

From the Director General

Teaching is a complex craft. In some ways, it is impossible to capture in a page or two the sophistication of what good teachers do. Yet nothing is more fundamental to achieving our goal of success for every student than high quality teaching. That is why Classroom First places the teacher at the centre of our improvement efforts.

I believe it is important for all teachers in our schools to have a clear understanding of the Department's position in relation to effective teaching practice.

I hope this statement will stimulate discussion at staff meetings and professional development forums, and will help teachers deliver a high quality curriculum to their students.



SHARYN O'NEILL
DIRECTOR GENERAL



The following expresses the aspirations of public school teachers for every one of our students to be well taught.

Having high expectations

Effective teachers strive to motivate and engage all their students in learning rather than simply accepting that some students cannot be engaged and are destined to do poorly.



They believe every student is capable of achieving success at school and they do all they can to find ways of making each student successful.

Effective teachers have high expectations of students in terms of both their standard of learning and their behaviour, and they help their students meet those expectations. They also have high expectations of themselves and their own learning.

Acknowledging individual differences

Effective teachers personalise the learning for their students. They understand that students develop at different rates and that in every classroom there will be a range of student abilities and aptitudes. They accommodate the different needs of students in their class rather than pitch their teaching to the middle, letting some students be bored while others struggle or are unable to do the work.

Effective teachers use techniques that have each student working on tasks that engage and challenge them to achieve their personal best. They understand that students learn best when they are presented with new material in a way that enables them to connect it to what they already understand and know how to do.

Effective teachers also understand that students learn best if their particular culture, background and abilities are acknowledged by the teacher in the way they teach.

Using a range of pedagogies

Effective teachers use techniques that best serve the learning needs of their students.

There are many things that students can learn themselves through discovery, with the teacher structuring the learning to suit. There also are many things that require the teacher to teach in a more direct way.

Students not only learn by being exposed to learning opportunities but they also need to be explicitly taught those things it is important for all students to know. Some students will learn these things quickly and with only minimal direct teaching. Other students will need concerted direct teaching and correction by the teacher before they master the learning required.

Effective teachers help students learn on their own as well as with and from others. They know that students learn best if they are provided with opportunities to learn not only from the teacher but also from other students and from sources outside the school that are now more readily accessible through various forms of technology.

Encouraging student responsibility

Effective teachers teach in a way that encourages students to take greater responsibility for their own learning.

They make sure their students know what the goals of the learning program are; understand how these goals will be assessed; know whether they are on track to achieve success; and are actively involved in evaluating their own learning.

Having mastery of their teaching content

Effective teachers have a thorough knowledge of their subject content and skills. Through this, they inspire in their students a love of learning. They also understand how students best learn concepts, content and skills.

Effective teachers use their knowledge of learning processes to determine which will be most effective to help the particular students in their classes learn successfully.

Providing a safe environment

Effective teachers provide a safe and orderly environment, both physically and emotionally, so students can achieve their potential. They know students learn best if they are in a classroom where they feel safe and confident to attempt new tasks even if at first they are unsure about how to tackle them.



Monitoring progress and providing feedback

Effective teachers closely monitor each student's achievements. This enables them to provide every one of their students with regular feedback on their performance, and gives them valuable information to assess the impact of their teaching.



Effective teachers are in the habit of constantly reflecting on how well they are getting through to their students and searching for better ways of teaching those who are not responding as well as extending those who are achieving well.

Effective teachers understand the standards their students are expected to achieve and use a range of assessment methods to determine the extent to which those standards are being met and to plan the next steps.

Building positive relationships

Effective teachers develop productive relationships with their students – they get to know them and take a particular interest in their overall development and progress. They treat their students with respect and expect the same in return.

Effective teachers work collaboratively to benefit student learning.