learning points. A summary plenary should take place at the end of each lesson to link learning objectives and intended learning outcomes for all groups of students.

4.9 Cross-curricular Skills

Literacy and numeracy must be promoted across the curriculum. Where opportunities present themselves, cross-curricular themes should be highlighted and literacy and numeracy skills should be explicitly identified, practised and developed.

ICT is viewed as an integral part of the curriculum and used on a regular basis within lessons when appropriate to do so. ICT will be used as a basis for independent learning, encouraging students to judge when and how to use ICT media and to make accurate judgments regarding the reliability of ICT based information. Students should be encouraged to use the College's Virtual Learning Platform to develop their independent learning skills.

5. MONITORING, EVALUATION AND POLICY REVIEW

The Principal and Vice Principal working with the BLT team will collect, study and use quantitative and qualitative data relating to the implementation of this policy, and make adjustments as appropriate.

The policy will be reviewed annually by the Teaching & Learning group of the Governing Body.

6. ASSOCIATED POLICIES AND PROCESSES

- Special Educational Needs Policy
- Assessment Recording and Reporting
- Fundamental British Values Policy
- Gifted and Talented Policy
- Homework Policy
- Quality Assurance Group Framework
- Performance Management and Appraisal Policy
- Operation of the BLT/Data Dashboard Meetings 2016/17
- Departmental Meetings/Priorities 2016/17