

# GREAT TEACHING BY DESIGN

Evidence-based practices to improve student  
outcomes in Canberra's classrooms



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## Minister's Message

ACT schools are leaders in educational achievement.

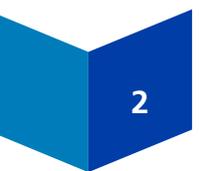
These results can be attributed to our passionate and highly skilled educators and the parents and carers who nurture, support and help their children meet educational goals every day.

Every child deserves a great teacher, irrespective of the school they attend, where they live, their background or their ability. Great teachers in every classroom in Canberra's public schools won't happen by chance.

*Great Teaching by Design: evidence-based practices to improve student outcomes in Canberra's classrooms* outlines research-based strategies to enhance the quality and impact of teaching in our schools. Great teachers build effective relationships, set high expectations for student achievement, and ensure that all students have the opportunities and support they need to learn, succeed and thrive.

It is a privilege to be Minister for Education in the ACT, and I look forward to celebrating the achievements of our schools, teachers and students in the future.

**Shane Rattenbury MLA**  
**Minister for Education**



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# Our intent: importance of evidence based practice

In the ACT, our challenge is to improve educational achievement for all students, irrespective of their background, circumstances or the school they attend.

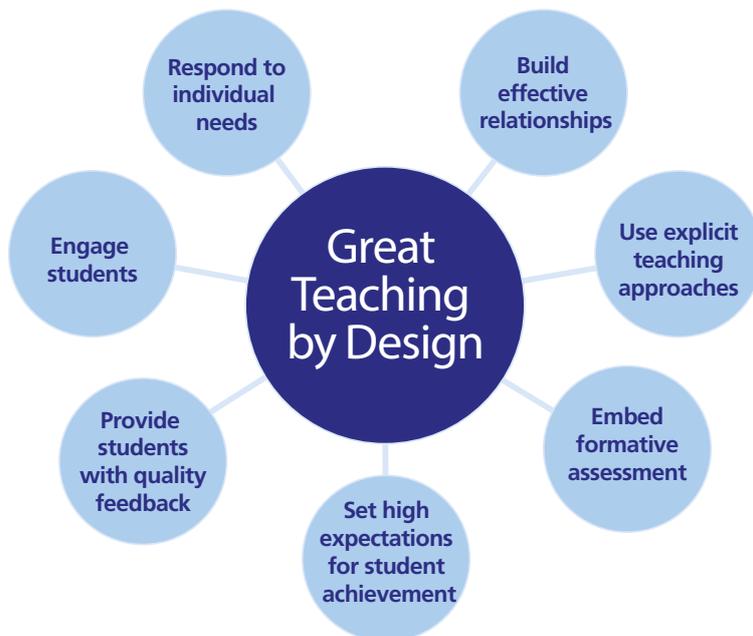
The Directorate's *Strategic Plan 2014-17* articulates these high expectations and the goals and strategies for improving the impact of teaching and achieving quality outcomes for all our students.

Aligned with the strategic plan, the Directorate's approach to school improvement and accountability will ensure a targeted, systematic and sustained change process to enable success for all students, in all settings. Our people, practice and performance are integral to this approach which will be realised through engagement with the *School Improvement in Canberra public schools - A Framework for Performance and Accountability*. The framework ensures we have the right processes and accountabilities in place in our schools, based on strong evidence. This work will build and strengthen a culture of self-evaluation, reflection and improvement.

In developing Great Teaching by Design we have drawn heavily on the work of Andy Hargreaves and Michael Fullan detailed within *Professional Capital: Transforming Teaching in Every School* (2012). We highlight their focus on the importance of students having a series of high quality teachers, over time that makes the most difference.

According to Hargreaves and Fullan (2012) *students do well when they have a series of very good teachers – not by chance but by design.*

Great Teaching by Design: Evidence-based practices to improve student outcomes in Canberra's classrooms provides an evidence base for school level decision making and implementation of classroom practices that have the most impact on positive student outcomes.



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*In the ACT every child, young person and adult will benefit from a high quality, accessible education, childcare and training system.*

*Every student will learn, thrive and be equipped with the skills and attitudes to lead fulfilling, productive and responsible lives.*

*Our highly educated and skilled community will contribute to the economic and social prosperity of our city and the nation.*

ACT Education Directorate  
*Strategic Plan 2014-17'*

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ing Magnesium

1 → "The Big Thaw"  
National Geographic  
\* brainstorm global impacts

2 → [www.climate.nasa.gov](http://www.climate.nasa.gov)  
\* Arctic Sea ice cover  
\* CO<sub>2</sub> levels  
\* sea levels  
\* global temperature  
\* land ice cover



# Our approach: aligning our frameworks

## The ACT Engaging Schools Framework

The Directorate's *Engaging Schools Framework*<sup>2</sup> outlines what schools can do to engage students. The Framework is underpinned by four principles and four areas of good practice that are proven to have a positive impact on engagement.

The four principles are:

- Ensure every student belongs to their school
- Engage everybody
- Focus on success
- Respond to context

The four areas of good practice are:

- Strengthening relationships
- Valuing, understanding and having high expectations of every student
- Enriching connections with communities
- Building engaging school cultures

The Framework outlines high expectations for what can be achieved both in terms of learning and wellbeing outcomes for all students to support personal development, future study or employment, and their capacity to lead fulfilling and productive lives.<sup>3</sup>



## Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) Professional Standards for Teachers

The Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (the Standards) are the benchmarks that guide professional practice, engagement and growth for Australian teachers. The AITSL Standards include clear and concise statements about teachers' professional attributes and what they are expected to know, understand and do. They encompass strong subject matter knowledge, pedagogical skills, capacity to respond to student diversity, effective collaboration with colleagues, contribution to the school and the profession, and the capacity to engage in ongoing development.<sup>4</sup>

The AITSL Standards are referred to throughout *Great Teaching by Design* as a key reference point for teachers and school leaders in the selection of strategies to improve practice.

# People, practice and performance

## School improvement in Canberra Public Schools – a framework for performance and accountability

In the ACT we have embedded the domains of the National School Improvement Tool into our *People, Practice and Performance: School improvement in Canberra Public Schools - A Framework for Performance and Accountability*. The tool was informed by 'research into the practices of highly effective schools and school leaders'<sup>5</sup> and has been designed to support schools in their school improvement planning and practices.

Each section of *Great Teaching by Design* references the alignment to the ACT approach to school improvement embedded within the *People, Practice and Performance: School improvement in Canberra Public Schools - A Framework for Performance and Accountability*.

PEOPLE	
Effective partnerships	• School-community partnerships
	• A culture that promotes learning
Strategic management of resources	• An expert teaching team
	• Targeted use of school resources
PRACTICE	
Effective teaching and learning	• Systematic curriculum delivery
	• Differentiated teaching and learning
	• Effective pedagogical practices
PERFORMANCE	
An evaluation culture	• An explicit improvement agenda
	• Analysis and discussion of data

### Effect Sizes

Throughout *Great Teaching by Design*, reference is made to the effect size of a particular approach or teaching strategy. These effect sizes are derived from contemporary meta-analyses of research on teacher effectiveness<sup>6</sup> and allow for relative comparison of various influences on student achievement, independent of the original measures used.<sup>7</sup>

For any particular intervention to be considered worthwhile, an effect size of at least 0.40 is required. This is widely regarded as the 'hinge point' or standard where the effects of an innovation or strategy enhance achievement in a significant way.<sup>8,9</sup>

*Teachers need to be critical evaluators of the effect they are having on their students...Know thy impact.*

Hattie 2012<sup>10</sup>

*A meta-analysis combines the results from a number of studies to determine the average effect of a given technique. When conducting a meta-analysis, a researcher translates the results of a given study into a unit of measurement referred to as an effect size. An effect size expresses the increase or decrease in achievement of the experimental group (the group of students who are exposed to a specific instructional technique) in standard deviation units.*

Marzano et al 2005 <sup>11</sup>

## Respond to individual need



In every classroom, students have different:

- abilities
- learning preferences
- backgrounds
- prior knowledge
- interests
- experiences.<sup>12</sup>

Some students require additional support and a range of scaffolded learning experiences and opportunities to help them learn effectively and develop the capacity for further learning.<sup>13</sup>

Some of these students may need more individualised and intensive behavioural supports to engage in learning.

All students require a curriculum that is tailored to their specific intellectual and social and emotional learning needs. Curriculum differentiation is critical when designing learning programs to respond to the individual learning needs of students.<sup>14</sup>

Success for all students relies on flexible delivery and curriculum adjustments, including content, processes and skills.<sup>15</sup>

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*A great coach never achieves greatness for themselves or their team by working to make all the players alike...No weakness in understanding or skill is overlooked, but all players work from their strengths and competencies, not from a sense of deficiency.*

*Tomlinson 2014*<sup>16</sup>

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Tomlinson<sup>17</sup> argues there are some key features common to the differentiated classroom:

- The learning environment supports learners and learning.
- The teacher actively attends to students' learning profiles to address individual learning needs.
- The curriculum is organised to support learning and structured around the essential knowledge, understanding, and skills in each learning area/subject.
- Assessment is embedded to ensure responsive teaching.
- The teacher modifies content, process, and products based on students' readiness, interest, and learning profiles.
- The teacher and students collaborate to plan, set goals, monitor progress, analyse outcomes, and build on their learning.
- The teacher understands both the needs of the group as a whole and individuals' needs. The teacher keeps track of a student's learning relative to their cohort and monitors individual growth over time.
- The teacher structures the classroom environment around individual needs, various small groups, and the class as a whole to enhance the learning of each student while working towards common goals.

Canberra public schools are committed to meeting the needs of, and increasing the proportion of, high performing students.

The Directorate's implementation of its Gifted and Talented Students Policy is supported by 14 parent and teacher fact sheets, which include answers to Frequently Asked Questions.<sup>18</sup> The fact sheets include the topics of Differentiation and Dual Exceptionality. Dual or twice-exceptionality refers to gifted students who also present with one or more specific learning difficulties; physical, emotional or behavioural disabilities; or other factors which may impair performance and mask high potential.

The Taskforce on Students with Learning Difficulties highlighted the need for Canberra public schools to maximise outcomes for students with learning difficulties by taking a consistent systemic approach, building staff capacity and partnering with families.<sup>19</sup>

The evidence strongly indicates that thorough, pervasive and unrelenting focus on student needs will benefit all students, particularly those with complex needs and challenging behaviour.<sup>20</sup>

This section includes a number of evidence based strategies suitable for meeting the needs of students with learning difficulties, including the use of the response to intervention framework and student-specific learning plans.

## Response to intervention framework

The Taskforce on Students with Learning Difficulties identified response to intervention as a process that ensures students receive responsive, high-quality instruction according to their needs, determined by regular benchmark assessment.<sup>21</sup> Response to intervention is not a particular program, but a multi-tiered framework for differentiating instruction to support learning for all students. Schools use various programs in each of the tiers.

The approach involves universal assessment, progress monitoring, multi-tiered instruction and data-based decision making to identify and support all students who are below benchmark in literacy and/or numeracy. Assessment and instruction are linked to better inform teachers about the best ways to teach all their students. The goal is to minimise the risk of long-term negative learning outcomes.

Schools implementing response to intervention have the choice of which evidence-based assessments and evidence-based interventions best suit their structures and contexts.

**Tier 1** emphasises research and/or evidence-based, quality differentiated instruction in the classroom for all students.

**Tier 2** instruction is targeted and more explicit than Tier 1, and conducted daily in a smaller group setting in addition to Tier 1.

A **Tier 3** plan is developed if the student requires additional support in addition to Tier 1 and Tier 2. Tier 3 instruction involves 1:1 support and individualised instruction.

The ACT Engaging Schools Framework outlines approaches used by engaging schools to demonstrate how they value, understand and have high expectations for every student. This involves providing quality learning programs, making explicit their high expectations, use of good pedagogy, development of flexible learning and education options, and understanding students in a holistic way.

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*...a process that ensures students receive responsive, high-quality instruction according to their needs, determined by regular benchmark assessment.*

*Taskforce on Students with Learning Difficulties: Final Report 2013*<sup>22</sup>

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## Individual Learning Plans

In Canberra public schools, Individual Learning Plans (ILPs) are used to create specific goals to meet the specific learning needs of individual students with additional needs. ILPs are a working document, designed by teachers in collaboration with parents/carers and support staff, which inform the planning, delivery and evaluation of a student's individual learning program.

## Personalised Learning Plans

Personalised Learning Plans (PLPs) are developed to support the outcomes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. PLPs identify, monitor and review personalised, targeted approaches to learning to ensure students reach their potential. Building quality relationships and partnerships between home and school is essential. Student and family involvement throughout the process is key, and goals should be effectively communicated.

An ILP/PLP:

- identifies the student's individual needs and priorities for learning
- outlines both short and/or long term educational goals for a student and the actions, strategies, modifications and adaptations required
- recognises that individuals approach learning in different ways
- uses SMART goals – Specific, Measureable, Achievable, Realistic, and Time-bound
- is a flexible working document that is reviewed, monitored and amended over time
- assigns responsibility and accountability for implementing and evaluating the plan
- provides an ongoing record to ensure continuity of learning.

## Questions for reflection and discussion

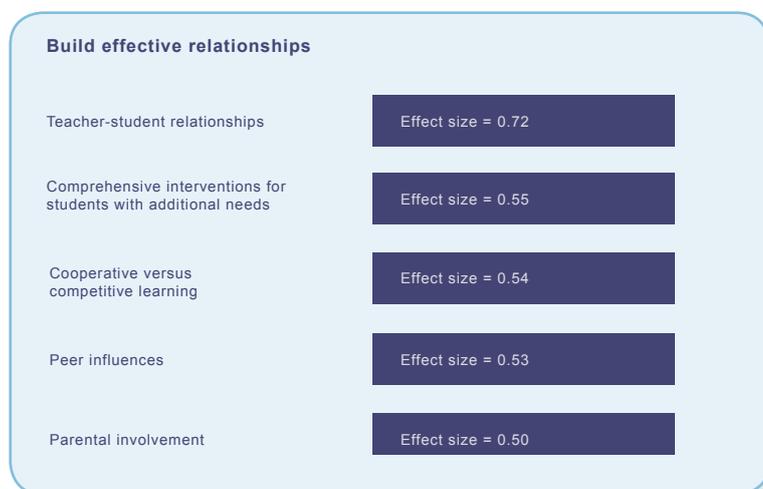
- How do you engage students and ensure active learning in your classroom?
- What are the features of your classroom environment that support quality differentiated instruction?
- How do your lessons/activities target students' individual needs?
- What mechanisms do you use to assess learning and respond to individual needs for all of your classroom students, including those with complex needs and challenging behaviours?

### *AITSL Standards*

- 1.3 Students with diverse linguistic, cultural, religious and socioeconomic backgrounds
- 1.4 Strategies for teaching Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students
- 1.5 Differentiate teaching to meet the specific learning needs of students across the full range of abilities
- 1.6 Strategies to support full participation of students with disability
- 2.1 Content and teaching strategies of the teaching area
- 2.2 Content selection and organisation
- 2.3 Curriculum, assessment and reporting
- 3.1 Establish challenging learning goals
- 3.2 Plan, structure and sequence learning programs
- 3.4 Select and use resources

PEOPLE	
<b>Effective partnerships</b>	• School-community partnerships
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	• Analysis and discussion of data

# Build effective relationships



It is vital for teachers to build positive relationships with students and their families. Strong relationships are fundamental for learning and build effective and productive classroom communities.

Research demonstrates that relationships formed between students and teachers are a key determinant of the levels of student engagement in schooling and learning.<sup>23</sup>

Evidence also shows that positive student-teacher relationships have a significant impact on students' academic results.<sup>24</sup>

Building positive relationships is critical to effective teaching. Hattie's meta-analyses<sup>25</sup> identified an effect size of 0.72 for positive teacher-student relationships. Cornelius-White<sup>26</sup> also found poor relationships are a primary cause of decreased student attendance and students' negative associations with school.

The ACT Engaging Schools Framework outlines how schools that focus on cultivating good relationships, provide opportunities for student voice to shape the school environment and support student self determination promote student willingness and ability to engage with learning.

Effective teachers know their students. They ask questions and learn about the backgrounds, strengths, interests and needs of their students, to build trust and a supportive learning environment. When students experience a sense of belonging at school and supportive relationships with teachers and classmates, they are more motivated to participate actively and positively in the life of the classroom.<sup>27</sup>

Prioritising opportunities to acknowledge each student and celebrate their strengths, interests and achievements builds rapport and ensures students feel valued.<sup>28</sup>

It is also critical that teachers model and effectively teach effective social and cooperative skills, to enable students to develop positive relationships with their peers.

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One simple way in which to turn students off learning is for them to have a poor relationship with the teacher. The essence of positive relationships is the student seeing the warmth, feeling the encouragement and the teacher's high expectations, and knowing that the teacher understands him or her.

Hattie 2012<sup>29</sup>

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*The National Safe Schools Framework* (2010) identifies nine key elements to assist schools in planning, implementing and maintaining a safe, supportive and protective learning community that promotes student safety and wellbeing.<sup>30</sup> These elements include building positive, caring and respectful relationships between students and teachers, and the extensive use of cooperative learning strategies. Students only learn effectively when they feel safe.

A significant amount of research highlights the benefits of collaborative and cooperative learning. Studies have also found that peer tutoring can be as effective as one-to-one teacher instruction.<sup>31</sup>

Teaching cooperative social skills creates a cohesive environment that encourages peer coaching, student collaboration, acceptance, tolerance and risk taking. Modelling respect, empathy and resilience also reduces anti-social behaviours, such as bullying. If school is seen as a safe and supportive place, students will have an increased sense of wellbeing and be more focussed and engaged with their learning.

A safe learning environment in the classroom allows pathways to form in the brain that promote longer term retention and connections to other learnt material.<sup>32</sup>

There is a strong correlation between parental engagement and student achievement. Successful relationships involve teachers and parents/carers working in partnerships to establish shared goals and effective communication. The benefits include creating a sense of community, helping teachers better understand the whole child, and increasing parents' confidence about ways to support their child's schooling at home.<sup>33</sup>

When parents, teachers and students view one another as partners in education, a caring community forms around students and begins its work.<sup>34</sup>

It is important that the classroom environment reflects the school and teachers' commitment to building positive and productive learning communities. This can be achieved by:

- actively seeking and creating ongoing opportunities to listen to, build rapport and establish connections with each student
- valuing students' backgrounds, prior knowledge and skills
- creating a safe classroom environment that values risk taking and mutual respect, where students feel comfortable in seeking support
- encouraging students to engage in cooperative learning activities, share ideas and work collaboratively
- practising ongoing and effective communication with both parents and students
- promoting opportunities for parents to engage in school/classroom events, programs and activities
- encouraging and supporting parents to take an active interest in their child's learning.

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**All students need to learn and work in environments where their individual strengths are recognised and individual needs are addressed. All students need to learn within a supportive community in order to feel safe enough to take risks.**

Li and Lam 2005<sup>35</sup>

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**A safe learning environment in the classroom allows pathways to form in the brain that promote longer term retention and connections to other learnt material.**

Rossouw 2015<sup>36</sup>

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## Questions for reflection and discussion

- What strategies do you use to get to know your students and their families?
- How do you create a safe and welcoming classroom environment for students and visitors?
- What do you do to actively engage parents and carers in their child's learning?
- How do you recognise and celebrate students' strengths and interests?
- How are cooperative and social skills modelled and practised daily in your classroom and across the school?

### *AITSL Standards*

- 2.4 Understand and respect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People to promote reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians
- 3.1 Establish challenging learning goals
- 3.5 Use effective classroom communication
- 3.7 Engage parents/ carers in the educative process
- 4.2 Manage classroom activities
- 4.3 Manage challenging behaviour
- 4.4 Maintain student safety
- 5.5 Report on student achievement
- 7.3 Engage with the parents/carers
- 7.4 Engage with professional teaching networks and broader communities

PEOPLE	
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## Use explicit teaching approaches



The platform for effective instruction is designing and communicating clear learning intentions.<sup>37</sup> When teachers share learning objectives with students and provide ongoing feedback to students about their learning, goals are more likely to be attained.<sup>38</sup> This is reflected throughout the ACT Engaging Schools Framework.

Moss and Brookhart state that the most effective teaching and meaningful student learning happens when teachers design an explicit learning intention for each lesson, collaborate with their students to determine the success criteria for learning, and assess understanding.<sup>39</sup>

*Learning intentions* are clear statements about the skills, knowledge or understanding taught within any lesson. Learning intentions should be clear, provide a framework for the content of the lesson, and help students understand the purpose of the learning activities. Learning intentions also provide the basis for assessing student learning and the impact of instruction.<sup>40</sup>

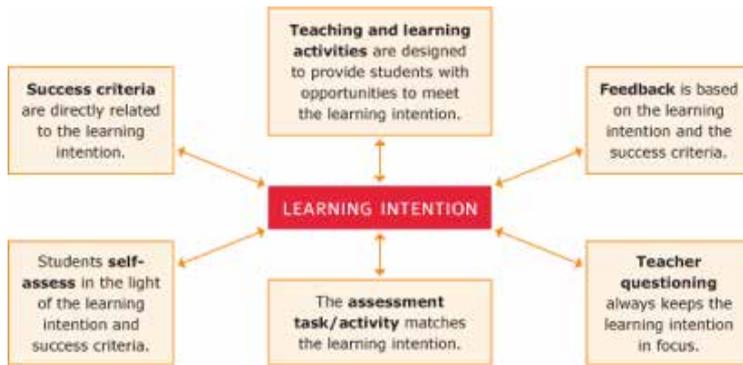
*Success Criteria* outline and describe the ways in which students may achieve each learning intention and the level of performance expected. Success criteria provide a platform for targeted teacher feedback and students' self-assessment of progress and achievement. Success criteria should always be modelled by quality examples to deconstruct and analyse their meaning. This process may include use of exemplar pieces of students' work.

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Providing students with milestones or process criteria allows students and teachers to evaluate their learning journey and make adjustments where necessary.

William 2011<sup>41</sup>

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#### 1. Curriculum Corporation

Learning intentions, success criteria and assessment tools should align with relevant *Australian Curriculum Achievement Standards*.

Involving students in the construction of learning intentions and success criteria empowers students and ensures they are written in an accessible way for students, and may also encourage increased ownership of students' learning.

Teachers and students can use the following questions to guide the construction of learning intentions and success criteria:

- What do you want the students to learn?
- Why does the learning matter?
- What are you going to get the students to do (or produce) and how do you determine the appropriateness of this task?
- How well do you expect them to do it?<sup>42</sup>

To ensure learning intentions are visible and students monitor their learning, teachers may also ask strategic questions, such as:

- What are you learning?
- How are you doing?
- How do you know?
- What can you do to improve?
- Where do you go for help?<sup>43</sup>

If students can accurately answer these questions, then learning is visible and learning intentions and success criteria are explicit.

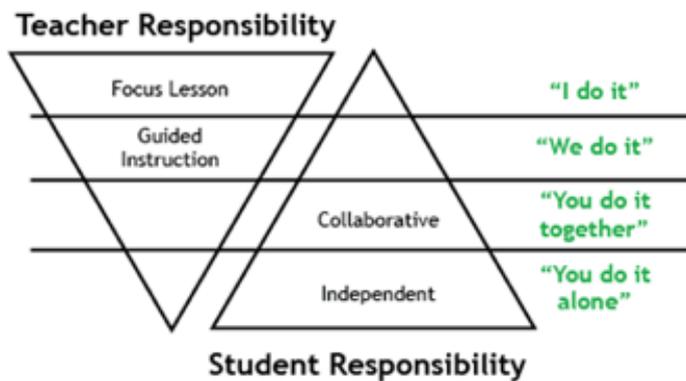
Asking challenging questions also supports the development of deep understanding and has the potential to enhance student performance. Effective teacher questioning is planned. Students should also be encouraged to ask questions throughout each phase of learning. Craig<sup>44</sup> distinguishes between shallow questions that verify existing knowledge, and don't take much thought to answer, and deep questions, which ask learners to build connections between ideas.

## Explicit teaching

Explicit teaching supports students to achieve success, regardless of their stage of learning. *The gradual release of responsibility model* (based on Vygotsky's zone of proximal development) provides teachers with an instructional framework that enables students to take responsibility for collaborative and independent learning.

- **Focus lessons** make explicit connections between students' prior knowledge and new ideas or concepts. Teachers model the concept or content and provide quality examples.
- **Guided instruction** leads and scaffolds student understanding through coaching or small group instruction (including prompts and feedback).
- **Collaborative learning** encourages students to work together to apply learning and share ideas.
- **Independent learning** enables students to work autonomously and transfer and apply new skills/knowledge.

### Gradual Release of Responsibility Model



Fisher and Frey (2006).<sup>45</sup>

Quality teachers use explicit teaching practices to support student engagement and make learning more visible by:

- developing a clear understanding about what it is that they want their students to learn and what it looks like to be successful.
- explicitly teaching with learning intentions and success criteria.
- structuring lessons that model skills and scaffold learners to achieve goals (I do it; we do it; you do it).
- working in collaboration with students throughout the learning process.
- designing assessment tasks which accurately demonstrate meeting success criteria and validly assess the achievement of learning intentions.
- encouraging ongoing student self-assessment through planned questioning and targeted feedback.

## Questions for reflection and discussion

- How are explicit teaching approaches embedded in practice at our school?
- Do your students have a clear understanding of the learning intentions and success criteria for each task? How do you know?
- What scaffolds do you use to support students to meet the success criteria?
- How do you ensure assessment tasks are directly aligned with learning intentions and success criteria?

### *AITSL Standards*

- 1.2 Understand how students learn
- 1.3 Students with diverse linguistic, cultural, religious and socioeconomic backgrounds
- 1.4 Strategies for teaching Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students
- 1.5 Differentiate teaching to meet the specific learning needs of students across the full range of abilities
- 1.6 Strategies to support full participation of students with disability
- 2.1 Content and teaching strategies of the teaching area
- 2.2 Content selection and organisation
- 2.3 Curriculum, assessment and reporting
- 2.5 Literacy and numeracy strategies
- 3.2 Plan, structure and sequence learning programs
- 3.3 Use teaching strategies
- 6.2 Engage in professional learning and improve practice
- 6.3 Engage with colleagues and improve practice

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# Embed formative assessment

## Embed formative assessment

Providing formative evaluation

Effect size = 0.90

The Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) *Australian Professional Standards for Teachers* (the Standards) require teachers to collect, analyse and interpret data in order to improve the planning and delivery of teaching programs.<sup>46</sup> The benefits of using data derived from formative assessment are well documented.<sup>47</sup>

Research demonstrates that teachers' interpretation and use of assessment information has the potential to accelerate student achievement. A study conducted by Timperley<sup>48</sup> demonstrates student achievement gains of up to twice the expected rate when using this approach. The average effect sizes were 1.20 for writing and 0.92 for reading. Gains were found to be the greatest for the 20% of students in the lowest range, with effect sizes of 2.25 in writing and 1.90 in reading. These results are particularly significant when compared to average effect size gains of 0.20 in writing and 0.26 in reading.

Formative assessment is a process used before and during learning experiences, to continuously check for student understanding and progress. Formative assessment strategies also encourage students to reflect on and monitor their own learning processes through feedback and opportunities to improve and set future goals.<sup>49</sup> In this way, formative assessment is *for* and *as* learning,<sup>50</sup> and *for teaching*.<sup>51</sup>

When planning lessons and designing assessment tasks, teachers may find the following questions provide a useful framework for embedding formative assessment:

1. What is it we expect students to learn?
2. How will we know if they have learned it?
3. How will we respond when they don't learn?
4. How will we respond when they already know it?<sup>52</sup>

Formative assessment provides evidence to students and teachers about students learning. Explicit learning intentions and success criteria are integral to effective formative assessment practices.

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*...it is the specific mind frames that teachers have about their role – and most critically a mind frame within which they ask themselves about the effect they are having on student learning.*

*Fundamentally, the most powerful way to think about a teacher's role is for teachers to see themselves as evaluators of their effects on students.*

*Teachers need to use evidence-based methods to inform, change and sustain these evaluation beliefs about their effect.*

*Hattie 2012<sup>53</sup>*

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There is no one way to assess learning, however, effective assessment should:<sup>54</sup>

- be planned, frequent, ongoing and authentic
- support planning and improve the impact of teaching
- align with explicit learning intentions and success criteria
- inform teachers about student progress and provide guidance for targeted intervention and improvement
- enable provision of timely and constructive feedback
- facilitate peer and student self-assessment
- allow students to demonstrate their skills or knowledge in a variety of ways
- be sensitive and constructive in supporting students to enhance their learning.

Formative assessment should not:

- focus on grading students' work
- be limited to a test at the end of a unit of work, concept or series of lessons
- be invisible to students (used only by the teacher).

When teachers are provided with opportunities to use and interpret assessment data in order to become more responsive to their students' learning needs, the impact is substantive.<sup>55</sup>

## Questions for reflection and discussion

- What formative assessment strategies do you use in your classroom?
- Do formative assessment mechanisms provide you with accurate information to support the provision of quality feedback to students?
- How do you design assessment tasks that are both authentic and differentiated?
- How do you ensure your assessment tasks reflect the learning intentions?

### *AITSL Standards*

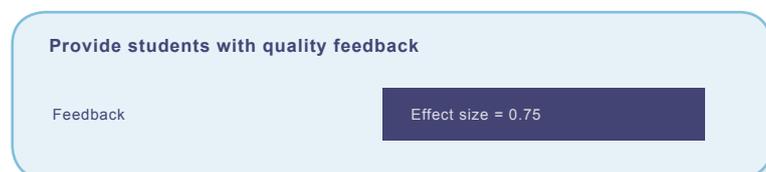
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- 1.5 Differentiate teaching to meet the specific learning needs of students across the full range of abilities
- 2.2 Content selection and organisation
- 2.3 Curriculum, assessment and reporting
- 2.5 Literacy and numeracy strategies
- 3.3 Use teaching strategies
- 5.1 Assess student learning
- 5.3 Make consistent and comparable judgements
- 5.4 Interpret student data
- 6.2 Engage in professional learning and improve practice
- 6.3 Engage with colleagues and improve practice

*...formative assessment is for and as learning, and for teaching.*

Wiliam 2011 <sup>56</sup>

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PRACTICE	
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	• Differentiated teaching and learning
	• Effective pedagogical practices
PERFORMANCE	
<b>An evaluation culture</b>	• An explicit improvement agenda
	• Analysis and discussion of data

# Provide students with quality feedback



Feedback is one of the most important drivers of student success and achievement. It is also an essential component of formative assessment, providing advice and strategies for students to continually improve their performance.

Quality feedback is focused, specific, clear and related to learning intentions, success criteria and students' individual learning goals.<sup>57</sup>

Sharratt and Fullan<sup>58</sup> describe quality feedback as being explicit and ideally used by students to self-assess and develop personal learning goals for improvement. Effective feedback provides students with practical, direct, and useful insights that outline how they can use the success criteria to achieve their intended learning goal.<sup>59</sup>

Studies by Professor Stephen Dinham<sup>60</sup> have indicated that learners want answers to the following four questions:

1. What can I do?
2. What can't I do?
3. How does my work compare with that of others?
4. How can I do better?

It is important to note that many types of feedback received by students have little or no effect on their learning, and may be counterproductive.<sup>61</sup>

Feedback should never be confused with praise or positive reinforcement. Hattie and Timperley<sup>62</sup> note that studies showing the highest effect sizes for feedback involved students receiving information feedback about a task and how to do it more effectively. Lower effect sizes were related to praise, rewards and punishment.

Research by Dweck<sup>63</sup> shows that praising students for the process they have engaged in – the effort they applied, the strategies they used, the choices they made, the persistence they displayed – yields more long-term benefits than telling them they are 'smart' when they succeed.

The timing of feedback is also crucial, and it should never occur before students have had the opportunity to first attempt a problem.<sup>64</sup>

*The most powerful  
single influence  
enhancing  
achievement is  
feedback.*

*Hattie 2009*<sup>65</sup>

Nicol and McFarlane-Dick<sup>66</sup> outline seven principles of quality feedback:

1. Clarify what good performance is
2. Facilitate self-assessment
3. Deliver high quality feedback information
4. Encourage teacher and peer dialogue
5. Encourage positive motivation and self-esteem
6. Provide opportunities to close the gap
7. Use feedback to improve teaching

In order for feedback to be effective, it should inform student self-reflection to enable students to take responsibility for their own learning. This process has the potential to enhance motivation and empower learners.

It is also valuable to initiate and encourage peer-peer feedback and student-teacher feedback. When students practise giving and receiving feedback, they become adept at providing insightful and beneficial feedback about their own work, peers' work and teacher's practice.

To improve student outcomes, feedback should:

- relate directly to the learning intentions, success criteria and assessment
- be timely and ensure students are given time to actively use the feedback to improve their work
- acknowledge strengths and weaknesses and give practical, achievable suggestions for improvement
- encourage self-assessment and empower students to take ownership of their learning
- be factual, objective and cause thinking.<sup>67</sup>

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*If feedback is to be effective it needs to be frequent, constructive and instructive.*

*Dinham 2008*<sup>68</sup>

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## Questions for reflection and discussion

- Are you giving your students explicit feedback about their learning and progress?
- How do you ensure the feedback you provide is timely and used by students to improve their learning?
- Do you provide students with opportunities to give feedback to each other?
- How do you support students to give and receive feedback?

### *AITSL Standards*

- 1.2 Understand how students learn
- 1.4 Strategies for teaching Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students
- 1.5 Differentiate teaching to meet the specific learning needs of students across the full range of abilities
- 3.1 Establish challenging learning goals
- 3.5 Use effective classroom communication
- 3.6 Evaluate and improve teaching programs
- 4.1 Support student participation
- 5.5 Report on student achievement
- 6.4 Apply professional learning and improve student learning

PEOPLE	
<b>Effective partnerships</b>	• School-community partnerships
	• A culture that promotes learning
<b>Strategic management of resources</b>	• An expert teaching team
	• Targeted use of school resources
PRACTICE	
<b>Effective teaching and learning</b>	• Systematic curriculum delivery
	• Differentiated teaching and learning
	• Effective pedagogical practices
PERFORMANCE	
<b>An evaluation culture</b>	• An explicit improvement agenda
	• Analysis and discussion of data

# Set high expectations for student achievement

## Set high expectations for student achievement

Teacher expectations

Effect size = 0.43

Every child can learn, irrespective of the school they attend, where they live, their background or their ability. Setting high expectations for student achievement requires teachers to value students' strengths and differences and to consider these to plan effective learning. This includes finding innovative ways to learn, providing supplementary support, reflecting on best practice and responding to challenges.<sup>69</sup>

Teachers who reap the rewards of high expectations for their students do not simply inform their students that they have high aspirations for them; they also ensure instruction, teaching strategies, learning intentions and classroom management structures are consistent with these high standards.

Effective teachers promote excellence in student achievement by setting ambitious goals, then nurturing a student's desire to achieve those goals on a daily basis.<sup>70</sup> A number of factors influence the ways in which teachers shape high expectations, and how students respond.

A number of studies have arrived at various conclusions about the effect of high expectations on student achievement. One consistent finding, established over decades of research, is that students are more likely to meet expectations than not, regardless of whether these expectations are good, bad, correct, or misguided.

Students are also adept at identifying the degree to which their teachers place different expectations on other students in comparison. High expectation should not be confused with learning goals. The same high expectations should be set for all students, regardless of where they are at in their learning, ensuring learning goals are realised through differentiated classroom instruction.<sup>71</sup>

Hattie's<sup>72</sup> research finds that teachers who identify students as having 'learning difficulties' demonstrate lower expectations of those students than other students not labelled as such.

Hattie's<sup>73</sup> synthesis of numerous analyses found that four factors primarily affect the formation of teacher expectations. These include: input factors, such as gender, age, or ethnicity; output factors such as student behaviour; climate; and feedback (praise or criticism). Interplay of these factors is significant.

Dweck's<sup>74</sup> research on growth mindsets recognises that intellect and achievement can be developed over time, irrespective of a students' background or circumstance. This idea is critical to maximising success, especially for at-risk students who might otherwise believe they are predestined to be less successful. This shift away from a 'fixed mindset' approach, which teaches that intelligence or ability is predetermined, must be implemented by teachers so that teachers' high expectations translate into development, improvement, and achievement, no matter the starting point.<sup>75</sup>

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*Think about your hero. Do you think of this person as someone with extraordinary abilities who achieved with little effort? Now go find out the truth. Find out the tremendous effort that went into their accomplishment—and admire them more.*

**Dweck 2006**<sup>76</sup>

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The value of high expectations in relation to building an engaging school is reinforced in the ACT Engaging Schools Framework.

High-performing teachers and schools:

- set high expectations for learning to challenge and engage their students
- have a strong focus on quality teaching in every classroom and a commitment to professional learning to improve the impact of instruction
- deliver a curriculum that provides all students with a solid foundation in core knowledge, understandings, skills and values while being responsive to individual needs
- actively encourage and support parents to be involved in their children's learning
- foster a genuine collaborative relationship with the school community<sup>77</sup>
- explicitly outline learning intentions, or goals and expectations for students
- design challenges to enhance the learning goals of individual students at specific times<sup>78</sup>
- Ensure students have the skills to meet high expectations.

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*... intellect and achievement can be developed over time, irrespective of a student's background or circumstance.*

*Rae-Dupree 2008 <sup>79</sup>*

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## Questions for reflection and discussion

- How do you reflect on the impact of your teaching?
- How do you set high expectations and challenge your students to reach their full potential?
- Are your expectations about learning communicated effectively? How do you know?

### *AITSL Standards*

- 1.2 Understand how students learn
- 1.3 Students with diverse linguistic, cultural, religious and socioeconomic backgrounds
- 1.4 Strategies for teaching Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students
- 1.6 Strategies to support full participation of students with disability
- 2.5 Literacy and numeracy strategies
- 3.1 Establish challenging learning goals
- 3.3 Use teaching strategies
- 3.6 Evaluate and improve teaching programs
- 3.7 Engage parents/ carers in the educative process
- 4.1 Support student participation
- 4.3 Manage challenging behaviour
- 6.4 Apply professional learning and improve student learning

PEOPLE	
Effective partnerships	• School-community partnerships
	• A culture that promotes learning
Strategic management of resources	• An expert teaching team
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PRACTICE	
Effective teaching and learning	• Systematic curriculum delivery
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# Engage students



The ACT Engaging Schools Framework outlines what schools can do to be more engaging for students. The Framework outlines four underpinning principles and four areas of good practice that have been shown to have a positive impact on engagement.

Classroom management is a critical and complex component in the creation of effective learning environments.<sup>80</sup>

A range of theories, frameworks and models inform effective classroom management practices.<sup>81, 82</sup> Characteristics common to many of these approaches include setting high expectations for behaviour and performance, and clearly communicating these to students.

Class routines should be established quickly each year, including communicating protocols and daily timetables to enable transitions from one activity to another. A classroom is a shared environment; therefore, students should be given opportunities to contribute to daily organisation and responsibilities through class jobs and leadership opportunities. 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 and criteria by which they will be assessed.<sup>83</sup>

Expectations and norms should be co-constructed, negotiated with students, and expressed in positive and succinct language. Joint construction and agreement on norms supports students to self-monitor and encourages them to be accountable and take ownership over their choices.

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*Teacher communication about classroom norms and procedures that is clear and consistent is associated with greater attentiveness, timely task delivery and less disruptive behaviour.*

*Lyons et al 2011<sup>84</sup>*

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Bennett and Smilanich<sup>85</sup> outline four concepts that are employed by effective teachers to create and maintain positive classroom environments:

- **Winning over** – what teachers say and do to maintain and enhance their social relationships with students so that students are inclined to work in partnership with teachers.
- **Positive cohesive bonding** – the strength of student-peer relationships, through the establishment of cooperative learning structures and activities that encourage peer-coaching.
- **Inclusivity** – what teachers do to ensure all students feel welcome and belong, irrespective of race, gender, socio-economic and academic needs.
- **Safe environment** – how students and teachers feel about their sense of self and wellbeing. This includes valuing effort, participation and risk taking through positive and encouraging comments.

Charles<sup>86</sup> describes three strategies effective teachers use to manage student behaviours in positive classroom environments:

- **Preventive** – being mindful of students’ needs, modelling respectful behaviour and explicitly teaching students how to constructively manage their emotions and reactions to situations (e.g. protective behaviours and social and emotional learning programs).
- **Supportive** – positive reinforcement, simple non-verbal and verbal reminders, physical proximity and providing assistance or redirection.
- **Corrective** – maintaining composure, speaking to students calmly and respectfully and giving appropriate and consistent consequences.

It is important that teachers engage in restorative practices should a student’s behaviour result in consequences. This is critical to building and maintaining respectful relationships with and between students.

Canberra public schools have access to a range of expertise and programs to provide additional support for students. School counsellors provide psychological services to help students address educational, social, emotional and behavioural needs, either individually or in groups.<sup>87</sup>

A positive and cooperative classroom environment promotes safety and wellbeing for all and enables students to engage positively in their learning.<sup>88</sup>

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*A great teacher knows me. They know me as a person and how I learn.*

*Harry (Year 6)*

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Effective classroom management looks like:

- students on task and working cooperatively
- explicitly teaching social and emotional skills and protective behaviours
- students actively listening, contributing and questioning appropriately
- prompts and strategies to prevent the escalation of certain behaviours
- reinforcing positive behaviour choices and timely and logical consequences to address less constructive behaviours
- students demonstrating autonomy and regulating their behaviour choices
- repairing and maintaining relationships through student conferencing
- celebrating student achievements and successes
- students taking risks and accepting others differences and opinions.

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*Great teachers  
acknowledge positive  
behaviour and  
manage inappropriate  
behaviour in a timely,  
logical, consistent and  
constructive way.*

*Hill 2011 <sup>89</sup>*

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## Questions for reflection and discussion

- How do you establish class routines and behavioural expectations?
- In what ways are students accountable for their behaviour choices?
- What strategies do you employ to prevent, support and correct challenging behaviours?
- How do you promote and maintain positive relationships and communication in your classroom?
- How do you incorporate social/emotional skills and protective behaviours into the learning program?

### *AITSL Standards*

- 1.2 Understand how students learn
- 1.3 Students with diverse linguistic, cultural, religious and socioeconomic backgrounds
- 1.4 Strategies for teaching Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students
- 1.6 Strategies to support full participation of students with disability
- 3.1 Establish challenging learning goals
- 3.2 Plan, structure and sequence learning programs
- 3.5 Use effective classroom communication
- 4.1 Support student participation
- 4.2 Manage classroom activities
- 4.3 Manage challenging behaviour
- 4.4 Maintain student safety
- 6.2 Engage in professional learning and improve practice
- 6.4 Apply professional learning and improve student learning

PEOPLE	
<b>Effective partnerships</b>	• School-community partnerships
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	• Effective pedagogical practices
PERFORMANCE	
<b>An evaluation culture</b>	• An explicit improvement agenda
	• Analysis and discussion of data

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