Quality Teaching in NSW Schools:
the pedagogy model applied to design projects

Intellectual quality

Element	What does it look like in a design project?
Deep knowledge	The knowledge being address is focused on a number of key concepts identified from the syllabus and on the relationships between and among these concepts.
Deep understanding	Students demonstrate a profound and meaningful understanding of key concepts and the relationships between and among those concepts.
Problematic knowledge	Students are encouraged to address multiple perspectives and solutions and to recognise that knowledge has been constructed and therefore is open to question.
Higher-order thinking	Students are regularly engaged in thinking that requires them to organise, reorganise, apply, analyse generate ideas and evaluate information, processes and ideas.
Metalanguage	There are opportunities in design projects to explicitly identify and analyse the specialist language, and provide frequent commentary on language use and various contexts of differing language uses.
Substantive communication	Students are regularly engaged in sustained conversations about the concepts and ideas they are encountering. These conversations can be manifest in oral, written or graphical forms.

Quality Learning Environment

Element	What does it look like in classrooms?
Explicit quality criteria	Students are provided with explicit criteria for the quality of work they are to produce and those criteria are a regular reference point for the development and assessment of student work.
Engagement	Most students, most of the time, are seriously engaged in the lesson or assessment activity, rather than going through the motions. Students display sustained interest and attention.
High expectations	High expectations of all students are communicated, and conceptual risk taking is encouraged and rewarded.
Social support	There is strong positive support for learning and mutual respect among teachers and students and others assisting students' learning. The classroom is free of negative personal comment or put-downs.
Students' self-regulation	Students demonstrate autonomy and initiative so that minimal attention to the disciplining and regulation of student behaviour is required.
Student direction	Students exercise some direction over the decisions made in the design project and the means and manner by which these activities will be done.

Significance

Element	What does it look like in classrooms?
Background knowledge	Design projects explicitly build from students' background knowledge, in terms of prior school knowledge as well as other aspects of their personal lives.
Cultural Knowledge	Lessons regularly incorporate the cultural knowledge of diverse social groupings (such as economic, class, gender, ethnicity, race, sexuality, disability, language and religion).
Knowledge Integration	Design project enables meaningful connections to be made with relevant learnings from other subject areas.
Inclusivity	Lessons include and publicly value the participation of all students across the social and cultural backgrounds represented in the classroom.
Connectedness	Lesson activities in the design project rely on the application of school knowledge in real-life contexts or problems, and provide opportunities for students to share their work with audiences beyond the classroom and school.
Narrative	Case studies, personal stories, accounts and profiles are included in lessons to illustrate concepts and to enrich student understanding related to the design project.