

British School of Gran Canaria
Teaching and Learning
Document



THE BRITISH SCHOOL OF GRAN CANARIA

TEACHING AND LEARNING DOCUMENT

1. Scope

This document includes key teaching initiatives within the Secondary School and should be viewed as a practical and active guide to high quality teaching expected across all subjects. The document endeavours to clarify the foundations upon which quality learning can take place, but teachers are actively encouraged to add to these expectations, sharing and collaborating to extend and improve teaching within our school.

2. Rationale

The BSGC is committed to its Vision:

To recognise and release the unique potential of each student, equipping them with the skills, knowledge and values to meet the demands of an ever changing world, inspire social responsibility and a commitment to lifelong learning.

The primary vehicle for enabling this vision to come to fruition is the teaching and learning that takes place on a daily basis in our classrooms. At The British School we are committed to providing high quality teaching at all times and, through a clear understanding of the school's needs and the student body we serve, as well as from studying and following international educational research, we have identified key elements that are central to the school's teaching.

The school is a British School based in Spain and draws teachers and students from a wealth of countries, cultures and educational backgrounds and systems. This diversity is a strength of the school but within teaching, it is important the certain parameters and norms are established as the bedrock of quality, high level teaching expected within The British School of Gran Canaria. This policy is the statement of the school's requirements and expectations in this regard.

3. BSGC Teaching Requirements

As identified above, there are certain aspects that we, at the British School hold as central to all successful and effective teaching. These are required from teaching staff within our school and are set out below.

1. Planning

In order to have effective planning, that considers all students, it is essential to have well thought out learning objectives and differentiated success criteria; these planning components are BSGC pre-requisites.

Learning Objectives – clear and precise outcomes to be achieved, in general terms, by all students.

When setting objectives, it is important that there is a clear distinction between what students will *do* in the lesson and what they will *learn*. Beginning a learning objective with the words “**To be able to...**” is a simple and effective way of ensuring your objective really is a learning objective and not a description of the activity. If you cannot use “To be able to...” the following stems may be helpful: **students will...know that/ develop/ understand how / why/ be aware of**

Learning objectives may be specific to a particular lesson or may extend over several lessons.

Success Criteria – these break down the objective in differentiated learning outcomes against which students’ learning can be evaluated. Building appropriate success criteria into short-term planning is vital to ensure a focus on **learning as opposed to activities**. When planning consider:

- What will my students have learned and what will they be able to do at the end of the lesson that they **could not do before**?
- How will they **demonstrate** that they have met the intentions?
- How can I make it clear to students what **good quality** work will look like (and avoid simply focussing on task completion)?

Throughout the lesson, **success criteria** should be shared with students so that they always know what they need to do in order to demonstrate success. Success criteria should:

- be based on the **objectives**
- shape the teaching and modelling and provide the **students’ focus** while they are working
- provide the key focus for all **feedback** and assessment
- have three levels – Gold, Silver, Bronze – aimed at More Able and differentiated downward to include two more categories. Bloom’s taxonomy and terminology is useful in developing precise and appropriate criteria.

Displaying success criteria can provide a **visual prompt** for students and teachers during the course of the lesson or sequence of lessons.

It can also be very useful to **involve students** in setting the success criteria. For example, ask the students ‘what will you need to do to demonstrate to me that you have met the intentions for this task/lesson?’

Learning objectives and Success Criteria are expected for all lessons.

Students should be clearly aware of objectives and success criteria and these should be recorded by teaching staff for future sharing.

Guidelines for staff regarding planning requirements are listed in Appendix 1.

ELLI – The Effective Lifelong learning Inventory (ELLI) is an initiative that was devised by Bristol University to identify the characteristics of life-long learners. The seven “dispositions” that characterize a life-long learner are as follows:

Changing and learning	I am continually changing and improving as a learner
Critical curiosity	I like to find out the way something is.
Meaning making	I can make connections between things I am learning and things I already know.
Creativity	I can come up with good ideas that help me to learn more easily.
Learning relationships	I can improve my learning by sharing my ideas with others.
Strategic awareness	If I get stuck with a learning task I can usually think of some ideas to get around the problem.
Resilience	I can keep working to understand a problem even if I find it difficult.

ELLI dispositions should be explicitly taught to students as part of the curriculum. Designated ELLI weeks throughout the year allow teachers to plan to incorporate specific lessons aimed at the development of a particular ELLI disposition, as well as drawing students’ attention to tasks that help them to work on dispositions in day-to- day lessons. Teachers should incorporate ELLI into their schemes of work to identify when certain skills will be taught. In addition to this, KS3 students will complete online ELLI profiles which later provide a reference for students to reflect on and talk about their strengths and areas for development as learners.

2. Feedback

Formative feedback is vital for learners to know where they are in their learning, where they need to go and how best to get there. Also for teachers to assess students’ progress and use findings to plan next steps in lessons effectively.

Format for giving feedback

All teachers to use: WWW.EBI.COM feedback stickers to ensure students have a consistent experience across the school and are clear about their role/responsibility in the marking process. These should be used for all classes. Periodic ‘Book Looks’ will take place throughout the Year to ensure that these are being used consistently.

This stands for:

WWW –What Went Well

Based on what the teacher is marking for, what skills the student is demonstrating/progress of skills from last piece of work marked. As feedback is formative, grades do not have to be given.

EBI –Even Better If

What does the student need to do to improve the quality of her work so she/he can make progress. This should be task based.

.COM – Student Comment/the students' response to the teacher's marking

For feedback and marking to be purposeful, students need to respond to it in a meaningful way. This should include:

- Correcting errors identified
- Answering specific questions
- Redoing a section/piece of work
- Considering how they will improve/what strategy they will use?
- Considering what they need to do/to do list
- In their next piece of work, acting on the feedback

If students have not responded straight after a teacher has marked their work, they can write .com in the margin of where they have addressed their EBI. This will make the student response easier to identify for the teacher.

3. Opportunities to Fly

These are discrete, planned moments where learning is open-ended or extremely challenging. Opportunities to fly (OTF) are included in teachers' planning at least twice per academic year for each year group in each subject. They can last from part of a lesson to a series of lessons but are not set as homework tasks.

They allow our More Able (MA) learners in particular to take a step into the unknown and to enhance their confidence, utilise higher order thinking skills and develop creative solutions when the outcome is unknown.

Guidelines for staff regarding OTF are listed in Appendix 2.

4. Choice, Challenge and Collaboration

The inclusion of the 3Cs in BSGC lessons is held as essential if we are to successfully reach our More Able Learners. Teachers should be making considered decisions as to how to include the 3Cs into introductory openers, main activities and plenary sessions; opportunities that enable all students to think outside-the-box and work on higher order skills.

Appendix A

Schemes of Work which Stretch and Challenge

All BSGC schemes of work should refer to **Learning Objectives** and **Success Criteria** for each lesson.

Learning Objectives

A learning objective describes what learners should **know, understand** or **be able to do** by the end of the lesson or a series of lessons.

Learning Objectives that focus on Knowledge

Thinking about the different kinds of knowledge that are required in a particular situation will help teachers design their learning objectives. For example

- knowledge *about* a particular topic (*able to identify different types of energy*)
- knowledge of *how* something is done, of the steps involved in producing something (*Be able to construct a pie graph*)
- knowledge of *why* something happens (*be able to explain why rabbits are an ecological disaster*)
- knowledge of *what* causes something to happen (*be able to describe what causes thunderstorms*)

Learning Objectives that focus on Understanding

Understanding builds on knowledge and requires some kind of processing. For instance, a learner might be able to list the causes of an historical event - thereby showing knowledge of them - but understanding requires analysis and, perhaps, interpretation.

Understanding, then, is of a higher cognitive order than knowledge. For example

- *be able to understand the causes of an historical event*
- *understand the effects of diet on health*
- *understand how persuasive language can position the reader to agree with the author*
- *be able to understand how the internet can be used for research purposes*
- *understand what happens when our bodies consume carbohydrates*
- *understand why X causes Y.*

Learning Objectives that focus on Skills

Learning objectives that focus on skills always start with the words 'to be able to' followed by a verb. For example,

- *to be able to write an account*
- *to be able to solve a problem using more than one strategy*
- *to be able to work as part of a team*
- *to be able to identify persuasive strategies used by the author or an argument*
- *to be able to experiment with a variety of media in order to achieve a stated effect*

Often learning intentions that focus on skills will also imply the acquisition of certain knowledge or understanding. For instance, to be able to write a report, learners must have knowledge of the structures and features of a report.

Success criteria

These are measures used to determine whether and how well a learner has met the learning objective that is how the learning will be assessed. The focus is on **learning** as opposed to activities.

What will my students have learned and what will they be able to do at the end of the lesson that they **could not do before**?

How can I make it clear to students what **good quality** work will look like (and avoid simply focussing on task completion)?

Success Criteria should have three levels – **Gold, Silver, Bronze** – aimed at More Able and differentiated downward to include two more categories.

Effective Success Criteria

- are written in language that learners understand.
- are specific to an activity.
- provide a **scaffold** and focus for learners while engaged in the activity.
- are used as the basis for teacher **feedback**, peer feedback and self-assessment.
- focus on the learning and not on aspects of behaviour (eg paying attention, contributing, meeting deadlines etc.).
- are supported, where necessary, by exemplars or work samples which make their meaning clear (WAGOLs – what a good one looks like)

Success Criteria are not:

- a completed worksheet
- a finished assignment
- 10 questions
- A poster
- a PowerPoint slide show

(These are the means by which students demonstrate the success criteria; they are not success criteria in themselves)

WAGOLL planning

Learning objective: *To know about the structure of the Earth*

Success criteria:

- **Gold** *choose 2 layers and compare and contrast their characteristics using key words and connectives*
- **Silver** *add to your diagram at least one of the characteristics of each of the layers so you can describe what it is like*
- **Bronze** *draw and label a diagram to show the structure of the earth, name the layers and sequence them into the correct order*

Appendix B

Opportunities to Fly

These are discrete, planned moments where learning is open-ended or extremely challenging. Opportunities to fly (OTF) are included in teachers' planning at least twice per academic year for each year group in each subject. They can last from part of a lesson to a series of lessons but are not set as homework tasks.

They allow our More Able (MA) learners in particular to take a step into the unknown and to enhance their confidence, utilise higher order thinking skills and develop creative solutions when the outcome is unknown. In order to achieve this staff should aim to incorporate the following elements into their OTF:

1. Creativity

OTF should encourage creative thinking or encourage students to come up with their own solutions or ideas to given scenarios. Creativity is not about paintbrushes and poems. More Able students tend to be out-of-the-box learners, so they often need alternative ways to process new concepts and information. Creativity is a way of thinking and an attitude.

Therefore, OTF may not have a known outcome but focus on finding solutions or contain a problem solving element. The emphasis is on the process and not the outcome.

2. Challenge

OTF promote:

- Higher Levels of Thinking: The methods used should stress use rather than acquisition of information; students should apply information to new situations, use it to develop new ideas, evaluate its appropriateness, and use it to develop new products.
- Open-Endedness: Activities for which there is no predetermined right answer and which stimulate further thinking and investigation.
- Discovery: Activities in which students use their inductive reasoning processes to discover patterns, ideas and underlying principles.
- Evidence of Reasoning: Students should be asked to express not only their conclusions but also the reasoning that led to them.

3. Choice

Whenever possible, students should be given freedom to choose what to investigate and how to study in order to increase their interest in learning. For More Able learners, choice allows them to delve deeper into a subject. For other students choice can help to provide options which increase confidence and reduce frustration.

4. Collaboration

For MA learners, working with peers of **a similar level of ability** is critical:

- *In Pairs:* Students who need more challenges could work together to share their ideas on a task that is more complex or involved.
- *In Groups:* Let MA students work together in areas where they need the stimulation of intellectual peers.
- *Across Classes:* Combine More Able students across classes, if possible, collaborating with colleagues.
- The Internet also provides ways for students to collaborate with peers from other countries who share the same interests.

5. Curiosity

MA students can be given a chance to explore their interests; follow their curiosity. Any opportunity to draw on student interest will greatly aid their growth and learning. Student engagement propels authentic learning experiences. Teachers play a critical role not only in encouraging student interests and linking them to the curriculum, but also in helping them to discover new interests.

After an Opportunity to Fly

Self-assessment helps students to reflect on what they have learned. Writing a paragraph about what they take away from a lesson can help them to see their progress and own it. MA learners need this kind of visual record. Becoming conscious of what they know and how they came to know it makes them more aware of their learning process.

Having a success criteria list for a project helps students monitor their progress. For example, a list for a project on the science of flight could include the following criteria:

1. My project draws on at least two books and two websites.
2. My final project includes at least one of da Vinci's designs and explains what made it aerodynamic and what its limitations were as a flying machine.
3. My airplane design addresses the concepts of weight, lift, thrust, and drag.