

Unity College Literacy Policy 2013 - 2014

Rationale

All teachers are teachers of literacy. As such, all staff at Unity College are committed to developing literacy skills in all of our students, in the belief that it will support their learning and raise standards across the curriculum. We believe:

- Students need vocabulary, analytical skills, expression and organisational control to cope with the cognitive demands of all subjects
- language helps us to reflect, revise and evaluate ourselves and others
- developing effective speaking and listening skills builds confidence
- reading helps us to learn from sources beyond our immediate experience
- writing helps us to sustain and order thought
- improving literacy levels can have an impact on students' self-esteem, on motivation for learning and behaviour
- literacy skills are becoming increasingly important when entering the workplace; employers are placing greater emphasis on such key skills.

All schemes of work should include specific literacy objectives (where appropriate for the subject). These objectives should focus on reading, writing and speaking and listening. Activities that utilise reading, writing and speaking and listening skills should be built into schemes of work in order to provide opportunities which are focused on literacy.

Roles and Responsibilities

- **Senior Leadership Team:** lead and give a high profile to literacy.
- **English Department:** to lead and support all staff to ensure literacy provision is of a high quality.
- **English Department:** provide students with the knowledge, skills and understanding students need to read, write and speak and listen effectively and provide a consistent approach to students' development of language.
- **Literacy Coordinator:** supports departments in the implementation of strategies and encourages departments to learn from each other's practice by sharing ideas. To lead and develop the Literacy working party.
- **Parents:** should encourage their children to read at home and write with accuracy.
- **Students:** understand what strategies are being used in lessons, take increasing responsibility for recognising their own literacy needs, make improvements using such strategies and commit to reading widely outside of college.
- **Literacy Governor:** governors may meet with the Governing Body, staff and students to understand strategies and report on progress.

Across the college we shall:

- Identify strengths and weaknesses in our students' work
- adapt the literacy priorities for each year as students' skills improve
- seek to identify progression in reading, writing, speaking and listening undertaken in each department and strengthen teaching plans accordingly
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- review this policy annually
- assess and review the success of implemented strategies annually

Aims

The aims of this policy document are to:

- support students' learning in all subjects by helping teachers to be clear about the ways in which their work with students contributes to the development of students' communication skills
- develop a shared understanding between all staff of the role of language in students' learning and how work in different subjects can contribute to and benefit from the development of students' ability to communicate effectively

- recognise that language is central to students' sense of identity, belonging and growth
- raise students' own expectations of achievement, thus raising standards
- develop students' confidence and self-expression
- promote knowledge and understanding of the students' standards of achievement and assessment in speaking and listening, writing and reading, and the identification of any areas of strength and weakness.

Aims of the three language modes

Although the following is divided into three sections, Speaking and Listening, Reading and Writing, we recognise that the three language modes are interdependent.

Speaking and listening

Talk is our main means of communication in everyday life and is fundamental to the development of understanding.

We want our students to develop increasing confidence and competence in speaking and listening so that they are able to:

- clarify and express their ideas and explain their thinking
- adapt their speech to a widening range of circumstances including paired and group discussions and speaking to a larger audience
- use varied and specialised vocabulary
- speak for a range of purposes e.g. to narrate, to analyse, to explain, to reflect and evaluate
- listen with understanding and respond sensitively and appropriately.

Reading

We want our students to enjoy reading, to be able to use their reading to help them learn and to develop increasing confidence and competence in reading so that they are able to:

- read fluently, accurately and with understanding
- become independent and critical readers and make informed and appropriate choices
- select information from a wide range of texts and sources including print, media and ICT and to evaluate those sources
- apply techniques such as skimming, scanning, and text-marking effectively in order to research and appraise texts
- to have access to, and be able to, choose texts that enable them to read for pleasure.
- to enable them to access exam questions, thus giving them the best chance of success.

Writing

Many lessons include and depend on written communication. We want our students to develop increasing confidence and competence in writing so that they are able to:

- write in a widening variety of forms for different purposes e.g. to interpret, evaluate, explain, analyse and explore
- develop ideas and communicate meaning to a reader using wide-ranging and technical vocabulary and an effective style, organising and structuring sentences grammatically and whole texts coherently
- make connections between their reading and writing so that students have clear models for their writing
- use the modelling process to make explicit to students how to write
- understand that every text has an audience and format and this impacts on how the writing is done
- present their writing clearly using accurate punctuation, correct spelling and legible handwriting
- understand and be able to apply word processing conventions and understand the principles of authoring multi-media text.

Implementation

Successful implementation of this policy is dependent upon the extent to which we:

- identify literacy content of lessons and develop consistent use of skills through all subjects.
- take account of the needs of all students, with regard to ethnicity, gender, ability and social and cultural factors
- structure lessons appropriately in ways that support and stimulate language development and show how learning objectives for students are to be achieved
- recognise how resources will be organised and used to support this teaching
- monitor and evaluate the impact of common goals and clear, shared expectations of students' developing ability to talk, read and write effectively and, specifically, establish whether targets have been achieved.

Speaking and listening

- In our teaching we should provide planned opportunities across the curriculum for students to engage in purposeful talk, both formally and informally
 - In planning for talk we should consider pace and timing so that purposeful talk is maintained
 - Whilst teacher exposition is essential we should take account of demands on concentration to ensure that students are required to listen for realistic lengths of time
- We should give students regular opportunities to speak and listen in the following contexts:
 - in pairs with a working partner
 - in small groups with opportunities to take on the roles of chair or scribe

- with the teacher or another adult
- in whole class discussions
- presentations to a wider audience
- In these contexts some of the following activities should take place:
 - exploring and describing events, activities and problems, exploring and developing ideas with others
 - reporting back to a wider audience in order to consolidate ideas and understanding
 - asking questions as well as answering them
 - speculating, hypothesising and imagining
 - planning, organising and reviewing activities
 - investigating and solving problems collaboratively
 - evaluating experiences and reflecting on learning
 - talking at length and adopting the 'expert' role.

Reading

- We should use available data on students' reading levels in order to make informed choices about appropriate texts and to plan appropriate support for students in order that they may successfully access texts.
- We should take opportunities to demonstrate pleasure in reading.
- We should make opportunities both in lessons and in tutorial times for students and teachers to share their reading experiences.
- We should provide planned opportunities across the curriculum for students to:
 - read and follow written instructions
 - read and engage with narratives of events or activities
 - follow up their interests and read texts of varying lengths
 - question and challenge printed information and views
 - read with understanding descriptions of processes, structures and mechanisms
 - read and explore ideas and theories
 - learn how to sift and select, and take notes from text and read to locate and relocate information
 - learn how to scan for overall meaning and scan for key points, words and phrases
 - use reading to research and investigate from printed words and moving images ICT texts.

Writing

We should draw attention to the purpose and intended readers of each piece of writing. Whilst the audience for students' writing is often teacher and peer group, students should be encouraged to write for a range of intended readers. For example, writing to explain a scientific principle to a younger audience, writing guidance for peers on an aspect of the subject, writing to agencies to elicit information or to express a viewpoint.

We should pay close attention to writing as a learning tool as well as a product of the learning.

- We should help students to appreciate the differences between standard English and non-standard forms of the language.
- We should help students to recognise the appropriate form for their written responses so that they know when to respond in note form and when more formal constructions are required.
- We should limit the use of pre-structured writing e.g. copying, sentence completion, and sentence rearrangement.

We should provide planned opportunities across the curriculum for students to:

- make notes from a variety of sources - printed word, moving images and ICT texts
- use writing to plan organise and record
- write logs and journals in order to clarify thoughts and develop new understanding
- plan, draft, discuss and reflect on their writing
- learn the conventions of different forms of writing in different subject areas e.g. by using writing frames and providing clear models for writing
- write at appropriate length, sometimes briefly
- write collaboratively with other students
- present some writing for display or publication.

We should:

- expect high standard of presentation in most of our students' finished writing
- provide good models of particular kinds of writing
- provide dictionaries, glossaries and lists of appropriate subject vocabulary and encourage students to use them
- help students to use a range of strategies to learn spellings, including:
 - look – say – cover – write – check
 - making connections between words with the same visual spelling pattern
 - `exploring families of words.

Subject Support

The Literacy coordinator and the English Department will provide help and support to all subjects in implementing literacy strategies. This support could include:

- observation-literacy teaching
- meetings with subject leaders
- scrutiny of schemes of work
- developing resources
- providing ideas and activities
- encouraging departments to share good practice by exhibiting or exemplifying students' work
- discuss ideas in Literacy Focus Groups.

Resources

We should aim to provide:

- displays of reading material relevant to the topic or national curriculum subject and of relevant vocabulary
- relevant material at appropriate levels of interest and difficulty and from a range of text types
- reading material of high quality which is up to date, relevant, and balanced in its presentation of ethnicity, culture and gender
- some texts in the first languages of students acquiring English as an additional language
- access to public libraries and to ICT sources of information
- access to an area in college which has a reading focus
- access to appropriate audio visual equipment
- a classroom environment which is conducive to good literacy practice.

Assessing Literacy across the Curriculum

- When assessing students' work across the curriculum we should value their oral contributions and listening skills alongside their reading and writing.
- We should take into account students' performance in speaking and listening, reading and writing when assessing and reporting on students' progress in subject areas.
- When setting writing tasks we should make explicit to the students the key features of language which will be considered.

When responding to students' work we should:

- make comments which are positive and supportive
- target specific areas for improvement (a selective and focussed identification of errors)
- give guidance on how to achieve the short-term targets set. For example, whilst "improve your spelling" is unhelpful and vague, the identification of a particular spelling error e.g. doubling of letters before adding -ing is specific and presents the student with a target which can be addressed
- give priority to content, ideas, organisation and meaning above presentational features
- create opportunities for students to reflect on the quality of their own work and for peer assessment.

Literacy Provision for All

Unity College students are entitled to our highest expectations and support. Some will need additional support and others will need to be challenged.

1. Differentiation across all levels of ability

Strategies that we can use include:

- varied questioning techniques
- adjusting the demands of the task
- use of additional support
- use of group structures
- making objectives clear
- creating an environment where students evaluate their own and others' work, set targets and develop their own skills as a result of this

2. English as an Additional Language

Our students learning EAL need to hear good examples of spoken English and also to refer to their first language skills to aid new learning in all subjects of the curriculum.

As a college we will seek to:

- provide specific EAL support in small focus groups
- provide differentiated resources for EAL students in lessons as appropriate
- provide clear literacy targets
- provide speaking and listening opportunities where possible to foster the development of spoken English.

3. SEN

We will teach our students with special educational needs appropriately, supporting their learning and providing them with challenges matched to their needs.

We will seek to:

- use a range of teaching strategies to develop reading, writing, speaking and listening skills
- provide differentiated resources which are tailored to student specific needs
- offer small support groups

4. Able and Talented

We will teach our gifted and talented students through differentiated literacy activities that extend and challenge.

We will seek to:

- use a range of teaching strategies to develop the reading, writing, speaking and listening skills of identified gifted and talented students in specific subjects
- provide differentiated resources that are designed to extend and challenge students in all areas of literacy

Key Priorities Agreed for 2012/2013:

Exam Literacy

Speaking and Listening

Improving Reading Age for student in all years who tested below 11yrs in Year 7; 12 yrs in Years 8-11.

Review of college priorities will take place: September 2013

Dean Plowes
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December 2012

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Unity College
Literacy Policy

This policy should be used alongside the following policies:

E-Safety Policies
SEN Policy
Able & Talented Policy
Equality Policy