

**Affinity 2020 CIC Teaching and Learning Policy**

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**Teaching and Learning Policy for Specialist SEND Provision**

**Purpose** This policy outlines our approach to teaching and learning within our specialist SEND provision, focusing on strategies to support young people effectively. It emphasises reducing cognitive load through the "I Do, We Do, You Do" strategy, alongside evidence-based practices such as modelling, scaffolding, and fostering metacognitive skills to promote independence, success, and long-term retention of knowledge.

**Vision** Our goal is to provide a supportive learning environment where students experience success, develop independence, and achieve their academic and personal potential. By reducing cognitive load and utilising structured teaching strategies, we empower students to master skills progressively and build confidence in their abilities.

### **Core Principles**

1. **Reducing Cognitive Load**
   * **Understanding Cognitive Load Theory**: Research by John Sweller highlights that excessive information processing can overwhelm working memory, hindering learning. Our teaching practices are designed to prevent this by:
     + Breaking down tasks into manageable steps.
     + Providing clear, concise instructions.
     + Focusing on one element of a skill at a time.
2. **The "I Do, We Do, You Do" Strategy**
   * **"I Do" - Direct Instruction**: Teachers explicitly model skills or concepts, providing a clear reference for students. This phase includes structured demonstrations and verbal explanations to build foundational understanding.
   * **"We Do" - Collaborative Practice**: Students engage in guided practice with teacher support, fostering collaboration and enabling immediate feedback. This stage helps bridge the gap between direct instruction and independent application.
   * **"You Do" - Independent Practice**: Students practice skills independently, applying what they have learned. Teachers monitor and provide feedback, supporting the development of autonomy and mastery.
3. **Modeling and Scaffolding**
   * Teachers model thinking processes, providing students with a template for success.
   * Scaffolding is gradually removed as students demonstrate increased competence, ensuring they are not overwhelmed.
4. **Gradual Release of Responsibility**
   * Students are supported as they transition from teacher-led instruction to collaborative and independent practice, ensuring they develop confidence and competence at each stage.
5. **Metacognition and Independence**
   * Encouraging students to think about their learning process supports independence.
   * Strategies such as self-monitoring, self-reflection, and goal setting are explicitly taught and reinforced.

### **Teaching Strategies**

1. **Structured and Sequential Learning**
   * Lessons are designed to focus on mastering one component of a skill or concept at a time.
   * Overlearning—repeated practice beyond initial mastery—is emphasised to strengthen long-term memory and automaticity.
2. **Immediate Feedback**
   * Teachers provide instant, specific feedback during guided practice, enabling students to identify and correct errors in real-time.
3. **Resource Provision**
   * Materials from the "I Do" stage serve as reference tools during independent practice, reinforcing learning and promoting autonomy.
4. **Minimising Cognitive Overload**
   * Visual aids, step-by-step instructions, and chunked content help students process information more effectively.
   * Lessons are paced to ensure students have time to internalise and apply new knowledge.

### **Evidence Base**

1. **Cognitive Load Theory (Sweller, 1988)**
   * Demonstrates the importance of minimising extraneous cognitive load to enhance learning efficiency.
2. **Gradual Release of Responsibility Model (Pearson & Gallagher, 1983)**
   * Emphasises the progression from teacher-led instruction to student independence.
3. **The Importance of Feedback (Hattie & Timperley, 2007)**
   * Highlights the critical role of feedback in improving student performance and fostering self-regulation.
4. **Collaborative Learning (Vygotsky, 1978)**
   * Stresses the role of social interaction in cognitive development, supporting the "We Do" stage of learning.
5. **Metacognition (Flavell, 1976)**
   * Underscores the value of teaching students to monitor and regulate their own learning processes.

### **Implementation**

1. **Planning and Delivery**
   * Lessons are planned to incorporate the "I Do, We Do, You Do" strategy, ensuring clarity, consistency, and a structured approach to skill acquisition.
   * Teachers design activities that reduce cognitive load, using scaffolding to support students as needed.
2. **Professional Development**
   * Staff receive regular training on cognitive load theory, the "I Do, We Do, You Do" strategy, and related evidence-based practices to ensure high-quality instruction.
3. **Monitoring and Evaluation**
   * Teaching and learning are regularly reviewed through observations, student feedback, and assessment data to ensure the effectiveness of strategies.

### **Outcomes**

* Students will:
  + Develop mastery of skills through structured and supported learning.
  + Gain confidence and independence in their abilities.
  + Experience success and improved academic outcomes.
  + Transfer knowledge from working memory to long-term memory effectively.
* Teachers will:
  + Employ evidence-based strategies to enhance learning.
  + Provide a consistent framework that reduces cognitive load.
  + Foster an environment where all students can succeed.