

ACTIVATION OF LEARNING

Rationale

As *connected teachers* at BUEEC, we know that the foundation of high quality teaching and learning involves explicitly giving students the knowledge and skills they need to engage in a curious, productive, inquiring, challenging and experiential environment.

We believe that curiosity is the engine that drives learning. When students experience curiosity, there is increased activity in parts of their brains that:

- comprehend information and anticipate ideas, and
- link ideas with positive emotions and value the new knowledge. (Munro, 2015)

“Education is what survives when what has been learned has been forgotten”.
(B.F. Skinner)

Elaboration

Connected teachers at BUEEC believe that to educate, inspire and empower connected students we must:

- Employ high quality, evidence-based teaching practices that focus on engaging, challenging and enabling each student to experience success.
- Provide and foster experiential learning experiences that make curriculum content:
 - Relatable; increases the effectiveness of learning;
 - Links theory to practice; increases student engagement;
 - Assists in the retention of information and leads to the development of skills for lifelong learning.

“Tell me and I forget. Teach me and I remember. Involve me and I learn”.
(Benjamin Franklin)

- Provide authentic learning experiences to enhance the development of knowledge and skills through connecting the student to the specific concept or place. In this way:
 - The most engaging, effective, and enduring learning experiences in the context of learning in natural environments, occur through experience-based rather than teacher-directed strategies. (Ballantyne and Packer, 2009)
 - Students that engage in learning experiences outside of the classroom report having higher levels of motivation, recall the course material more vividly, and have improved academic performance in the class. (Smith and Fedesco, 2020)
 - Authenticity automatically gives relevance to the learning journey; relevance encourages engagement and enthusiasm, which should bring about meaningful learning.
 - We teach our students to be adaptable and creative thinkers who are able to utilise the skills and knowledge they do have to create new solutions to problems.
 - Giving students the opportunity to learn through authentic, real life, relevant learning experiences, we are giving them the ability to apply their learning, to learn through doing, to see their abilities, to adapt and change, and to form the habits required to do this successfully in their lives beyond school. (ACEL, 2016)
- Set learning goals and establish high expectations that are visible.
 - If students understand what they are to learn during a given lesson, they are better able to determine how well they are doing and what they need to improve. (Marzano, 2017)
- Make available effective learning strategies, that have a clear purpose and are accessible to all our students, which allows them to be better positioned to become powerful learners.

- Provide tasks that are purposeful, clearly defined, differentiated and challenging.
- Scaffold tasks to ensure that each student can work towards a successful performance of understanding.
- Practice effective questioning and facilitate dialogue and discussion, where students see the learning journey as one taken together. In this way, students can reflect on and adjust their thinking about the choices, strategies and actions taken. *Connected teachers* know that:
 - Questions are important devices for energising and directing learning.
 - Questions that ask students to explain, comment, give their opinion or evaluate are more likely to stimulate long answers.
 - Curiosity is driven by questions about new information.
 - Questions cause thinking and elicit evidence of learning.
 - Teachers using higher order questioning have greater impact (effect size=0.46). (Hattie, 2009)
- Develop and maintain a culture of curiosity by:
 - Using extended wait time when asking questions.
 - Encouraging students to answer questions, even if they find it difficult by letting students know that best guesses and taking risks is encouraged.
 - Modelling making guesses and explicitly managing the process of guessing intelligently.
- Create an atmosphere of collaborative learning where students, centre and visiting teachers investigate, analyse ideas and issues and evaluate information. In this way, students are encouraged to become curious, creative and critical thinkers who are in control of and connected to the development of their knowledge, skills and understanding.
- Encourage and scaffold peer collaboration.
 - This approach has been shown to be effective, and allow students to share strengths and develop weaker skills.
 - Students working in groups that fosters peer learning and allows them to cooperatively solve problems using previously acquired knowledge and skills.
 - Cooperative learning vs. individual work - 0.59 (Hattie, 2009)
- Provide immediate and targeted feedback to students that is aligned with the success criteria.
 - Effective feedback also depends on the quality and clarity of the learning goals and modelling provided.
 - Use multiple assessment methods to provide rapid, formative interpretations to students and to make the necessary adjustments to teaching therefore maximising learning.
- Recognise the importance of our own learning journey and utilise and leverage the expertise of outside agencies to develop our own knowledge and understanding, but also allow students to access this specialisation.