Choosing the best approach to drug education is a key task for educators. There is no shortage of guidance, information, and materials but choosing the most relevant and supportive for the group or groups you lead depend on a number of factors.

This document aims to help you understand the principles that lie at the heart of good practice; those that follow have been adapted from the latest best-practice evaluations carried out in the UK, Canada, Australia, the USA, by the United Nations and in other countries.

The Principles

1. Environment: Good drug education is...
   - Underpinned by a whole school approach
   - Enhanced by family-based prevention programmes

2. Planning: An appropriate curriculum is...
   - Relevant and responsive to the developmental stage and circumstances of the children and young people (see Needs Assessment below)
   - Taught in the context of other personal, social and health issues.
   - Manageable given available resources
   - Informed by programmes that produce achievable outcomes

This briefing paper is part of a series produced by the Drug Education Forum, for schools and others involved in drug education or informal drug prevention.
• Developmental: re-visited, consolidated and extended throughout childhood and youth
• Supported by appropriate training
• Evidence based and/or evaluated

3. **Practice**: The educator...
   • Creates a comfortable classroom climate
   • Uses interactive teaching styles
   • Is responsive to different cultural views and realities
   • Includes a normative component

4. **Content**: The selected materials and activities...
   • Explore attitudes to drugs and drug users
   • Provide children and young people with opportunities to develop social skills
   • Use credible, reliable and up-to-date sources to explore, contrast, and, where appropriate, support (or challenge) attitudes to self and others, to drugs, to drug use and non-use - and to drug users and non-users
   • Strengthen protective factors
   • Minimise risk factors

5. **Evaluation**: The programme is informed by...
   • Assessment
   • Monitoring
   • Impact evaluation