



GEMS

مدرسة جيمس وينشستر

Winchester School

FUJAIRAH

GEMS Winchester School, Fujairah Innovation Policy

NAME OF POLICY	Innovation Policy
APPROVED BY	Principal
DATE APPROVED	January 2023
DATE OF REVIEW	January 2024
REPLACING POLICY	None
RELATED POLICIES	Teaching & Learning Policy



EDUCATION



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Statement of Intent

At GEMS Winchester School Fujairah, we believe that students should think critically and collaborate with peers to develop team spirit leading to innovation and leadership, thus preparing them for the world. Innovation and innovative practices are central to our work as educators, and we work towards high standards in teaching, putting learning at the centre in all that we do. This policy ensures that everyone is committed to achieving a high-quality consistent approach to innovation. All staff are expected to adopt innovative approaches to teaching and learning, by design.

WSF Vision:

At WSF, our vision is to deliver a high-quality education to the diverse community of Fujairah. We will nurture lifelong learners in an enabling, caring and inclusive environment so that they become confident, independent and progressive world citizens. We will do that whilst embracing and sharing the vision of the GEMS Founder and Chairman: "Every child has the right to a quality education. We strongly believe that every single child has talents and abilities that are as unique as their personalities. We take pride in our inclusive ethos and are determined to bring out the best in every single child who comes to us to learn."

Mission:

WSF will establish a child-centered learning environment that will allow all students to reach their full potential. Our mission is to become the school of choice in Fujairah, meeting the needs and aspirations of all our learners and families.

Teaching strategies for Innovation

Our expectation is that teachers across all phases of the school will implement the innovative approaches detailed below. Alongside our teaching and learning policy, this innovation policy is designed to ensure that innovation is an intentional instructional design choice on the part of teachers. Whilst not all lessons may lend themselves to these approaches, when opportunities to innovate present themselves, and they have the potential to raise the quality of teaching and learning, the assumption is that teachers will take them.

Problem-based learning

Problem-based learning (PBL) flips the traditional approach to school learning by making the students identify what needs to be known rather than pre-defining it. In PBL students use "triggers" from the problem case or scenario to define their own learning intentions. Subsequently, they do independent, self-directed study before returning to the group to discuss and refine their acquired knowledge. Thus, PBL is not about problem solving per se, but rather it uses appropriate problems to increase knowledge and understanding.

Inquiry-based learning

Inquiry-based learning (IBL) takes a further step in student independence by offering students the possibility to identify the problem themselves and design an exploratory route of inquiry to refine their problem and find solutions for that themselves. This methodology is supported by effective digital learning environments. While IBL is often used in science subjects due to its roots in scientific research, it is also suitable for humanities or arts discovery.

Experiential learning

Experiential learning is an engaged learning process whereby students "learn by doing" and by reflecting on the experience. It enriches the previously introduced methodologies by making students reflect on their own learning process and the experiences they had during them. Well-planned, supervised and assessed experiential learning



programs stimulate academic inquiry by promoting interdisciplinary learning, civic engagement, career development, cultural awareness, leadership, and other professional and intellectual skills.

Playful learning or Learning through play

There are several definitions and frameworks for playful learning, The WSF definition being defined as serious play. While most scholars have done research on the benefits of serious play in early childhood, recent studies have also emphasised its benefits for older children and adults, thus making it an approach to consider in all stages of lifelong learning. This is partially rooted in the concept of Csikszentmihalyi's flow and positive psychology. This concept establishes the ideal state for learning as a situation that is challenging, but not overchallenging for the individual, and offering meaningful learning moments.

Gamification

Building on principles previously quoted about playful learning, the approach is based on the gratification players feel in computer games. It is based on the experiences of millions of gamers who spend long periods of time in their games online. What is important during game for pedagogical approach is the so-called epic win (perhaps it could be translated as cathartic success): difficult problems during games the gamer has to solve, they need to think hard, dedicate all available resources to it - and if they do, in the end success crowns their efforts.

Project-based learning

Project-based learning (PBL) is probably the most widely known and used, complex student-centred methodology. Students work on a project over an extended period – from a week up to a semester – that engages them in solving a real-world problem or answering a complex question. They demonstrate their knowledge and skills by creating a public product or presentation for a real audience. As a result, students develop deep content knowledge as well as critical thinking, collaboration, creativity, and communication skills. If managed well, PBL has the potential to boost creative energy among students and teachers.

Deep learning

As compared to the previously introduced approaches it focuses on the role of teachers in the learning process, while keeping the focus on 21st century skills. It is aiming at transforming the role of teachers to that of activators who design experiences that build global competencies using real-life problem solving; and supports schools, districts, and systems to shift practice and how to measure learning in authentic ways.

Universal Design for Learning

UDL is an educational framework based on research in the learning sciences, including cognitive neuroscience, that guides the development of flexible learning environments and learning spaces that can accommodate individual learning differences.

Professional Development

WSF provides professional development opportunities to expose teachers to these approaches whilst encouraging them to explore and experiment.

Monitoring and Evaluation of Innovation

Innovation is a core tenet of our approach at WSF. Innovative practices are identified and evaluated as part of our Professional Growth and Evaluation process. Teachers receive developmental feedback to ensure proven approaches to innovation become established and shared.



Appendix - Sample Activities

Problem-based learning – Creating sustainable cities

This problem-based learning activity looks at the complex issue of sustainable living on a grand scale, beyond individual responsibility. Students assess the problems that cities face and think of realistic ways they can be addressed to promote sustainability.

Inquiry-based learning - Deconstructing facts

Students are given a list of “facts” about different planets. Some of those facts are wrong. The students work in small groups and try to identify the different planets and which facts are false.

Experiential learning – Gardening project

Through the process of growing a garden, students may develop more of a passion for nature and ecological conservation than if they simply learned from textbooks. Furthermore, if the garden contains edible foods in it, then the lesson can be transferred into a lesson about how our food reaches our tables.

Playful learning or Learning through play - Running, dancing, climbing, rolling

These activities all foster muscle development and help fine-tune motor skills. Children also build their mental and emotional muscles as they create elaborate, imaginative worlds rich with a system of rules that govern the terms of play.

Gamification – Minecraft building project

Minecraft’s game-based origin combined with the tools and constructs present in the education version lend themselves to projects that involve building, crafting, and collaborating. The appeal lies in the association with ‘fun’, motivating students to participate enthusiastically.

Project-based learning – Collaborative video

In this type of project, students are divided into groups and each group is responsible for completing a task or solving a problem. This type of project encourages students to communicate and work together to find solutions. For example, having students work together to create a video about a particular topic. Each group would be responsible for researching the topic, writing the script, and filming the video.

Deep learning

Students in a grade six robotics classroom might build controllers for swimming robots. One group may experiment with settings to sink the robots by filling a bladder with water. Another works to perfect the speed controls on the motor. Students are engaged and focused as they apply math, engineering, and science knowledge to their work. This type of multidisciplinary learning requires mastery, critical thinking, collaboration, communication, along with positive learning behaviors and attitudes.

Universal Design for Learning – Adaptive learning environments

One example relates to classrooms. They may have workstations; some for individuals, some for working in groups, some for receiving guidance from the teacher. Linking elements of the learning environment to specific activities and resources is achieved by intentional design and mirrors the ‘real’ world.