

The 6 Distinctive Features of The UCL Academy



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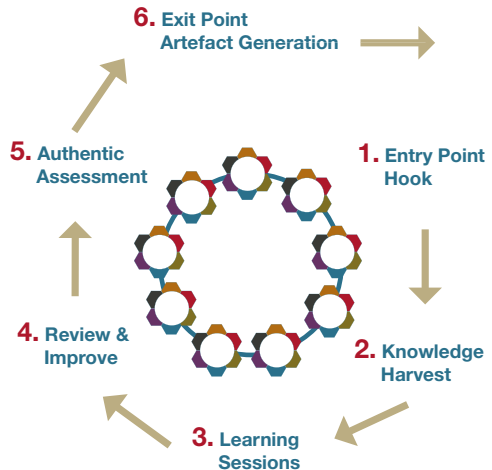
1 A Connected Curriculum

The Academy curriculum is based on the premise that students learn best when they can make meaning and sense from their learning.

Using the IMYC curriculum as its basis, the Academy's Connected Curriculum emphasises specialist subject teaching, within a broadly thematic framework.

These themes (**Big Ideas**) act as a thread running through a half term of work and urge students to apply their learning from a range of subjects to a concept such as:

The UCL Academy Connected-Curriculum Unit Learning Cycle



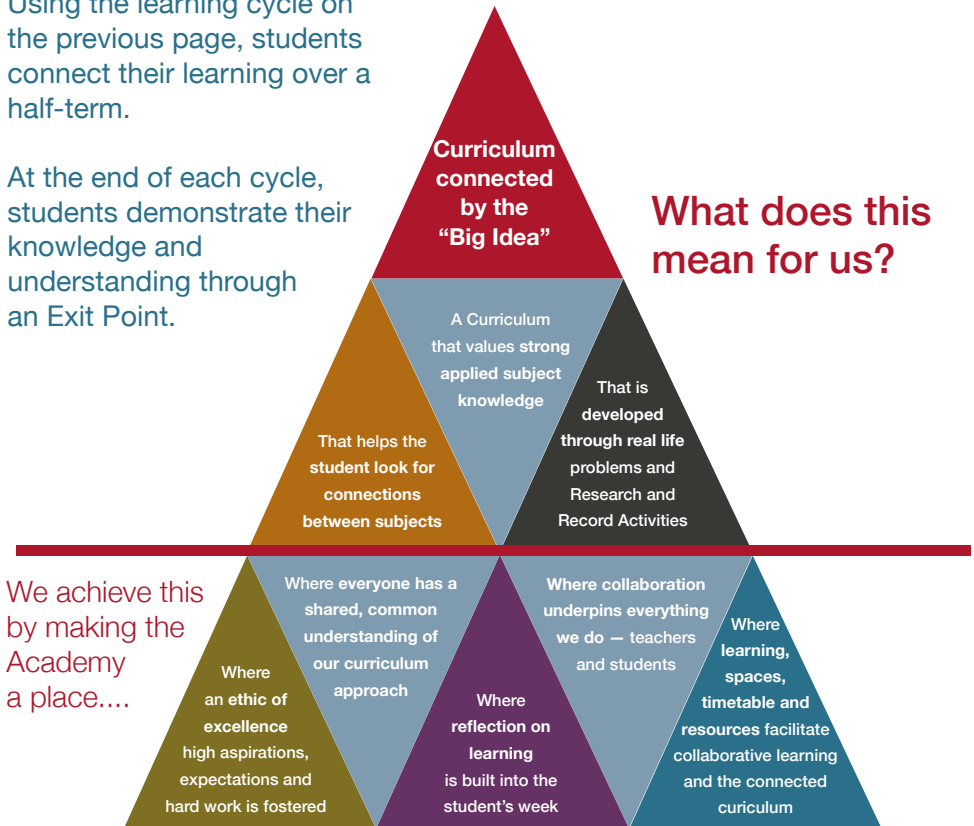
“A fair society is organised so that no-one suffers unduly for the benefit of others” [Justice]

The UCL Academy Connected Curriculum

Using the learning cycle on the previous page, students connect their learning over a half-term.

At the end of each cycle, students demonstrate their knowledge and understanding through an Exit Point.

What does this mean for us?



We achieve this by making the Academy a place...

Recently, following their Big Idea on Justice, students worked collaboratively on an issue of injustice of their choice, and presented their campaign “pitch,” to an audience of students, parents and staff.

2

Assessment & Pedagogy

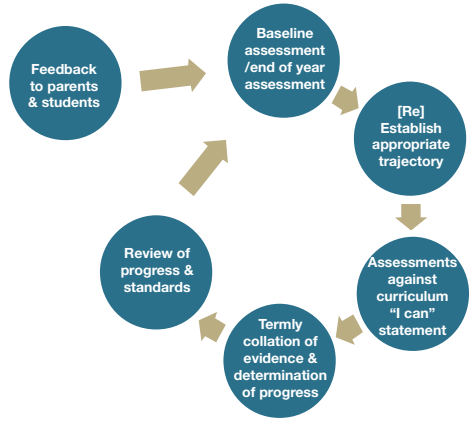
Having developed an approach to curriculum planning that reflects the vision and values of the Academy and Sponsor, it is essential that the models of Assessment and Pedagogy supported it fully.



Superstudio open spaces support innovative approaches to learning

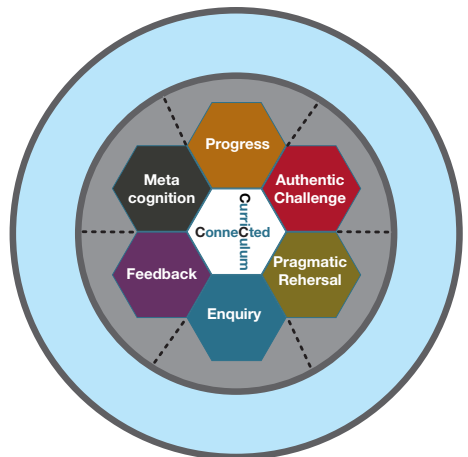
In turn, planning for learning is based on the 6 pillars of this learning architecture.

The pillars reflect not only the main principles of excellent teaching common to many schools, but in the concepts of Authentic Challenge and of Enquiry we reflect the more distinctive nature of the **Connected Curriculum**.



Assessment is based on establishing broad trajectories of progress, to which students are allocated using a range of prior data.

Students build evidence against appropriate statements of attainment, called **“I can statements”**. Progress is determined against this evidence.



Wheel of learning

3

Education of the Whole Person

Two elements of the Connected Curriculum that particularly reflect the Sponsor's vision of the education of the whole person are:

- a. **Self Directed Learning (SDL)** is a programme in which all students participate as part of a longer Academy day. For a variety of sessions throughout the week, students choose from a range of activities that aim to develop a balance of Heart, Body, Mind and Spirit over their Academy career. Activities include, for example, Rugby, Genius Hour, Mindfulness, Swing Dance, Mini UN and Latin;



- b. **Learner Attributes:** since development of the whole person is core to our ethos and values, the Academy assesses and rewards students based on their development in these areas. The Academy has developed 10 Learner Attributes. These are rewarded via digital badges that students log online, and can be awarded by staff in any area of the Academy. We track and monitor student progress in each area, and one of our next steps is to combine Learner Attributes into our overall assessment of Student Progress and attainment.

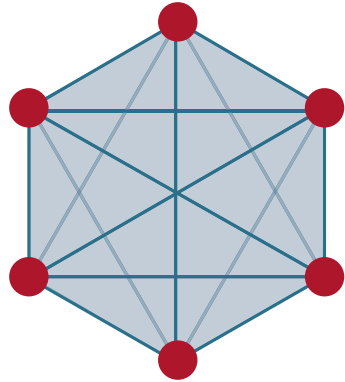
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Collaborative Learning

When students learn to work together, to reflect upon how well they work and how to improve their work patterns, they are motivated to achieve and succeed.

“Improvements in their self-esteem as well as poise and confidence are quickly seen.”

(Brown and Thomson, 2000, p.14)



The Learning Set promotes collaboration between students

Collaboration, explicitly different from co-operation, emphasises the essential contribution each member of the group must make for the outcome to be successful.

Collaborative Group Learning Checklist	
CGL Attribute/Practice	Evident
One voice at a time	<input type="checkbox"/>
Calm verbal communication	<input type="checkbox"/>
Eye contact with speaker	<input type="checkbox"/>
Connected talk used	<input type="checkbox"/>
Formal and accurate language used	<input type="checkbox"/>
All contribute ideas/views/opinions	<input type="checkbox"/>
Each member helps at least one other	<input type="checkbox"/>
3 before me rule followed	<input type="checkbox"/>
Each member manages the behaviour of the group	<input type="checkbox"/>
Positive body language	<input type="checkbox"/>
Members explain their reasoning	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Total ticks
WWW? EBI? LS target for next time?	<input type="checkbox"/>

A fundamental feature of teaching, learning and the student experience at The UCL Academy is the Learning Set of 6 students.

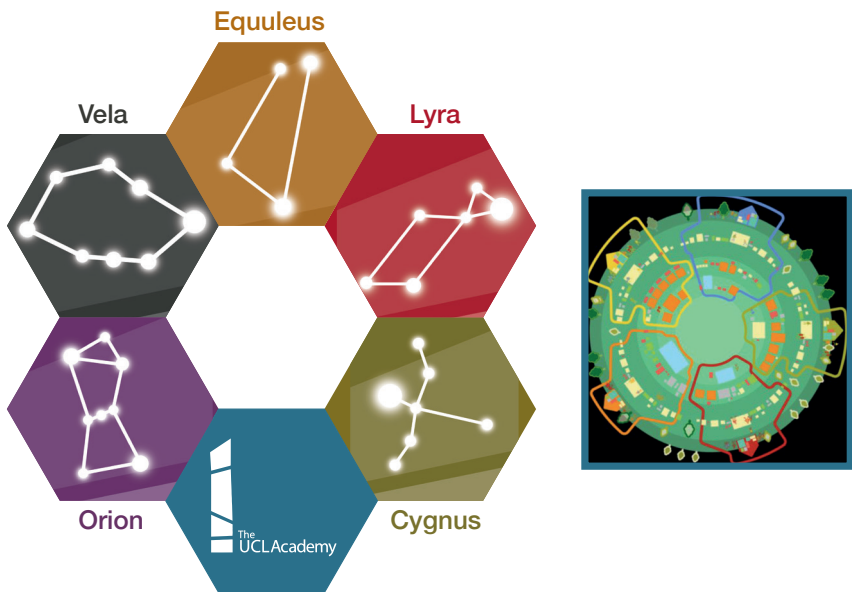
A key principle underpinning a range of structures, procedures and features within the Academy is the recognition and promotion of teaching and learning through the learning set.

Collaboration is hard-wired into every area of the Academy, from the design of the learning spaces and vertical tutoring system, right through to how schemes of work, entry points and exit points are designed.

5 Community

The Academy is organised around five Houses with every student and member of Academy staff belonging to a House.

Each House has its own Superstudio space and its own canteen area. Additionally, every space in the Academy belongs to a household, and the members of that household are responsible for 'hosting' those facilities for the rest of the Academy community.



A student belongs to the same household for the duration of their time at the Academy enabling them to build a strong House identity and to be provided with academic and pastoral support from those that know them best: their tutors, Learning Sets and Heads of House.

Inter-House competitions form an important element of Academy life, with students competing to score the highest in Accelerated Reader, to achieve the most House Points and to achieve victory in our annual Sports Day.

All staff, students and parents have a strong pride in their Houses.

6 Links with UCL

Sponsorship of an Academy allows UCL to make its world class facilities and expertise available on a formal basis to students, as a means of extending the connected curriculum, providing access to new ways of learning and exposing them to 'life at university' from a young age.



The Academy benefits from a programme of master-classes, seminars and summer schools, given by UCL staff and making use of UCL's laboratory, library and other teaching facilities. These are designed to build on the teaching undertaken in class and help to extend students' understanding of core topics. It also helps to prepare students for the transition between school and university teaching.

UCL also has a tremendous resource in its students. We draw on well-established networks of UCL student **mentors and tutors** to provide practical and classroom support to Academy students, with UCL students as **role models**, classroom assistants and sources of **informal advice and guidance**.

Staff are regularly given opportunities to access resources at UCL and the Institute of Education. This supports our principle of being a research engaged institution.