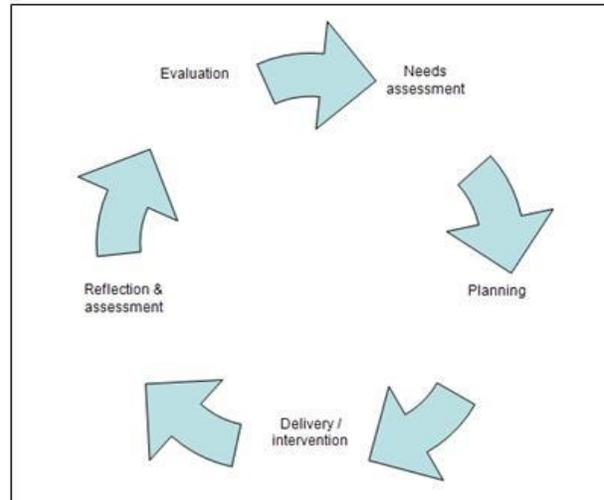


Elements of Effective Drug Education

Figure 1: The Learning Cycle

Effective drug education should include all the elements of good pedagogical practice, whether taking place within formal or informal settings. The key elements are summarised in the learning cycle [Figure 1].

Looking at each point in the cycle in turn we can see the approaches that effective drug education.



Needs assessment:

- Undertaken within the context of the organisation's up-to-date policy framework.
- Reviewing relevant data, both national and local, including wider experiences of relevance to drug education, as well as levels of substance use.
- Using needs assessment activities with class/group (e.g. 'Jugs and Herrings', 'What's in the Bag?'), which also promote engagement by the pupils.
- Relating these to the relevant curriculum: PSHE and citizenship and science in schools, or the youth work curriculum.

Planning (curriculum):

- Needs assessment then informs detailed planning, with suitable learning activities enabling active engagement. These activities are consistent with the organisation's values.
- There are clear learning objectives which can be shared with and understood by children and young people, together with specific learning outcomes.
- Learning objectives and activities which are consistent with national and local guidance, and coordinated with other subjects/teams/sessions.
- Learning objectives and activities which are consistent with national and local guidance, and coordinated with other subjects/teams/sessions.
- If there is to be visitor involvement, clear briefing is undertaken, including the policy framework and joint planning of the lesson/session.

Effective Delivery:

- Involving active participation by the entire group in a safe environment. All children and young people showing progress in learning. Opportunities for reflection, embedding the learning.
- Learning opportunities enabling children/young people to develop skills and reflect on attitudes, as well as increase understanding.

- Practising learning strategies such as insightful questioning, peer assessment and researching, as well as life skills, through the activities.
- Educators having sound subject knowledge and confidence in using suitable learning methodologies.

Reflection & assessment:

- Undertaking summative reflection at the end, in addition to reflection throughout the lesson/session.
- Using assessment for learning principles; drawing upon routines such as “What We Are Learning Today”/“What I’m Looking For”.
- Involving children/young people in assessment against learning outcomes, so they are clear about how their learning has developed and how to improve it further.
- Using a range of approaches to assessment, for example, quizzes, ‘thumbs up-down-along’ rounds, whilst recording progress.

Evaluation

- Routinely seeking feedback from children/young people, as well as the educator, about methods and activities.
- Systematically using evaluation to inform future planning, both short term (e.g. next lesson/session) and longer term (e.g. next year).

The Mentor Foundation have pulled together a [useful set of resources](#) for building an evaluation plan or strengthening the evaluation you are currently undertaking. Each resource is summarised and then followed by either its web-based source or the link to a supporting document.