# Workshop 2 – How learning happens

## Facilitator guide

It is recommended that facilitators review the ‘Explicit teaching in NSW public schools’ statement prior to leading the workshop. Facilitators should consider the most suitable approach to engage the whole school, to develop a shared understanding of explicit teaching.

### Purpose

This workshop is designed to deepen participant’s understanding of knowing students and how they learn.

### Outcomes

By the end of the workshop, participants will:

* build awareness of expectations for key professional knowledge
* have a consistent understanding of how learning happens, enabling the selection of the right strategy at the right time for the right purpose.

### Timing

The workshop is designed for a 45-minute session. This timing is suggested and the facilitator will make decisions about timing based on the school context.

### Resources

Prepare copies of the reading material below for each group to access during the session.

* Australian Education Research Organisation (AERO) (2023) [How students learn best: An overview of the learning process and the most effective teaching practices (PDF 2.1 MB)](https://www.edresearch.edu.au/sites/default/files/2023-11/how-students-learn-best-aa_0.pdf).​
* Australian Institute for Teaching and Educational Leadership (AITSL) (2023) [Addendum: Accreditation of initial teacher education programs in Australia: Standards and Procedures (PDF 495 KB)](https://www.aitsl.edu.au/docs/default-source/national-policy-framework/addendum-to-accreditation-standards-and-procedures.pdf).​
* Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation (CESE) (2017) [Cognitive load theory: Research that teachers really need to understand (PDF 553 KB)](https://education.nsw.gov.au/content/dam/main-education/about-us/educational-data/cese/2017-cognitive-load-theory.pdf).
* Slides 13, 14, 15 and 16 of Workshop 2 – How learning happens PowerPoint presentation for the group activity.

### Facilitating the workshop

The Workshop 2 – How learning happens PowerPoint presentation contains prompts for discussion and reflection. The [discussion and reflection questions](#_Reflection_questions) are included in this guide. The facilitator may choose which questions are most appropriate for their context and the time available for discussion. This workshop can be completed across more than one session.

### Suggested structure

1. Present **Section 1–** **Explicit teaching in NSW public schools** of the Workshop 2 PowerPoint presentation. Slide 5 contains a prompt to connect this workshop to Workshop 1 [5 minutes].
2. Present **Section 2 – Key professional knowledge** of the Workshop 2 PowerPoint presentation and introduce Activity 1 detailed on slide 10 [3 minutes].
3. Complete [Activity 1 – the brain and learning](#_Reflection_questions), using the speaking notes and facilitator prompts to guide discussion [15 minutes].
4. Present **Section 3 – How learning happens** of the Workshop 2 PowerPoint presentation and assign groups and a group discussion leader for Activity 2 detailed on slide 12 [2 minutes].
5. Participants complete [Activity 2 – how learning happens](#_Activity_2_-_1) in their group. The identified discussion leader uses the corresponding slide for their chosen reading to guide the discussion [10 minutes].
6. Conclude **Section 3 – How learning happens** of the Workshop 2 PowerPoint presentation by using slide 17 to facilitate a ‘check for understanding’ by asking each group to report back. Use slide 18 to discuss how the activities from the workshop link to explicit teaching strategies depicted in the graphic. [10 minutes].

### Discussion questions

The discussion questions in this guide include reflection questions embedded in the Workshop 2 PowerPoint presentation and questions for extended discussion.

#### Activity 1 – the brain and learning – reflection questions (slide 10)

After reading pages 6 to 7 of ‘Addendum: Accreditation of initial teacher education programs in Australia: Standards and Procedures', Core Content 1 consider:

* What are the implications of this change in professional knowledge expectations?  
  (5 minutes for staff discussion).
* How has this changed your understanding of the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers – 'Standard 1: Know students and how they learn'? (5 minutes for reflection).

#### Activity 2 – how learning happens – discussion questions (slide 12)

1. Assign participants to Group A, B, C or D. Select a group discussion leader and provide each group with the associated slide. These slides provide each group with the link or QR code to the reading and questions for discussion and personal reflection:

* Group A slide 13
* Group B slide 14
* Group C slide 15
* Group D slide 16.

1. Allow 5 minutes for participants to individually read the associated paper.
2. Allow 5 minutes for teachers to discuss their reading in groups using the discussion questions (slides 13 to 16).
3. Use slide 17 to facilitate a ‘check for understanding’ by asking each group to report back (10 minutes):

**Group A –** ask the group who read pages 2 to 3 in ‘[Cognitive load theory: Research that teachers really need to understand](https://education.nsw.gov.au/content/dam/main-education/about-us/educational-data/cese/2017-cognitive-load-theory.pdf)’ the question below:

How does cognitive load theory support the use of explicit teaching in relation to how the brain stores and retrieves information?

**Group B –** ask the group who read pages 2 to 3 in ‘[Cognitive load theory: Research that teachers really need to understand](https://education.nsw.gov.au/content/dam/main-education/about-us/educational-data/cese/2017-cognitive-load-theory.pdf)’ the question below:

Working memory is limited. How does understanding schemas help us to manage the load on students’ working memory?

**Group C –** ask the group who read pages 8 to 10 in [How students learn best](https://www.edresearch.edu.au/sites/default/files/2023-11/how-students-learn-best-aa_0.pdf) the question below:

The process of consolidation makes knowledge easier to recall and use. How can students move learning from working memory to long-term memory?

**Group D –** ask the group who read page 19 in [How students learn best](https://www.edresearch.edu.au/sites/default/files/2023-11/how-students-learn-best-aa_0.pdf) the question below:

How does the practice of retrieval help to create new connections in long-term memory?

## More information

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[Explicit teaching webpage](https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/curriculum/explicit-teaching)

If you have questions about the guide, please email [ContactCurriculumReform@det.nsw.edu.au](mailto:ContactCurriculumReform@det.nsw.edu.au).

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