Irvine Royal Academy

Learning and Teaching Policy

BELIEVE IN BETTER

'All Irvine Royal Academy pupils will feel welcomed and loved'

AMBITION   *RESPECT*   *RESPONSIBILITY*

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Introduction

School Vision

To provide an equitable and excellent learning environment for all pupils which enables them to maximise their full potential and support them into appropriate and sustainable destinations.

Irvine Royal Academy is committed to excellence and equity through the provision of the highest quality of experiences for all our pupils. Learning and teaching is at the centre of this aim, and our teachers are crucial to helping our pupils reach their goals.

This policy has been written by our school's learning and teaching working group, after consultation with pupils and teachers. This policy sets out how we as a school plan to achieve and sustain excellence; it draws upon current educational thinking and professional development to ensure teachers are supported in raising our pupils' attainment and achievement.

This policy sets out to highlight the principles that underpin effective learning and teaching and identifies the roles and responsibilities of those involved. It sets out to promote, within our learning and teaching, active and independent learners who have the opportunity to develop higher order thinking skills and whose learning is within a contextualised setting. It recognises the importance of knowing what is to be learned, how learners can measure success and the importance of formative feedback between pupils, peers and teachers to support pupils' development.

Aims

- To maintain a positive learning environment in which all pupils have the opportunity to achieve their potential in a wide range of learning activities.
- To support the development of excellent learning and teaching in a range of contexts in which the contributions of all staff and pupils are valued.
- To set out practice that promotes self-evaluation from staff and pupils in order to promote dialogue in order to reflect upon, improve and share best practice.

Rationale

Curriculum for Excellence is the policy that sets out the development and future of our education system. It promotes the development of knowledge and transferrable skills as well as preparing students for the changing world of the 21st century. CfE focuses on the development of the four capacities - successful learners; confident individuals; responsible citizens and effective contributors.

CfE – Through their learning experiences, young people should:

- Be encouraged to set high expectations and develop their confidence and self-esteem (confident individuals)
- Develop the attributes and capacities to make valuable contributions in society (effective contributors)
- Be aware of their rights and responsibilities, core values in society - and have opportunities to make informed choices and considered judgements (responsible citizens)
- Experience success in their learning, with differentiated support as appropriate (successful learners)

Under CfE it is the responsibility of teachers to develop pupils' literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. Young people should be supported in their learning style and education should provide learners with a range of skills, techniques and strategies to be life-long learners. Pupils should be able to take responsibility for their own learning and be able to work individually or as part of a group. Learners who have confidence in their ability to be leaders of their own learning will be motivated to succeed, and this will contribute to focussed, on task learning. In essence young people should develop positive attitudes to work, acquire knowledge and understanding and develop the key skills that will help them succeed in life. This policy supports other policies, those being, Positive Relationships, Self Evaluation, Tracking, Monitoring and Interventions.

What Makes an Excellent Lesson

START OF THE LESSON:

- All students are greeted by teacher outside the door and welcomed into the room.
- All students remove their outdoor clothing.
- Registration completed.
- Clear learning intentions are shared and displayed/referred to throughout lesson, *can* be written in class jotters.
- Success criteria should be established and where possible, differentiated.
- LI and SC linked to specific skills for Learning, Life and Work.
- Starter activity displayed and easily accessible to all learners' abilities.

MIDDLE OF THE LESSON:

- Pupils engaged in planned differentiated tasks which meet all learners' needs, enabling them to make progress and achieve success in every lesson.
- Tasks enable students to develop Skills for Learning, Life and Work.
- AifL strategies are employed to help support learning as appropriate.
- Progress is measured against success criteria at appropriate points in the lesson and learning intention acknowledged throughout.
- Feedback is effective, positive and consistent.
- Opportunities are created for working with others.
- Opportunities are created for working independently.
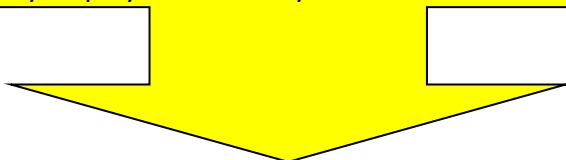- ICT is used to enhance learning where appropriate.

END OF THE LESSON:

- Plenary session creating opportunity to reinforce key points through effective questioning.
- Use of AifL strategies to facilitate reviewing of progress in line with success criteria.
- Homework set (where applicable) and "Show my Homework" utilised.
- Teacher and students aware of working routine to 'pack away' materials and leave classroom in good order for next class.
- Students 'tuck chairs in' and leave classroom in orderly manner.

Key Features of an Excellent Lesson

START OF THE LESSON:
- Clear learning intentions are shared and displayed/referred to throughout lesson, *can* be written in class jotters.
- Success criteria should be established and differentiated.
- LI and SC linked to specific skills for Learning (HOT skills, Life and Work (Meta-Skills)
- Starter activity displayed and easily accessible to all learners' abilities.

MIDDLE OF THE LESSON:
- AifL strategies are employed to help support learning as appropriate.
- Progress is measured against success criteria at appropriate points in the lesson and learning intention acknowledged throughout.
- Feedback is effective, positive and consistent.
- Opportunities are created for working with others.
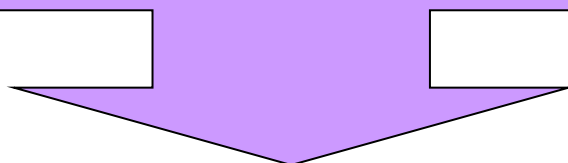
END OF THE LESSON:
- Plenary session creating opportunity to reinforce key points through effective questioning.
- Use of AifL strategies to facilitate reviewing of progress in line with success criteria.
- Homework set (where applicable) and Google Classroom utilised.

Structure of a Lesson – IRVINE ROYAL ACADEMY

SLIPP

- **S**tarter
- **L**earning **I**ntention and Success Criteria
- **P**ace and challenge
- **P**lenary

STARTER
Why is a starter important?

- Gives students a focus the moment they enter the room.

- Refreshes prior knowledge and bridges learning from previous lessons into the current one.

- Starter activities can be particularly effective when they become part of the agreed routine of each lesson.

- Supports positive relationships and class management.

- A good lesson starter can get your students engaged, excited about a topic and motivated for learning.

- Lesson starters can also be used as a helpful recap of what was learnt in the last lesson or covered for homework.

Key features of a starter

- Brief. (approx. 10 mins *or less*)

- Pace.

- Designed to engage and to focus attention.

- Inclusive – accessible for all learners.

- Motivational – designed to offer early success in the lesson.

LEARNING INTENTIONS

Why are learning intentions important?

- They ensure that teachers and pupils are clear about the purpose of the lesson before it begins.

- They provide a very useful signpost for pupils and teachers against which progress can be checked.

> *"Ensuring that all students know what quality work looks like has a profound impact on the attainment gap."* Dylan Wiliam:

SUCCESS CRITERIA

Why are success criteria important?

- Not all students have the same ideas as their teachers about what they are meant to be doing in the classroom. Some students already know what successful work looks like, others do not, so it is important to make clear to learners what is required.

- Sharing the learning intentions keeps young people motivated and focused on the learning as opposed to the task or activity. Success criteria lets pupils know exactly how their work will be judged and ensure meaningful feedback related directly to the learning. Together learning intention and success criteria encourage greater independence and a sense of responsibility for learning.

When planning success criteria, 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)?

DIFFERENTIATED SUCCESS CRITERIA

Wherever possible, it is a good idea to include differentiated success criteria

- For example, using **'must, should, could',** or '**all, most, some'.**

For example:

Consider the learning intention 'To know about the structure of the Earth'

Possible differentiated success criteria: -

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

Bloom's can be useful here in that it may guide you in deciding the nature of the outcome you are expecting e.g. all students expected to 'describe' their K and U, most expected to include an element of 'explain' and some may be asked to 'justify' their reasoning.

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 intentions
- shape the teaching and modelling and provide the students' focus while they are working
- provide the key focus for all feedback and assessment
- 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?'

Intentions vs Criteria

In planning lessons, we should consider the distinction between:

- Lesson intentions (What will the students be learning?)
- Success Criteria (What will the students be doing? How will achievement be demonstrated by the students?)
- N.B. When considering the difference between intentions and outcomes, some teachers find it helpful to think in terms of WALT (We Are Learning To...) and WILF (What I am Looking For...)

MAIN BODY OF THE LESSON

- It helps to provide clear and specific instructions and expectations (as to materials and activities).

- In this phase, pupils can be encouraged to make the new learning their own, perhaps by applying it or re-stating it. Pupils might work in groups, pairs, individually, or in a mixture of all three, depending on how you have decided is best to meet the Learning Objectives.

PACE AND CHALLENGE

- When there is no sense of urgency children (and adults) will take their time therefore explicit timings for tasks should be set. *(Timer could be set on Smart Board)*

Ideas to promote pace and challenge

- Have high expectations. Research shows that if teachers have higher expectations of their pupils, they will do better. Teacher expectations are a self-fulfilling prophecy.

- Use a mixture of class lessons and paired or group working.

- Use a mystery approach to learning – don't tell pupils too much, give them clues.

- Devise team challenges.

- Turn pupils into teachers.

- Consider moving children to the next level before they are ready. Spending time practising work at the level children have already mastered can actually make it more difficult for them to move onto the next level.

- Use recall questions sparingly. Look for alternatives to recall questions such as: 2/3 minute self-marked test, have key points displayed before lesson starts, put up key points but build in errors and ask class to spot the mistakes.

- Sequence questions to offer a progressive challenge – move from recall/descriptive questions to questions that require basic understanding and explanation (What do we mean by? Can you explain why?)

- Then to questions that require synthesis, evaluation (What is likely to? Which is better and why?)

- Create a self-motivating climate in the classroom – set high challenges which demonstrate belief in their ability, get to know pupils individually so can set goals

which are challenging but not beyond reach make pupils aware of their real strengths by providing quality feedback.

- Set strict deadlines and time limits.

Ideas to promote pace and challenge

The Challenge Toolkit

http://mikegershon.com/resources/

BRAIN BREAKS

- A brain break is a short period of time when we change up the routine/topic/activity of the lesson to stimulate the brain.
- When presented with new material and complicated topics, we need to be focused and calm.
- Brain breaks do take some time out of class, but they can improve the efficiency of both teachers and learners.

We can use brain breaks to positively impact our emotional states and learning. "They refocus our brain with either stimulating or quieting practices that generate increased activity in the prefrontal cortex, where problem solving and emotional regulation occur." Dr. Lori Desautels, "Energy and Calm: Brain Breaks and Focused-Attention Practices"
https://www.edutopia.org/blog/brain-breaks-focused-attention-practices-lori-desautels

Ideas for Brain Breaks

Brain Breaks

http://mikegershon.com/resources/

PLENARY

Why is a plenary important?

- It can be tempting to skip the plenary, particularly if timing is tight, but it serves an important function because they help pupils to understand and remember what has been learned creating a sense of achievement, gain and completion

- For the teacher, a plenary provides an opportunity to assess learning and plan accordingly

> *Muijs and Reynolds (Effective Teaching: Evidence And Practice 2001): "Effective teachers experience fewer problems with ending the lesson through methods such as planning and pacing the lesson to leave sufficient time for activities at the end."*

Key features of a plenary?

- A short activity at the end of a lesson which is generally some kind of evaluative activity of what happened during the lesson

- Refers back to and consolidates learning intentions stated at the beginning of the lesson

- Puts the learning in context, by linking it both to prior learning and to the coming stages

- Helps you judge the next steps – important in AifL and in enabling planning of subsequent lessons

- Excellent plenaries will help pupils identify not only what they learned but also how they have learned it (metacognition)

Ideas for Plenaries

Plenaries On A Plate

http://mikegershon.com/resources/

ASSESSMENT IS FOR LEARNING (AIFL) Strategies

Examples of work, to communicate expectations:

As well as providing clear instructions, it can also be useful to give pupils examples of work, both high quality and low quality. Have pupils "assess" these pieces of work and identify the strengths and steps for improvement in each, prior to starting their own work as when they notice mistakes in the work of others, they are less likely to make the same mistakes in their own work. Similarly, examples can be issued after pupils have completed a piece of work, again have them "assess" this piece of work and then feedback on their own work, identify strengths and next steps, allowing them to plan for improvement.

No hands up, except to ask a question/ Cold calling

Pose a question to the class; allow appropriate thinking time before selecting a pupil to answer. 'Shoulder partner' time could also be adopted. Although it is best to give pupils the impression that this selection is random, pupils should be carefully chosen to give a response depending on the difficulty of the question, allowing differentiation by question type. Generally, students only raise their hands when they are confident they have the correct answer and it tends to be the same pupils who regularly do this. Pupils can raise their hands if they wish to ask a question. Students should not be allowed to shout out answers.

Lollipop sticks
Teacher uses lollipop sticks/ random name selector on smartboard to choose pupil to answer question. Although there is the impression of randomness in choice, teacher can select another pupil without class knowing if the one chosen is not appropriate for the question posed.

Show me boards for answers

Use of show me boards for answering questions- you can see answer but others in class can't. Allows teacher to gauge understanding and
takes away fear of pupils giving wrong answer in front of whole class.

Peer feedback

This can be effective using the "Two Stars and a Wish" approach. (Two positive features and one area for improvement). Quite often pupils can be tougher on one-another than the teacher would be and they can be more likely to act upon feedback from peers than they would that given by teachers.
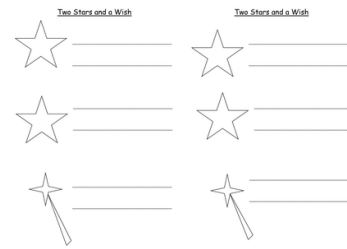
Peer marking
Have pupils peer mark past papers with official SQA marking schemes. This could 'de-mystify' the marking of papers as pupils can see clearly what markers are looking for and also allow them to reflect on their own responses in relation to what others have written.

Self-assessment

Pupils use highlighters to identify where they have met success criteria and decide themselves where they could improve. Again, using the "Two stars and a wish" approach.

Beat the teacher

Pupils are given out a completed piece of work, which as well as having correct answers, also has mistakes, or statements, some of which correct and others incorrect, displayed on the board. Pupils are given time to detect the correct answers and the mistakes. Alternatively, this can be done as a quiz, teacher V pupils and score displayed on the board.

> *Vienna is the present-day European capital city that was divided in two by a guarded concrete wall from 1961 until 1989*
>
> *Margaret Thatcher was the first female Prime Minister of the UK*
>
> *The Great Fire of London took place in 1466*

Basketball discussion

Teacher starts by asking a pupil a question, then a different pupil is selected to check if they agree with the answer given by the first pupil. A third pupil will then explain why the answer is right or wrong and then this can continue with questions like, How? Why? When? How long? Etc. Depending on the subject this can be useful when engaging pupils who are reluctant to participate in class discussion, as well as promoting Higher Order Thinking Skills and allowing differentiation based on the type/nature of questions.

Carousel Questions using Desks
Each group writes a question related to the topic on a desk. Each group moves on to answer the question on the next desk. They then write another question and the process continues.

Exit pass

Pupils are given post-it notes or any form of exit pass at the end of a lesson. Alternatively, pupils can be given a boarding pass when they enter the classroom which could have learning intentions and success criteria and at the end of the lesson pupils could write what they have learned. This can be used in a range of ways, such as:

- Check students' understanding by having them summarise key points from the lesson
- Verify that students can solve a problem or answer a significant question based on the lesson
- Have students ask questions they still have about the lesson
- See if students can apply the content in a new way

Exit passes can be as simple and straightforward as Red/ Amber/ Green for understanding.
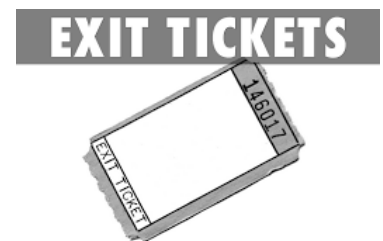
Traffic lights for support
Pupils are given Red/ Amber/ Green cards to display while working. This allows teacher to monitor understanding and focus support. It additionally facilitates peer support (Green can support a Red). Quieter pupils may be more likely to display a Red or Amber card rather than put their hand up to ask for help.

At the end of the lesson pupils return their work to colour coded trays (R/A/G) to show how well they understood work covered.

COOPERATIVE LEARNING

Speed dating

When pupils have learned about a topic this can be a useful revision activity or can be based on set questions. Pupils are given a set time during which they compare notes with another pupil in the class, taking down any information they do not already have/share ideas. Another way of using speed dating is to start a new topic to introduce key words/terms. Pupils are issued a worksheet with key terms/phrases/words they must understand for the topic they are learning about. Each pupil/pair/group (depending on class size and preferred outcome) is given a definition of one of the words/terms and they must "speed date" their class mates to find out the meaning of the other words/terms on the list.

Arrange pupils so they are sitting across from one another and display a countdown timer. Have pupils move 3-5 times, how long they spend with another pupil will depend on the nature of topic, etc.

Examples of Classroom Movement
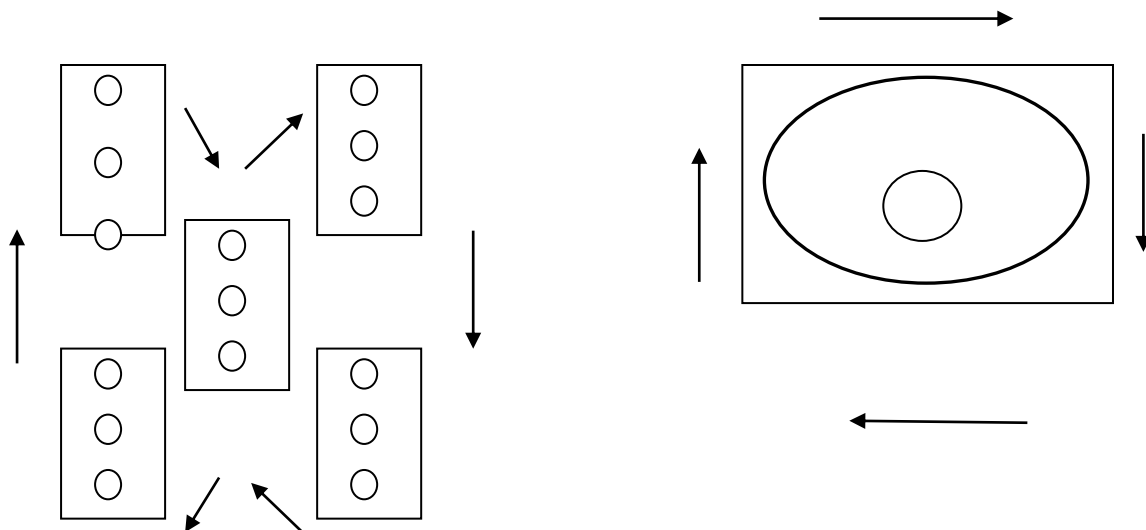
Think Pair Share

T: (Think) Teachers begin by asking a specific question about a topic. Students "think" about what they know or have learned about the topic.

P: (Pair) Each student should be paired with another student or a small group.

S: (Share) Students share their thinking with their partner. Teachers expand the "share" into a whole-class discussion. Teacher could write findings on the board, etc.

Assigning roles

Assigning roles to give pupils to facilitate them taking responsibility.

Can be based on individual abilities within group

- Scribe
- Spokesperson
- Timekeeper
- Chair
- Envoy/Representative

Establish group goals which can be reflected on and assessed afterwards.

Strategic grouping with a mixture of more and less able.

'Jigsaw' group work

Each pupil should be in a group, it is recommended that you do team-building tasks with them to ensure they are comfortable with their groups and have a "voice" at the table.

Number pupils 1-4.
The numbers correspond to the numbered pupils, for example, pupil number 1 will be researching 1. View on when an embryo becomes a person.

Pupils will leave their original group and all of the number 1s will go to one table, 2s to another and so on; this is the "Expert Group. At the expert tables, pupils should be issued with notes on the area they are researching, and they could be asked to choose a set number of points from the notes, which will be written into their square on the grid. Pupils then feedback their respective notes to original group, and all pupils can complete their girds.

Pre-printed sheets could be issued to each pupil or ask pupils to draw grids in their jotters, for example;

1. View on when an Embryo becomes a "Person".	2. Arguments supporting the use of Embryos in Stem Cell Research.
3. Arguments against using Embryos in Stem Cell Research	4. Religious and Non-Religious views on using Embryos in Stem Cell Research

Skills for Learning, Life and Work – SURVIVE AND THRIVE IN A 21ST CENTURY WORLD.

The Career Education Standard sets out how pupils learn and apply skills as part of CfE. It believes that all children and young people are entitled to opportunities for developing skills relevant to learning, life and work.

It reinforces that within our lessons it is important that children and young people are aware of, and understand, the value of the, skills that they are developing. Teachers and learners should reflect together on their progress in the range of skills that they consider to be important in their learning, lives and work.

Within the aspect of the lesson relevant to the sharing of Success Criteria we can use the ''Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOT) poster and the *"Meta-Skills"* poster to relate the learning of the lesson to skills that will be developed within the lesson. It provides an opportunity for teachers and our learners at the start of lessons to identify the skills for life, learning and work. It also allows us in the plenary section of the lesson to allow the class to feedback on when, how they used these areas.

Focussing on these skills benefits learners as they:

- Allow pupils to think about these important skills in relevant ways

- Encourage pupils to develop these skills in familiar and unfamiliar contexts

- Give pupils opportunities to lead their learning

- Identify their strengths and next steps

Staff can incorporate this into their practice in a range of ways:

- Lesson aims shared

- Success Criteria/tasks shared and understood

- "Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOT skills) poster used/shared electronically

- Met-Skills poster used/shared electronically

- At end of lesson gain feedback/discuss how pupils recognised skills stated on poster being used

Higher Order Thinking Skills

In Irvine Royal Academy we are working towards the effective use of Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS) across our curriculum to ensure that learners have opportunities to develop HOTS through their daily classroom experience.

Over the last sixty years a lot of research in education has focused on understanding the cognitive aspects of learning. In other words, researchers have been trying to find out about how people engage with, process and use information in their learning. In trying to improve learning and teaching surrounding learners' engagement with, processing and use of information there has been a focus on developing Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS).

Any definition of HOTS will be open to challenge. It is not possible, here at least, to attempt to capture precisely what HOTS is in every context for every subject domain. The summary in the box below is an attempt however to capture what HOTS are and why they are taught in Irvine Royal Academy:

HOTS are the techniques and processes learners can deploy to support them in knowing what it is they need to do with knowledge and information. The teaching of HOTS is then about explicitly providing a range of strategies for learners that can be used to decode, understanding, use and/or respond to knowledge and information.

HOTS are often illustrated hierarchically, as each preceding skill is a foundation for the next. These skills are Remembering, Understanding, Applying, Analysing, Evaluating and Creating. The table below provides descriptions of what each of these different, but connected, skills involve:

HOTS	Description[1]
CREATING	I can make, say, write or do something new with information.
EVALUATING	I can make a judgement based on a critical examination of information.
ANALYSING	I can separate information into component parts, make connections and explore relationships.
APPLYING	I can use information in familiar and unfamiliar contexts.
UNDERSTANDING	I get the meaning of information and can make sense of it.

[1] https://sites.google.com/site/flippedlearning101/3-activities-in-class/higher-order-thinking-question-starters

By developing our learners' HOTS we aim to:

- Develop learners' ability to engage with information independently and to use it appropriately in their learning.

- Support differentiation of learning and teaching as appropriate to learners and ensure appropriate pace and challenge and improve attainment.

- To achieve the aims stated above there are a range of approaches to HOTS that can be deployed. This policy will not prescribe any particular approach, only that staff can demonstrate that they are working towards the above aims in their practice in a way that works for their courses and particular contexts.

Approaches

Detailed below are a range of starting points to support staff and faculties in determining how HOTS will be introduced into their curriculum and courses.

Learning intentions, success criteria and HOTS

Framing learning intentions with HOTS language can be used to highlight to learners what skills they are developing. The same can be achieved via success criteria that focus on HOTS, with the added benefit of demonstrating to learners how they are developing these skills.

For example:
LI & SC and HOTS

Heading: Capital Punishment in the USA

Learning Intentions:
Describe different methods of execution.
Explain some of the moral issues surrounding the different methods of execution.

Success Criteria:
I must be able to list at least two key points about at least two different methods of execution.
I should give at least one reason why some people might not agree with at least one method of execution.
I could use a source to back-up my answers.

Command Words

Closely connected to the idea above is that of focusing on command words. Command words are the key terms in a question or task that provide direction to learners on what they should be doing with their knowledge in response to a question. The table below details a list of questions. They highlight how, by changing the command word, highlighted in bold, the expected response from a learner is decidedly different.

Example Question	Understanding the Command Word	Sample Learner Response
Describe religious views on different methods of execution.	In this question a learner would have to give information about what it is religious people think about different methods of capital punishment.	Many Christians would be against all methods of execution. Christians would say that executing someone and taking a life is wrong.
Explain religious views on different methods of execution.	In this question the learner would be expected to explore why religious people hold the views they do. This could involve going into more detail and giving reasons.	Many Christians would be against all methods of execution. Christians would say that executing someone and taking a life is wrong. Christians would think this because in the Bible they learn that all life is a gift from God and some believe that humans should not decide who lives and dies. Other Christians would believe this because one of the ten commandments is "you shall not kill" (Exodus) and this means they would be against taking life.
Evaluate religious views on different methods of execution.	For this question the focus is on judging the religious view. The learner may need to consider its strengths, weaknesses, validity, relevance etc.	One strength of the Christian view on different methods of execution is that it respects all human life and support international human rights legislation. However, it does have its drawbacks. For example, it could be seen as too soft and that someone who deserves the death penalty should pay the price for this actions as this is fair and justice would be seen to be done by the victims and/or the victim's family.

This is particularly useful in relation to developing learner's capacity for dealing with senior phase courses and developing skills for exams.