

Department Teaching and Learning Communities Guide

Department Teaching and Learning Communities (DTLCs) are sessions that have been calendared once a half term, in subject teams. They will provide the opportunity for subject teams to meet and work together to plan high quality teaching, through regular, subject specific collaborative planning & CPD, placing the focus very much on our core purpose; growing great subject teaching.

The discussions during the sessions will be based around the 6 principles of teaching (see reflection questions overleaf) which are used at Meden, but allow subject teams the autonomy to focus on implementing each principle within the context of their subject, based on the subject specific learning principles developed 2018/19. Basically, each subject team will be talking about what they are teaching over the next term, and then sharing ideas about how they can teach it well.

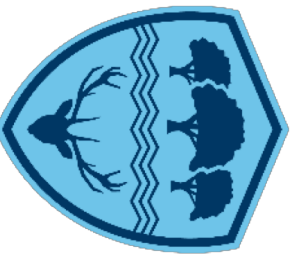
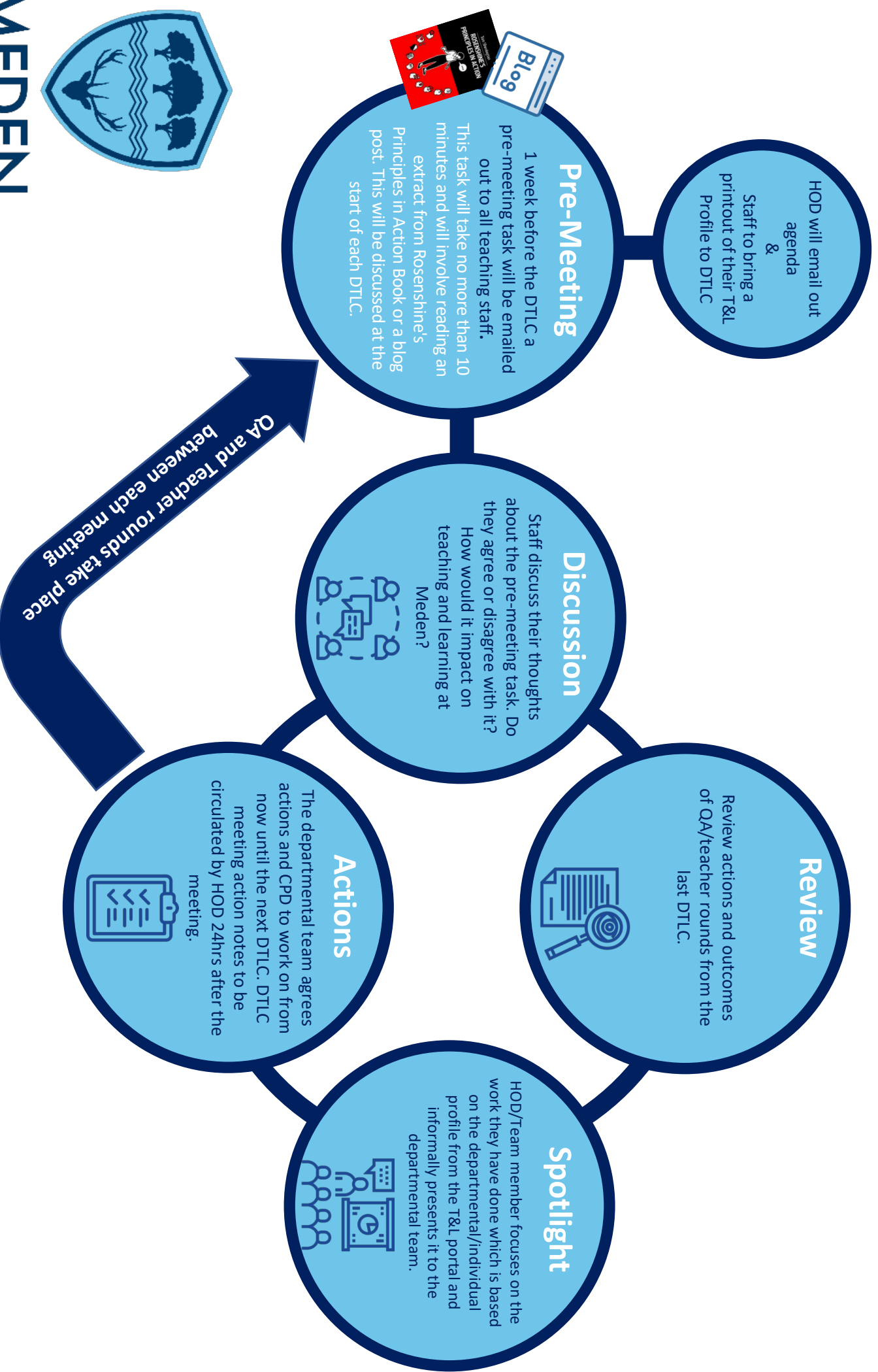
Some key questions that will be considered during each session:

- What are the key topics/concepts/ideas that we are teaching over the next term?
- How do we teach these concepts/ideas well?
- What are the key learning points that students need to master in these topics?
- Who teaches this topic well? How?
- Who is 'worried' about teaching this topic? Why?
- What resources can we share to help teach these concepts/ideas
- What is the key knowledge/skills that students need to be secure with in order to tackle these new topics?
- What are the opportunities for repetition and review?
- What are the 'hinge questions' to help students understand each topic/concept? How might we reframe questions to support students who are struggling?
- What are the possible misconceptions that students could have? How will we address these?
- How can we ensure high quality explanations are supported through effective modelling?
- What are the really hard bits of this topic? How can we explain these well – particularly to students with a low starting point?
- What opportunities are there to stretch the students with a high starting point? What 'Think Hard' questions can we use?
- What strategies/scaffolding can be used to support students who are 'stuck'?
- What opportunities are there for 'deliberate practice'? What will we use to provide this – exam questions, assessments?
- What opportunities are there for focused feedback over the next fortnight e.g. tasks that lend themselves to live marking, peer critique, self-checking

Clearly there will be no requirement to cover all of the questions above in one session. Furthermore, the Subject Leader will not have to lead each session, departmental staff will take the lead where specific strengths are identified and known about.

Overleaf it's a diagram of the DTLC process and how the meetings are structured.

Department Teaching and Learning Communities Process



Planning and Reflection Tool

This tool can be used by teachers to reflect on their own practice and then inform lesson planning and student learning.

Challenge

- Are the learning objectives single and challenging for all?
- Are all students expected to develop their knowledge and skills during the lesson?
- Is formal, subject specific, academic language modelled by teachers and encouraged from students?
- Is the bar of expectation high for all students?
- Is appropriate support and scaffolding in place to enable all students to achieve this level of expectation?
- Are examples of excellence shared, discussed and deconstructed with the class?
- Is subject content relevant and challenging?
- Are assessment criteria referred to explicitly?

Explanation

- Is prior knowledge established and used to 'hook into' new knowledge?
- Does the explanation focus on the key learning points, success criteria and subject threshold concepts?
- Are there opportunities to make the explanation more concrete and credible eg demonstration, visual, practical, appropriate use of analogy etc.?
- Does the explanation generate curiosity and so 'open up the learning gaps'?
- Is explanation clear and concise, especially when subject matter is challenging?
- Is teacher talk and gesture enthusiastic, kind and inclusive?

/Modelling

- Is practical work and other activities carefully modelled?
- Are examples of excellent work shared and compared? "This is great because?"
- Are exemplary examples subject specific products, including writing, deconstructed with the students?
- Is subject specific writing the modelled and co-constructed with the students?
- Does teaching allow critique of models?
- Is 'expert thinking' modelled by verbalising implicit thought processes?
- Is modelling scaffolded to maximise the learning for all?

Practice

- Once students have had an input from the teacher, are they given time to practise the new knowledge and skills?
- Are mistakes observed, leading to intervention when necessary to ensure that practice is perfect?
- Are mistakes utilised as a key aspect of learning?
- Is practice supported by scaffolds and support when necessary?
- Are scaffolds and supports removed at the right time to allow for independence?

- Is there evidence that threshold concepts (key subject specific knowledge and skills) are practised regularly to improve students?

Feedback

- Is there a good mix of written and verbal feedback?
- Are students encouraged to critique the work of their peers?
- Is feedback kind, specific and helpful?
- Is feedback designed to make students think – instead of giving them the answer?
- Is feedback time right i.e. are students given enough struggle time?
- Are students expected to move towards 'closing the gap' by responding to feedback?
- As a result, do students know what they have got to do to achieve?
- Are self-assessment strategies such as proofreading, editing, redrafting employed to aid metacognition?
- Is teaching flexible, based on feedback from the performance of the student?

Questioning

- Does questioning involving a wide range of students?
- Does questioning both deepen and develop thinking and check for common misconceptions?
- Are student responses developed by further questioning?
- Are reluctant respondents encouraged to respond by careful scaffolding?
- Are students encouraged to respond to and evaluate the responses of their peers?
- Are students encouraged to ask questions?
- Are students expected to rephrase answers in Standard English?