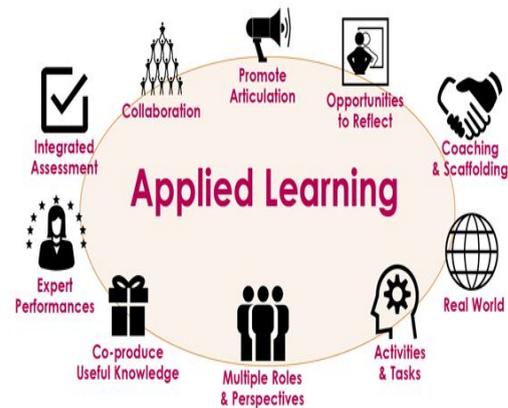


Reflections on Leadership and Applied Learning - pre and post lockdown - Mr Jon Edwards, Applied Learning Leader.

During my teaching career, students have often asked me in a frustrated tone,

“But, sir, when are we actually going to use this in real life?”

So here is my chance to explain what exactly is meant by Applied Learning and how it can fit into everyday life as opposed to more traditional methods of teaching which are often arguably antiquated and confined to the classroom/textbook. Once students discover the beauty of how Applied Learning works, they soon realise the many benefits to this method of teaching.



What *Is* Applied Learning, anyway?

The simple answer is that applied learning is *learning by doing*, where students are actively engaged with solving a problem. It's learning that's done in the real world, and thus relevant to everyday life.

Applied Learning has a strong academic foundation, but with a practical approach to teaching and learning. The curriculum team at Wapping High School are focused and determined in offering students a balanced curriculum, ensuring with each Applied Learning subject, students will develop key skills and confidence to succeed in their education. Wapping High School now has a very strong curriculum which consists of the perfect balance of academic and Applied Learning. This allows students more curriculum options which in turn can increase and develop students' motivation to learn.

There are 3 main teaching strategies to Applied Learning:

Self-Directed Learning

Self-directed learning flips from a teacher being the main implementation source of learning, to being a facilitator of learning. As an educator, I firmly believe that for students to maximise their potential, self-directed learning allows students to become responsible and have a reflective understanding of their learning.

High-Impact Learning

It is also an opportunity for high-impact learning, where students explore content and directly apply new knowledge to their learning. This formula of teaching is extremely important for our students to understand the real world, and link this understanding to their applied learning subject.

Project-Based Learning

The positive impact of a strong balanced curriculum, that includes Applied Learning, is that it prepares students for a technical pathway, allowing students to gain real world, project-based experienced learning. Project-Based learning nurtures and develops students ability to be 'critical thinkers'. Critical thinking requires students to view multiple perspectives of lesson content and real world learning. This critical thinking and reflection enhances their ability to fully engage in the process of constructing meaning. The combination of both critical thinking and reflection improves students' cognitive ability and develops higher order thinking skills and problem solving.

My Vision

I believe that education should not be focused solely in the classroom and at school: Why should a classroom have to have walls in order for a pupil to learn? My Applied Learning vision is to break away from the classroom walls at Wapping High School and instead collaborate with the wider community in East London; ensuring that students are able to learn and gain 'real world' learning experiences in educational projects that link to their applied learning subject. In turn, students will become 'responsible and reflective' learners, understanding and developing life and work based skills that connect to their education and curriculum subjects.