



Independent Practice

Independent practice empowers students to take ownership of their learning through structured opportunities to apply, rehearse, and extend new knowledge. With the right scaffolding, tools, and teacher clarity, practice becomes not just repetition – but transformation.

One-size-fits-all doesn't fit anyone. Rows of identical desks or uniform outputs risk stifling creativity and widening equity gaps, leaving learners with different needs, interests, and abilities behind. Independent practice should unlock student voice and choice. When students can approach practice in different formats, at their own pace, and through modalities that work for them, they become more deeply engaged and more likely to retain their learning.

Rationale for Overdale Junior School to use iPad implementation to support Independent Practice

At our school, we use iPads as a tool to strengthen learning, build independence, and ensure every child can access high-quality practice in a way that works for them. This approach is rooted in well-established educational research and aligns with the evidence-based frameworks outlined in the *DNA of Learning* series: Direct Instruction, Independent Practice, Feedback, and Assessment.

Below is the rationale we share with families.

1. iPads Give Every Child Voice, Choice, and Confidence

Independent practice is most effective when students can show their understanding in different ways. Not all children express their learning best through writing alone. iPads allow students to:

- Record their thinking using voice, video, drawing, or text
- Work at their own pace
- Choose the method that best reflects their strengths

This flexibility increases motivation, engagement, and ownership of learning – key principles supported by research on student agency and Universal Design for Learning (UDL).

2. iPads Make Learning More Accessible and Inclusive

Every learner is different. Some need more scaffolding, some benefit from visual models, and others need opportunities to rehearse ideas multiple times. iPads help us provide:

- Clear models and examples students can revisit
- Built-in accessibility tools (text-to-speech, translation, zoom, voice recording)
- Multiple ways to access and express learning

This ensures that independent practice is equitable and responsive to diverse needs, rather than “one-size-fits-all.”

3. iPads Strengthen Memory Through Rehearsal and Retrieval

Research shows that students remember more when they revisit and apply learning in different ways. iPads support this by enabling:

- Short, frequent practice tasks
- Opportunities to rehearse key ideas
- Activities that encourage retrieval, not just repetition

This helps move potential learning from the working memory into long-term understanding.

4. iPads Make Teacher Guidance Clear and Consistent

Independent practice only works when students know what success looks like. With iPads, teachers can provide:

- Clear instructions
- Annotated examples
- Voice notes that explain steps in a familiar tone
- Templates that guide students through tasks

This clarity helps students work independently with confidence, even when the teacher is supporting others.

Evidence & Principles

Student Voice & Choice

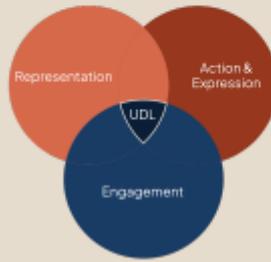
When learners have agency in how they demonstrate understanding, motivation and engagement rise. Independent practice should balance structure with freedom. (Ómarsson, 2017)

Encoding & Retrieval Diversity

Learning strengthens when information is encoded and retrieved in different ways – writing, speaking, drawing, or applying in new contexts. (Kirschner, 2023)

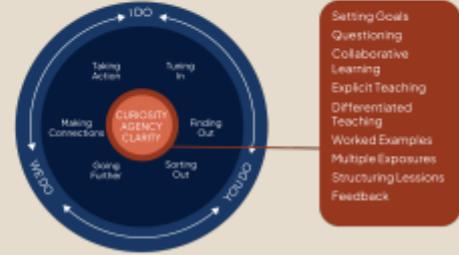
Universal Design for Learning (UDL)

Designing learning environments “for everyone” ensures equity and accessibility. Multiple means of representation, engagement, and expression benefit all students. (Rose & Meyer, 2002; OECD, 2023)



Teacher Clarity & Scaffolding

Clear modelling and guided practice support successful independent practice. Explicit routines, expectations, and feedback help students thrive. (EEF, 2018; Rosenshine, 2012; Doug Lemov, 2015; Tom Sherrington, 2020)



Digital Strategies

Structured Freedom

Provide clear goals and success criteria while allowing flexibility in how students demonstrate their understanding, encouraging creativity through multimodal practice – text, voice, video, or visual annotations.

Rehearsal & Application

Practice should be deliberate, not just repetitive. Short, frequent rehearsal of key ideas strengthens automaticity and builds confidence.

Equity & Inclusion

Digital tools enable students of all abilities to engage meaningfully. By applying UDL principles, practice opportunities become accessible and responsive to diverse needs.



How Showbie Makes Independent Practice Visible and Sustainable

- Students can record, annotate, and submit work in multiple formats, giving choice in how learning is demonstrated.
- Teachers provide scaffolds and exemplars through reusable templates, voice notes, or annotated models.
- Parents can view and support practice, strengthening the home-school connection.
- Work is automatically collected into portfolios, making growth visible over time.
- Outcomes improve not only for students by improving the quality of their work, but also for teachers by providing insight into their pedagogical impact, not just usage data, making it possible to measure and develop practice effectively.



1. Voice & Choice – Students engage in practice that reflects their strengths.
2. Efficiency – Save time by reusing recorded explanations.
3. Equity – Ensure all learners and families can access consistent teaching.