

Approaches to Teaching and Learning

Approaches to teaching and learning across the Diploma Programme refers to deliberate strategies, skills and attitudes which permeate the teaching and learning environment. These approaches and tools, intrinsically linked with the learner profile attributes, enhance student learning and assist student preparation for DP assessment and beyond.

Approaches to Teaching: This was the focus of our coffee talk meetings last year. We have outlined below the emphasis of each coffee talk if you did not have an opportunity to attend, in addition to describing each teaching approach in more detail.

1. **Teaching focused on effective teamwork and collaboration.** Within the classroom, how do you allow for collaboration among students? How do you teach collaboration skills? What skills does a student need to be an effective sharer of ideas?

Coffee Talk: Roundtable Discussion focusing on the following questions:

- How often and in what instances do you use collaboration in your lessons?
- How do you set up the parameters for successful collaboration?
- What do you see as the benefits of collaboration?

2. **Teaching differentiated lessons to meet the needs of all learners.** Students walk into our classrooms with a variety of previous experiences and varied skill sets. How do we modify our teaching style and assessments to best meet the needs of this wide variety of student abilities?

Coffee Talk: Roundtable Discussion based on reading of article, "Teach Me, Teach My Brain: A Call for Differentiated Classrooms."

3. **Teaching based on inquiry.** Students learn by asking questions. How do we approach the curriculum to allow for student inquiry? How do we create an environment that invites inquiry from our students?

Coffee Talk: Roundtable Discussion focusing on ToK extensions in each of the subject areas

4. **Teaching developed in local and global contexts.** In order for learning to be long-lasting, students need to make authentic connections to the real world. How do we ensure that these connections are made? Do we allow for reflection to take place to ensure these connections exist for students?

Coffee Talk: Watch a video from Harvard University's Project Zero

(<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A7UnupF-ujk>) and consider the following ideas from a study done by CORD (Center for Occupational Research and Development):

This report describes five strategies, called contextual teaching strategies:

- *Relating – learning in the context of one's life experiences or preexisting knowledge*
- *Experiencing – learning by doing, or through exploration, discovery, and invention*
- *Applying – learning by putting the concepts to use*
- *Cooperating – learning in the context of sharing, responding, and communicating with other learners*
- *Transferring – using knowledge in a new context or novel situation—one that has not been covered in class*

5. **Teaching focused conceptual understanding.** Conceptual learning focuses on broad powerful organizing ideas that have relevance within and across subject areas. They reach beyond national and cultural boundaries. Concepts help to integrate learning, add coherence to the curriculum, deepen disciplinary understanding, build the capacity to engage with complex ideas and allow transfer of learning to new contexts.

Collaborative Learning Visits took place in April. A group of teachers in grade-level teams observed classrooms in each of the six disciplines. Post-observation discussions focused on building a concurrency of skills across the disciplines. What were the connecting concepts and broader ideas that could possibly be utilized to build connectivity?

6. **Teaching informed by assessment (formative and summative)** Added this year, so not addressed in last year's coffee talks. Consider if your assessment practices support the curricular goals and encourage student learning. Think about assessment for learning, not just simply assessment of learning.
<http://www.journeytoexcellence.org.uk/videos/expertspeakers/feedbackonlearningdylanwiliam.asp>