Spring 2020

Alcester Academy

Teaching & Learning

Welcome to the Spring 2020 Edition

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to this edition of the

Teaching and Learning Journal. If you would like to contribute in

future please let me know, or send any articles to;

sarahmellors@alcesteracademy.org.uk

Inside this issue:

Wellbeing
Three ways to up your beat

Welcome self-reflection	Practice gratitude	Prioritise connecting with others in real life
Try reflecting on your interaction before making negative assumptions. Feel the emotion physically rather than make reasons, or self-indulging in emotions that bring more negative belief.	Two or three times a week before you go to bed think of three things you're grateful or thankful for, how it made you feel and how you made those good things happen.	Having a good social network to turn to in the good and bad times is important in improving our mental wellbeing. So why not try and go to the staff room at lunch and breaks once a week.

Contributors: Miss S Bayliss, Miss L Cotterill, Mrs J Scott and Miss N Taylor.

Teaching & Learning

Thought Provoking?

Why we need to ditch differentiation

Setting children different levels of work according to their ability places a glass ceiling on their progress, argues this teacher.

It's been five years since I finished teacher training and the word "differentiation" still haunts me.

Seminars and lectures would talk about differentiation. Within our teaching placements, we were expected to differentiate. However, this differentiation was hinged on children doing *different* things, usually organised by providing a range of different tasks (three or more) to suit the needs of different groups of children.

Many of us filled out planning sheets, deciding the tasks for the "lower-, middle- and upper-attaining" children. We determined what "all, some or most" of the children will do that lesson.

It led to some children imposing restrictions on themselves: they only did a certain amount of work as they knew that was all that was expected of them.

In a 1996 The Simpsons episode, "You Only Move Twice", Bart is having difficulty in his new class. Instantly, he is removed to a remedial class and quite perceptively states: "Let me get this straight. We're behind the rest of our class and we're going to catch up to them by going slower than they are?"

A crazy idea, possibly, but nonetheless, something that occurs in our classes? Quite often, the so-called lowest attaining children in the class will focus on easier skills, basic knowledge and fluency. Alternatively, the higher attaining children will be challenged to take on more difficult knowledge, reasoning, problems and skills. Although not the case in all classrooms, this is certainly evident in many lessons.

By our own admission, we are having low expectations and, therefore, should not be surprised when the pupils who are furthest behind get even further behind. Those at the top of the class steam ahead, resulting in a widening of the gap between the top and the bottom: ironically, what we are setting out to avoid by differentiating in the first place.

I often think if something is taught well enough, and children have

time to properly practise a concept, then they can be successful in that task. Often, breaking new ideas down into steps and having scaffolds in place for children to practise will aid achievement. As frequently as I can, I try to provide one main task and have challenges (for all children) built within that task to extend learning.

I have always found the teaching of inverted commas interesting to watch. A difficult concept involving many parts. In just one lesson, I have seen some children not use the inverted commas, simply putting the speech part in speech bubbles. Some children would have put the speech in inverted commas and others would have used the correct punctuation, too.

It can't be as simple as saying "I expect all of you to do this, good luck!" However, when we have low expectations of children and we are planning activities like this, then, of course, gaps will widen.

According to the "Pygmalion" effect (Rosenthal and Jacobson, 1963), teachers' expectations affect students' academic progress. Having high expectations of all pupils is essential. Rosenthal and

Jacobson stated: "When teachers expected that certain children would show greater intellectual development, those children did show greater intellectual development."

And yet, when we are planning for several different levels of work, and we segregate children into "all, most and some", are we placing high expectations on all learners? Or are we imposing a glass ceiling on the children in our classes?

Going forward, we should be looking to offer varying means of support rather than low expectations and a range of different tasks. Furthermore, it is worth noting that some children do need to spend longer on learning and recalling new concepts. Having starters in lessons that involve lots of recall and low-stakes quizzing is a great way to give pupils further practice and for teachers to work with different groups of pupils to support and re-teach ideas.

The writer is a secondary teacher in the UK Anon TES

June 2019
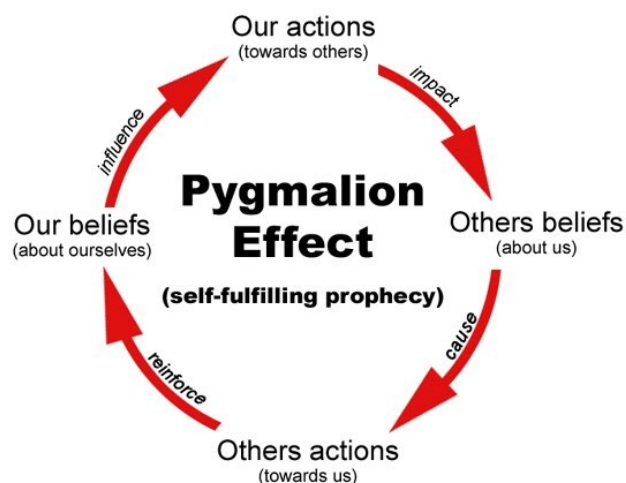
According to the "Pygmalion" effect (Rosenthal and Jacobson, 1963), teachers' expectations affect students' academic progress. Having high expectations of all pupils is essential.

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TEEP at Alcester Academy Update by Louisa Cotterill

The Academy was recently fortunate to be invited to present our TEEP journey at the SSAT National Conference in Birmingham. On the 6th December I arrived a little nervous, but also so excited to be able to share the Academy's achievements with schools up and down the country, and in one case Northern Ireland! The event started with a performance from the Severndale Specialist Academy Makaton Choir whom were a joy to watch - the students gave it their all and were just awe-inspiring! I am so proud of the achievements of our staff and students and was also able to hear from inspiring speakers. One which really touched a nerve was Carmel McConnell MBE, who is the founder of www.magicbreakfast.com. Carmel came from a background of working in management at BT, and after a chance conversation with a headteacher about the impact hunger was having on students, set up her charity in 2003. Magic breakfast now supplies 350,000 breakfasts to children in food poverty every day, and I would highly recommend a read of Carmel's book "Change Activist" if you need a boost to act on your ideas for social justice and change. How many times have we had a small idea to change the lives of our students but been too scared to take a stand and act?

TEEP presentation evening at Alcester Town Hall

On Monday 9th December the Academy also held its first ever TEEP presentation evening at Alcester Town Hall. This was organised to present staff with their Level 1 certificates, with both the Mayor of Alcester and Corinne Settle from the SSAT in attendance. Corinne spoke at length about the benefits of TEEP and how the pedagogy is evolving, as well as congratulating staff on their hard work. Staff enjoyed a well-deserved treat with Alcester Academy cupcakes and a surprise raffle! As someone who has been involved in the development of the programme over the past three years, it was a very proud moment and confirmed TEEP's place at the heart of the Academy's teaching and learning philosophy. What a lovely way to welcome in the festive season!

TEEP Open Day

Lastly, Tuesday 10th December saw the Academy host its first ever TEEP Open Day. The school was granted SSAT TEEP Ambassador School status in November in recognition to our commitment to TEEP, and the impact it has had on teaching and learning. Several Warwickshire and Worcestershire schools sent representatives including Stratford High School, Ridgeway and Birchensale Middle School, and they enjoyed a presentation from the SSAT, Hayley Farnell and myself regarding the school's experience with TEEP. Colleagues also enjoyed a tour of the school and a learning walk which saw some fantastic student work and effort in Art, maths and History - some of the student responses just were superb! Feedback from the event was overwhelmingly positive and I am sure it is just the first of many that will be held to showcase the Academy's excellent attainment, progress, and practice.
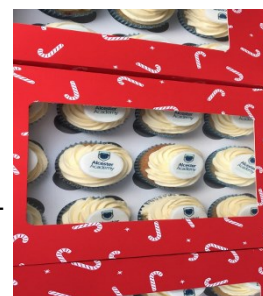
Teaching and Learning Reading:

The book curated by Isabella Wallace and Leah Kirkman is a very informative and thought - provoking read about different forms of feedback. Several prominent educationalists and teachers have contributed their ideas, and each section also contains practical strategies and ideas. I have been recently trialling a number of these ideas in my lessons so will feedback on the success of these next term! Highly recommended and available in the staff CPD section of the LRC.

THE PRINCIPLES OF INSTRUCTION

TAKEN FROM THE INTERNATIONAL ACADEMY OF EDUCATION

This poster is from the work of Barak Rosenshine who based these ten principles of instruction and suggested classroom practices on:

- research on how the brain acquires and uses new information
- research on the classroom practices of those teachers whose students show the highest gains
- findings from studies that taught learning strategies to students.

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01 DAILY REVIEW

MO TU WE TH FR

Daily review is an important component of instruction. It helps strengthen the connections of the material learned. Automatic recall frees working memory for problem solving and creativity.

02 NEW MATERIAL IN SMALL STEPS

Our working memory is small, only handling a few bits of information at once. Avoid its overload — present new material in small steps and proceed only when first steps are mastered.

03 ASK QUESTIONS

The most successul teachers spend more than half the class time lecturing, demonstrating and asking questions. Questions allow the teacher to determine how well the material is learned.

04 PROVIDE MODELS

Students need cognitive support to help them learn how to solve problems. Modelling, worked examples and teacher thinking out loud help clarify the specific steps involved.

05 GUIDE STUDENT PRACTICE

Students need additional time to rephrase, elaborate and summarise new material in order to store it in their long-term memory. More successful teachers built in more time for this.

06 CHECK STUDENT UNDERSTANDING

Less successful teachers merely ask "Are there any questions?" No questions are taken to mean no problems. False. By contrast, more successful teachers check on all students.

07 OBTAIN HIGH SUCCESS RATE

A success rate of around 80% has been found to be optimal, showing students are learning and also being challenged. Better teachers taught in small steps followed by practice.

08 SCAFFOLDS FOR DIFFICULT TASKS

Scaffolds are temporary supports to assist learning. They can include modelling, teacher thinking aloud, cue cards and checklists. Scaffolds are part of cognitive apprenticeship.

09 INDEPENDENT PRACTICE

Independent practice produces 'overlearning' — a necessary process for new material to be recalled automatically. This ensures no overloading of students' working memory.

10 WEEKLY & MONTHLY REVIEW

WEEK 1 WEEK 2 WEEK 3 WEEK 4 WEEK 5 WEEK 6 WEEK 7 WEEK 8

The effort involved in recalling recently-learned material embeds it in long-term memory. And the more this happens, the easier it is to connect new material to such prior knowledge.

Teaching & Learning

Minecraft in the Classroom…?
Surely not!

The Minecraft Education Edition website offers lesson plans and downloadable worlds to help teachers integrate the game into the classroom. There's also a Minecraft Professional Learning Community. Here you can connect with other educators, submit and share lesson plans, save your favorite resources, participate in discussions, and earn badges. When planning a lesson, be sure to take advantage of the teacher controls: You have the ability to select the type of biome and make changes within that biome, such as time and weather. Once in the game world, you can also teleport students who have roamed from the project or have gotten lost. Use the game's best feature -- the ability to communicate directly with students -- to send messages to the whole class or to individuals as needed.

Lessons are really only limited by your creativity. In Social Studies, students could work in small groups and create an Iroquois village. Math classes might use the game to learn about area and perimeter by creating a house, garden, and pool -- and supplying the correct dimensions. Whether you need technical tips or great ideas to enhance learning, ask your students; they'll be your most valuable resource.

https://education.minecraft.net/

TEACH ELEMENTARY MATH WITH MINECRAFT

Smart women

HOW I GOT HERE

Sabrina Sacco, a performing arts teacher at Alcester Academy in Warwickshire, discusses her path to success

When I was at school, I was in awe of my chemistry teacher, Mrs Broad. I struggled with science, but she was patient and helped me work through each problem. She came across as a very strong woman and was an excellent tutor; no one misbehaved in her class. I thought, 'This is the sort of woman I want to be one day.'

DESPITE MY EARLY FASCINATION WITH SCHOOL, I BECAME A WEDDING PLANNER AFTER UNIVERSITY. I enjoyed my job, but I didn't feel fulfilled and knew something was missing. I'd catch myself counting down the clock and, in the back of my mind, teaching was always there.

IN 2004, I DECIDED TO TAKE A LEAP AND APPLIED FOR A TEACHING QUALIFICATION. I was accepted to do a Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) at the University of Worcester, specialising in Modern Languages. As part of my teacher training, I assisted a primary school class. On my first day, a little girl innocently told me I had a big nose. Instead of being offended, I was warmed by her unadulterated honesty and, in that moment, I knew I'd found my place.

AS I WAS FINISHING MY TRAINING, MY FORMER TEACHER, MRS BROAD, GOT IN TOUCH. She told me a position had come up at my old school and invited me to interview. I couldn't believe it when I got the job. At 23, I arrived for my first day as a teacher at Alcester Academy in Warwickshire – the secondary school where I'd been a student.

I TAUGHT LANGUAGES FOR 10 YEARS, WHILE ALSO LEADING DRAMA CLASSES. I've always adored the theatre, so when a role teaching solely performing arts came up in 2015, I went for it. I'm a huge advocate for soft skills (social and communication abilities) in young people. Exam results are great, but we're sending people into the world who don't have the confidence to speak on the phone or interact properly. Performance really hones those interpersonal skills.

SEEING MY STUDENTS IMPROVE AND SUCCEED IS WHAT KEEPS ME GOING. I'm still in touch with most of my first-ever tutor group, who are in their late 20s now. They've become doctors and mechanics, got married and even had their own children. I can't believe they're the same tiny year-seven students I first met.

I WANT MY SONS TO SEE A WOMAN WITH A GOOD CAREER, SO BALANCING FAMILY LIFE WITH WORK IS IMPORTANT. I'm able to work four days a week, which is a huge help with three boys at primary school and my husband also working. My eldest is due to join Alcester Academy in September and, when I asked if he wanted me to move schools so I wouldn't be his teacher, he said no. He told me my job was too important.

'I WANT MY SONS TO SEE A WOMAN WITH A GOOD CAREER'

I'M A HUGE ADVOCATE FOR MY PROFESSION AND HAVE MENTORED TRAINEE TEACHERS. I work with Get Into Teaching, the campaign that aims to inspire anyone, from graduates to career-changers, to consider teaching. Often, people's perceptions of teaching are completely different to the reality – it's a hugely rewarding job.

I DEFINE SUCCESS AS THE DIFFERENCE I'M ABLE TO MAKE. As a mum, I understand the trust you put in your child's teacher. I see up to 150 pupils walk through my classroom door each day and I have the chance to positively influence and instil passion in every one of them.

NEARLY 14 YEARS LATER, I STILL PINCH MYSELF THAT I'M ABLE TO DO THIS JOB. I'm always looking towards what's next and have developed a three-year plan for my department, which I'm really excited about. For me, teaching is the greatest privilege there is.

To find out more about teaching as a career, visit getintoteaching.education.gov.uk or call Get Into Teaching on 0800 389 2500

Teaching & Learning

Deep dives:
Will Ofsted's plan to check up on the curriculum really work?

Tom Richmond looks below the surface at whether it will work.

'Top-level view', 'Deep dive', 'Bringing it together' – no, this is not a collection of cheesy management jargon from the corporate world. It is, in fact, the new methodology that Ofsted will use to calculate the 'quality of education' in every school that it inspects from September 2019.

Following an initial conversation with school leaders (the 'top-level view'), inspectors will embark on a 'deep dive' to "[gather] evidence on the curriculum intent, implementation and impact over a sample of subjects, topics or aspects." Alongside more conversations with school leaders, curriculum leaders, teachers and pupils, 'lesson visits' and 'work scrutiny' will be a key source of information for inspectors. However, the numbers included in Ofsted's methodology provide more questions than answers.

Each deep dive "will typically focus on a sample of four to six subjects, looking at a wide variety of pupils in different year groups across that sample." There is no clarity on what a 'wide variety of pupils' means or how they will be identified. Leaving that to one side, Ofsted state that their inspectors "can make appropriately secure judgements on curriculum, teaching and behaviour across a particular deep

dive when 4 to 6 lessons are visited".

So, in short, 4-6 subjects multiplied by 4-6 'lesson visits' equals a total of 16-36 lesson observations during every single inspection. Can you imagine teachers being subject to 36 'visits' in the space of two days?

And what about the length of these 'visits'? Surprisingly, Ofsted has not said how long they will last. How can we judge the suitability of their approach (especially after the consultation has closed) if we don't know how it will operate?

A quick calculation shows that if Ofsted only spend 15 minutes in each lesson, this would be 15 minutes multiplied by 36 lesson visits to give a total of 540 minutes – that's nine hours – of observations in a single inspection. Even if there are only 16 lesson visits, that is still a total of four hours of observations.

Seeing as Ofsted has said their focus is more on a "deliberately and explicitly connected sample of lessons", is 15 minutes really enough to gather first-hand evidence in each classroom? How will inspectors make such significant judgements on the 'connectedness' and sequencing of lesson material across an entire curriculum within a matter of minutes?

Inspection model for quality of education

Top level view

Deep dive

Bringing it together
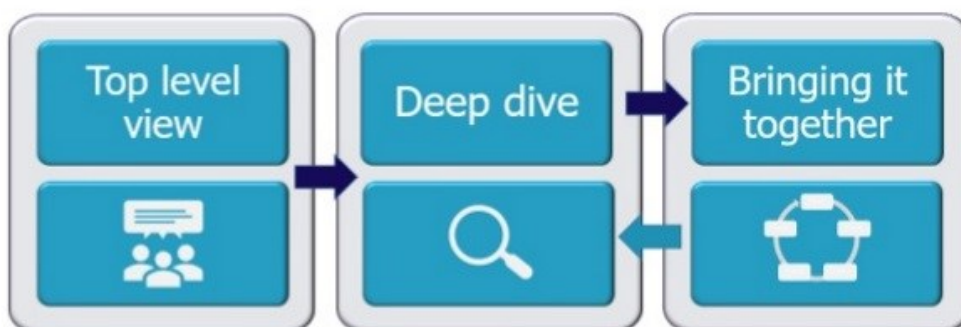
On book scrutiny, there is even less cause for optimism: "Inspectors should review a minimum of six workbooks (or pieces of work) per subject per year group, and scrutinise work from at least two year groups." So that's 4-6 subjects multiplied by six workbooks across two year groups to give a total of 48-72 books being looked at by inspectors. How many minutes can each book expect to receive in this context? Can inspectors make genuinely fine-tuned assessments of the 'quality of education' based on scanning a handful of books from a handful of subjects?

I find it hard to believe that picking six exercise books from a year group of 100-200 pupils will produce a fair and reliable judgement on "whether pupils know more, remember more and can do more". I wouldn't even trust a quick browse through six exercise books from the same class, let alone an entire year group.

I know how hard Ofsted inspectors will work as they try to make a success of this new inspection framework. Nevertheless, how confident can we be in a framework that aims to provide an accurate judgement on the 'quality of education' in a school based on a very brief scan of what is happening in a school, classroom, subject or year group?

In principle, Ofsted's 'deep dives' could be a useful way to understand how school leaders and subject leaders plan and deliver their curricula, but Ofsted still has not published any research to show that they will lead to consistent judgements across thousands of schools – and that should worry us all.

TES May 2019

Teaching & Learning

Teaching pupils how to learn
By Jo Scott

It was during a teaching and learning training day at Stratford High School when I first truly considered the difference between 'teaching' and 'learning'. Mike Hughes was leading a presentation on encouraging challenge and curiosity in lessons, where his anecdotes surrounding asking his children what they did at school today, really rang true to me. Their response was simply, 'We just did stuff.' I have been considering the lasting memories of my lessons on pupils, ever since.

Whilst we can all, at times, fall victim to the pressures of content-heavy specifications, it is imperative to ensure our students have learning skills and learning mindsets. With this in mind, I recently asked my Year 9 group to explain the difference between 'teaching' and 'learning' and, without surprise, they found it confusing. They explained how it was easier to listen to the teacher and copy notes, feeling assured and comfortable that they had 'learnt' lots that day. But let us consider this old proverb: give a man a fish and you feed him for a day; teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime.

As a TEEP ambassador school, we have worked tirelessly to maintain high expectations of ourselves as educators and I feel we owe those expectations to our learners too. Effective learner behaviours are to be 'responsible and independent' and 'it is important that they understand more about how to learn so that they can be empowered in the learning process.' But what does this look like on a daily basis, and how can we ensure students are prepared to be responsible for their own learning?

On many occasions, I have felt saddened when I have planned a creative and active-learning based lesson, only to feel like I spent most of the lesson keeping the pupils on task. Aside from the reminder that we are educating teenagers who want to be discussing social media and antics at breaktime, I couldn't understand why pupils could not keep themselves on task. As a result, I've set myself a personal challenge to re-kindle the spark and enthusiasm for pupil-led learning.

Mike Hughes (And The Main Thing Is…Learning) suggests that learning 'is an active process, done by people, not to them; a product of doing rather than receiving.' But what does this look like in a classroom? I am challenging myself (and my learners) to trial the following learning activities over the next few weeks.

Creating curiosity from the very start of the lesson

Thought-provoking and almost bizarre questions will definitely encourage learning conversations, and the students won't even realise it! Consider the 'buzz' and 'spark' in your classrooms with opening dilemmas such as: How are lungs like Hogwarts? Why does a fly stick to a spider's web but a spider does not? Or even, how does Peppa Pig exploit stereotypes? From the outset, students are engaged, confused and also eager to see why this has relevance to what they are about to study. Once the learning has taken place, it is their time to reflect on whether their answer has changed!

Allowing students to feel 'stuck'

With the right environment, feeling 'stuck' can be crucial to deep learning and high-order thinking. Using a higher-order questioning grid, I aim to challenge all of my groups to 'solve' a piece of 'prose' or 'poetry' through their conversations, leaving myself as facilitator. You can differentiate the grid, allocating pupils particular colours. Once they have created their own questions about the text, they can swap with another group and work together to give their own interpretations to 'solve' the text.

Q	is/are	Did/do	can	could	might
What		…Juliet's father want her to do?			…have happened if Juliet had listened to her father?
Where					
Who		…Lord Capulet want her to marry?			
Why			…Lord Capulet treat women so poorly?		
How					…people react to Lord Capulet's character these days?

Timpson Review Update (May 2019)

Schools will be made accountable for the pupils they exclude and there will be a clampdown on off-rolling, as part of Government measures taken in response to the Timpson Review of exclusions.

The review, published In May makes 30 recommendations to Government as it highlights variation in exclusions practice across different schools, local authorities and certain groups of children. The report concludes that while there is no optimal number of exclusions, there needs to be action to ensure permanent exclusions are only used as a last resort, where nothing else will do.

Analysis shows 85% of all mainstream schools not expelling a single child in 2016/17, but 0.2% of schools having expelled more than ten pupils in the same year.

Vulnerable groups of children are more likely to be excluded, with 78% of permanent exclusions issued to children who had special educational needs (SEN), or classified as in need or eligible for free school meals. Certain ethnic groups, including Bangladeshi and Indian pupils, have lower rates of exclusion than White British pupils, with the analysis also finding some ethnic groups, such as Black Caribbean and Mixed White and Black Caribbean pupils, experiencing higher rates, after controlling for other factors.

Edward Timpson CBE said:

No parent sends their child off to school believing they will end up being excluded but when this does happen we all need to be confident we have a well-functioning system that makes sure no child slips through the net. Exclusion from school should never mean exclusion from education.

Throughout this review I have found too much variation in the use of exclusions and too many missed opportunities for children to remain in the education that best suits their needs.

Although I did see examples of schools using exclusions appropriately and effectively, there is clear room for improvement and everyone – from teachers and parents, the Department for Education and Ofsted, to local authorities and children's services - has their part to play.

We expect school leaders to make sure all children are getting a good education, but we must equip them with the skills and capacity to do so. We need to reward schools who are doing this well and hold to account those who are not. Most importantly there must be safeguards in place for when things go wrong so that we can keep children on the path towards the successful future they all deserve.

It also found evidence that good behaviour cultures are vital in maintaining orderly environments that support all children, but teachers need consistent guidance and tools to deal effectively with poor and disruptive behaviour.

Education Secretary at the time, Damian Hinds said:

Every child deserves an education that fosters ambition and provides the knowledge and skills they need to make the most of their potential. That must include children at risk of exclusion or those that have been expelled.

This pivotal review demonstrates widespread good practice in support for students and in the use of exclusions, and I will continue to back headteachers in creating safe and orderly environments that enable teachers to teach and provide the right learning conditions for pupils – and sometimes exclusion will be the final option.

Exclusion should not be considered the end point for any child; it has to be the start of something new and positive – with alternative provision offering smaller class sizes and tailored support.

We also need to support those most at risk of exclusion, taking action before exclusion happens. Too many children can fall through the cracks, so I want schools to be accountable for the pupils they exclude, alongside tackling the practice of illegal off-rolling. This is not an easy answer, but it is one that will help the most vulnerable children in our society to fulfil their potential.

Teaching & Learning

Why teachers should choose multiple-choice questions

MCQs are often seen as an *easier* form of assessment for pupils, and a much more labour-intensive (and less useful) assessment tool for teachers.

But does the multiple-choice question deserve that reputation?

Teachers ask around 400 questions every day, which adds up to a staggering 70,000 a year. Most of these are low cognitive questions and it's important to consider how to make these questions more effective in developing pupils' learning.

By designing each choice to represent a different line of reasoning, it is possible to immediately identify misunderstandings and take corrective action. It primarily works as an aid to knowledge recall if used repeatedly these types of questions helps students to remember what they have learned.

Another way is as a diagnostic tool for assessing what pupils understand and what they don't. Here, carefully written answers can help the teacher diagnose exactly what misconceptions pupils have.

When designing effective multiple questions, there are two key principles to consider:

- Questions should be rigorous

- Questions should be informative to the teacher, that is, they ought to be a diagnostic.

Rigour

The rigour of the question is important in ensuring that the answers is not to easy to guess for example:

Whose death is remembered on Good Friday?

Jesus

The president of the USA

Elvis Presley

My teacher

This question is of little use because if a student couldn't remember who died on Good Friday it is too easy to guess the correct answer.

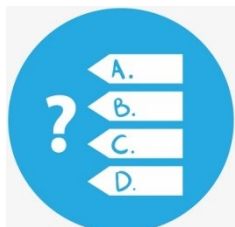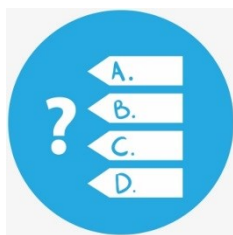A more rigorous question would be:

Whose death is remembered on Good Friday?

Jesus

Lazarus

Judas

Pontius Pilate

Rigour in questions can be increased in the following ways:

- Having answers that are close to the correct answer or are plausible answers so it is more difficult to guess the answer.

- The more possible answers the chance of guessing the correct answer increases.

- Have more than one correct answer but one being more accurate than the other requires judgements skills to arrive at the most appropriate answer and may also give rise to good classroom discussions.

- Using negative questions or reversing the question encourages the students to read carefully.

- It should be impossible for students to be only being able to get the right answer unless they have understood the topic.

- They should be able to be answered in no more than 30 seconds if it requires a multi-step process it could be difficult to spot where the misconception lies.

- Stretch questions can be created with comparisons or connection between topics for example which of the following is common both in Christianity and Islam.

15 easy ways for multiple choice

1. Try to answer without looking at the options, and then look at them Students often find the three wrong answers in the question so distracting that it is best just to get them to try and answer the question without looking the choices and then look at the options to check their answers. To […]

1. Try to answer without looking at the options, and then look at them

Students often find the three wrong answers in the question so distracting that it is best just to get them to try and answer the question without looking the choices and then look at the options to check their answers. To add a game element, after they have written their answers down give the options one by one, allowing students to choose each one if it matches their answer or if they change their minds when they hear it. Give 5 points for the first person to choose the correct option as you read them out, and minus one point to anyone who guesses the wrong one.

2. Guess the answer first

With multiple choice reading and listening questions, it is often a good idea to get students to guess which answers are wrong or clearly wrong before they read or listen. This is a good way of making sure they understand the question and have it at the front of their

mind when they are listening. To add fun, you can get them to bet on their choices depending on how confident they are.

3. Look at the options and guess the question

In this variation on Guess the Answer First, students are given the four options and have to guess what the question is, e.g. if the options are "Because he is bleeding" and "So he can get high" they could try "Why is the person taking morphine?" This task can be done with or without looking at or listening to the text. Give points for how close they are to the real question.

4. Look at the options and make the question

In this variation of Look at the Options and Guess the Question, students write questions that match one of the four options to test other teams with, e.g. if the options are "for", "since" and "ago" they can write "I have been here _____ Tuesday". After testing each other and checking their answers, they should find the real multiple choice task easier and more interesting.

5. One more challenge

Another way for students to challenge each other is to tippex out one of the false options and get students to rewrite the whole question with one more distractor they have written to try and fool another team. Alternatively, you can get them to write two or more distractors. You will need to make sure each team has different questions.

### 6. The amazing growing, rotating multiple choice

Each group has one different multiple choice question with only two options. They try the question and check their answers with the teacher, make up one additional wrong option, and pass to the next group. The next group then tries the question, makes up one additional wrong option etc. Continue until the task gets back to the original group, who should see if they can still remember or work out the answer

7. Multiple choice millionaire

Allow students the Who Wants to Be a Millionaire options of "Phone a friend" (ask someone else in class what they think), "Fifty fifty" (reduce the options to two) and "Ask the audience" (get the whole class to vote on the right answer)

8. Elimination

When you are going through the answers as a class, allow each team to give an answer they are confident of, either one answer they are sure is right or (probably easier for them) one option they are sure is wrong. You can give points if you like.
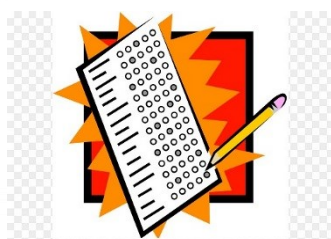
9. Multiple movie options

Especially for students who are taking English language exams, multiple choice questions based on dialogue from a film can be very good practice. You can easily write questions based on grammar, vocabulary, listening comprehension, or even reading comprehension if you give them a script of part of the film.

10. Multiple songs

Any of the things you can do with a film, you can do even more easily with a song

11. No options

A good way of giving students an easy start and improving their tactics when faced with a multiple choice question is actually to give them the correct answers and get them to work out why it is correct and the other three options are wrong, e.g. by underlining the correct place in the text.

12. Options here

A similar activity to No Options is to give them the reading or listening text with the important parts already underlined, so that they can ignore the rest of the information and get into the habit of underlining the important information themselves.

13. No distractions questions

A little less help than Options Here that also aids in getting rid of distractions is giving the students the questions with the words they particularly need to concentrate underlined.

14. Multiple choice matching

Before students answer the multiple choice questions, get them to match the cut up questions and options.

15. Multiple mixing

A more preparation-intensive but more intellectually stimulating version of Multiple Choice Matching is to rewrite the questions so the 1 right option in each case is written in the wrong question, e.g. the right option 1 A is switched with the right option 2 D, but 1 B, C and D and 2 A, B and C are in their original places.

http://www.natre.org.uk/uploads/Free%20Resources/multiple%20choice%20questions%20B%20Wood%20v2.pdf

https://www.tefl.net/elt/ideas/quizzes/easy-ways-for-multiple-choice/

Irena Barker

03 January 2020

Why teachers should choose multiple-choice questions Irena Barker, tes magazine

Teaching & Learning

The Learning Curve
How can we get students to remember more stuff?

One of the major problems we are now encountering with the new GCSEs is how to enable students to retain vast amounts of information with time restrictions on the curriculum. This is particularly pertinent when we investigate further and find that all of the research suggests that cramming just doesn't work, and that students need to continually revisit knowledge in order to retain it.

Here are a couple of strategies that you may want to consider and/or adapt. More importantly, below is the research, findings and implications for the classroom.

Idea no. 1: Silent Starters

Students enter in silence and complete a low stakes quiz that focuses on memory recall of facts and figures as opposed to exam style questions such as 'explain', 'justify'.

The teacher takes the student through the correct answers identifying and correcting misconceptions.

As a rule of thumb; questions are taken from topics that the students were taught last week, last term, last year to ensure knowledge is being revised from prior learning, not just last lesson.

Idea no. 2: Recap Starters

Students complete a 15 minute activity where they answer a range of questions that are broken into two parts. One set that revisits last lesson and one set that revisits last term. Afterwards give feedback – students can use a coloured pen to tick those they got correct, and add in the answers to those they didn't know. Not only does this revisit previously taught material, but also revision is easier as they (and you) can see at a glance the areas they find difficult to remember.

Here is an example I created from my RE lesson. We use these every other lesson.

Information Recall in RE

LAST LESSON: The Problem of Evil & Suffering

Define	**Show** Christian's belief about the nature of God.
Natural evil: _____	
Moral evil: _____	
Omnipotent: _____	
Omniscient: _____	
Omnibenevolent: _____	
Understand How do atheists use the Christians view of God to disprove his existence? _____ _____	

LAST TERM: The Holy Trinity

Define: The Holy Trinity:	**Compare:** Why do Christians have different views of the importance of the Holy Trinity?
Most Important	Not Important

Understand: How do Christians respond to the Trinity in different ways?
God the father:_____

God the Son:_____

God the Holy Spirit: _____

The Theory...

Memory	Spaced Learning
Research In 2013, researchers from Kent State University, Duke University, University of Wisconsin and University of Virginia published a review of hundreds of studies to explore which strategies are most likely to lead to long-term learning. http://elephantsdontforget.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/Learning-White-Paper.pdf	**Research** Researcher Nicholas Cepeda and colleagues from The University of California, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and the University of South Florida devised an experiment to explore the optimum amount of time to leave between revision sessions. Their study, published in 2009 in Psychological Science, offers valuable insight into this. https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1111/j.1467-9280.2008.02209.x
The Main Findings The following two techniques were rated as being very effective for improving long term memory: Practice Testing: This is where students have to generate an answer to a question. This includes past-papers, multiple choice questions or doing practice essay answers. This technique has been extensively researched and is consistently found to be one of the most effective ways to improve learning. Distributed practice (sometimes referred to as 'spacing'): this is doing little bits of work often instead of a lot all at once (i.e. cramming). Essentially, students remember more if they spread out their learning; for instance, doing one hour a day for eight days rather than doing eight hours in one day.	**The Main Findings** They found that after learning the material, the optimum gap to leave before revisiting the same material depends on how far after that second revision session the test is. The researchers found the following timings offer a good guideline: **How Far Away The Test Is** / **Gap Between Revision Sessions** 7 Days — 3 Days 35 Days — 8 Days 70 Days — 12 Days 350 Days — 27 Days
Implications for the Classroom It will vary depending on the nature of your cohort and the subject you teach. The testing effect can be harnessed through short quizzes at the start or end of a lesson. Likewise, distributed practice is important now that students no longer do modular exams, so revisiting previous topics is even more important.	**Implications for the Classroom** With students no longer doing modular exams, the ability to retain and recall large pieces of information has become even more important. It is now a premium skill. Teachers can help students improve their long-term memory by spacing out the material and revisiting it regularly. To commit something to memory, it takes time and repetition.

The table in the "Spaced Learning" cell:

How Far Away The Test Is	Gap Between Revision Sessions
7 Days	3 Days
35 Days	8 Days
70 Days	12 Days
350 Days	27 Days

Further reading and reference: The Science of learning Bradley Busch & Edward Watson

By Sarah Bayliss

Teaching & Learning

New to the LRC staff section
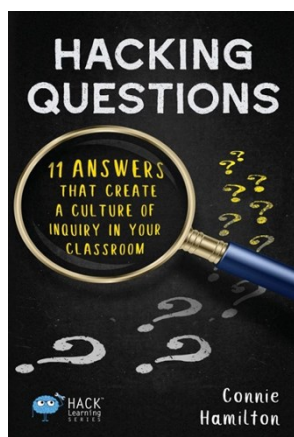
Hacking Questions

Do you need to ramp up your classroom questioning techniques?

Questions are the driving force of learning in classrooms. Hacking Questions digs into framing, delivering, and maximizing questions in the classroom to keep students engaged in learning.

Known in education circles as the "Questioning Guru," Connie Hamilton shows teachers of all subjects and grades how to:

Hear the music: listen for correct answers

Scaffold to trigger student thinking without doing it for them

Kick the IDK bucket to avoid "I don't know" as the final answer

Punctuate your learning time to end with reflection questions

Spin the throttle to fuel students to ask the questions

Fill your back pocket with engagement questions

Make yourself invisible by establishing student-centered protocols

Be a Pinball Wizard and turn students into facilitators

Praise for Connie Hamilton and Hacking Questions

"Connie Hamilton is known by teachers and leaders as the Questioning Guru. She offers minor tweaks and major perspective shifts. You will be a better questioner tomorrow." -Dr. Dorothy VanderJagt, Professional Learning Coordinator

"Connie Hamilton is a world-class presenter with expertise in the art of questioning. She provides a fresh perspective and practical tips on integrating research-based strategies." -Melisa Mulder, Intervention Teacher

"Connie is an incredible driver of change in our focus on classroom questioning as a best practice instructional strategy." -Troy VanderLaan, Middle School Administrator

Answers to your questions about questions

Hacking Questions provides practical solutions to the universal questioning problems that teachers face daily. Find your answers now.

"Look out, Socrates! Here comes Connie Hamilton, the newest innovator of questionology! — Marcia Gutiérrez, High School Educator

Pocket Pal by Gary Wilson

Based on sound research and experience by leading author Gary Wilson, this Pocket PAL provides and introduction to why boys underachieve along with a practical toolkit of proven strategies to help raise boys' attainment across all age boundaries, enabling every teacher, department, key stage or school to identify the problems and plan a way forward.
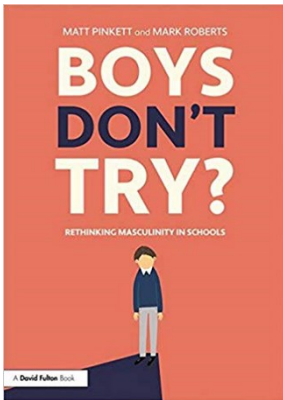
Boys Don't Try

What do we want for our boys?" Matt and Mark explode myths, challenge some of our preconceptions and suggest alternative routes to success in our raising and educating of boys. And they don't dodge the most sensitive issues.

This is a thoughtful, balanced, thoroughly-researched, eminently sensible and practical consideration of how we can support boys to be their best in the classroom and beyond it. It recognises and addresses the pressures boys are under as they make their journey towards manhood. Mark and Matt skilfully demonstrate that if we help boys in schools we will improve education for girls, too.

Each chapter is structured according to the story, the research, the solutions: this is positive and forward-looking, asking not only "what's not wanted?" but "what's wanted instead?" and so focusses on the future rather than only the past and present.

The authors explain honestly, courageously and with humility how and why they have rethought their own perceptions of "the boy problem" to come to a more nuanced and carefully considered understanding of why boys behave in certain stereotypical ways and how they can be encouraged, motivated and inspired to be their best selves. I learnt a huge amount from this book, and I suggest you will, too.

- Jill Berry, Former head, now leadership consultant
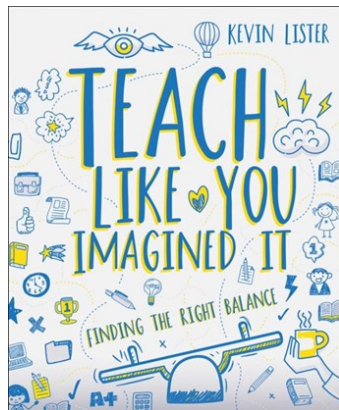
Teach Like You Imagined It

@ListerKev

Shares a wealth of tools, ideas and encouragement to help teachers manage the conflicting pressures of teaching, and to become the educators they imagined they would be.

Before you became a teacher, you imagined yourself as a teacher; hopefully in your imagination you would have been happy, good at your job, and able to manage your work-life balance effectively. Chances are that the reality of teaching is a little different to your imagined life - and it is this disconnect that is likely to breed dissatisfaction and frustration.

What if you could use simple strategies to refresh your teaching practice and take back control of your workload? Covering the prioritising of tasks, the streamlining of marking and feedback, making the most of data and getting the best out of CPD, this book is packed with trusted techniques and savvy suggestions to help you to teach like you imagined it.

Suitable for both new and experienced teachers.

Teaching & Learning

New to the LRC staff section
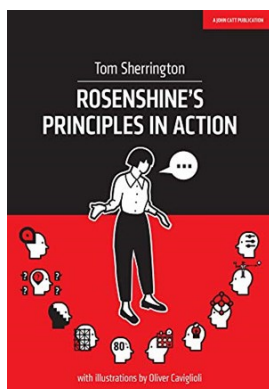
Barak Rosenshine's Principles of Action

Barak Rosenshine's Principles of Instruction are widely recognised for their clarity and simplicity and their potential to support teachers seeking to engage with cognitive science and the wider world of education research.

In this concise new booklet, Rosenshine fan Tom Sherrington amplifies and augments the principles and further demonstrates how they can be put into practice in everyday classrooms.

The second half of the booklet contains Rosenshine's original paper Principles of Instruction, as published in 2010 by the International Academy of Education (IAE) - a paper with a superb worldwide reputation for relating research findings to classroom practice.

Together with Sherrington's insightful and practical guidance, it forms a powerful booklet that no teacher can afford to be without.

The Science of Learning

Demystifying key concepts and translating research into practical advice for the classroom, this unique resource will increase teachers' understanding of crucial psychological research so they can help students improve how they think, feel and behave in school. From large to- small-scale studies, from the quirky to the iconic, The Science of Learning breaks down complicated research to provide teachers with the need-to-know facts and implications of each study. Each overview combines graphics and text, asks key questions, describes related research and considers implications for practice. Highly accessible, each overview is attributed to one of seven key categories:
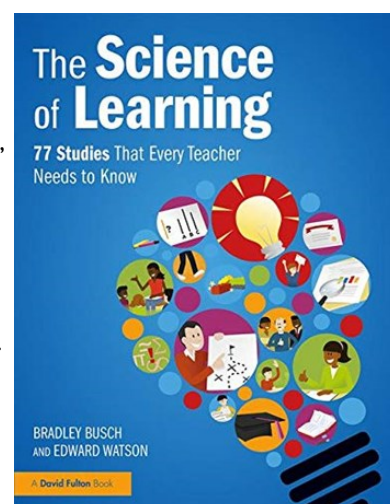
Memory: increasing how much students remember

Mindset, motivation and resilience: improving persistence, effort and attitude

Self-regulation and metacognition: helping students to think clearly and consistently

Student behaviours: encouraging positive student habits and processes

Teacher attitudes, expectations and behaviours: adopting positive classroom practices

Parents: how parents' choices and behaviours impact their childrens' learning

Thinking biases: avoiding faulty thinking habits that get in the way of learning

A hugely accessible resource, this unique book will support, inspire and inform teaching staff, parents and students, and those involved in leadership and CPD.

Teaching Boys

Persistently cheeky, disruptive, even aggressive boys can be found in classrooms everywhere, as can the victims of bullying. These boys' behaviours often pose a problem to themselves as well as to others. As the hotly contested debates about boys' education swirl around them, what can teachers actually do to improve boys' performance in the classroom? Teaching Boys provides a practical framework for teachers to improve boys' education in ways that are appropriate for their school context and also sustainable. Drawing on intensive research in classrooms where innovative teachers are achieving good outcomes with boys, Keddie and Mills show how other teachers can learn from their success. They acknowledge that there are no simple solutions, but show that what teachers do in the classroom really does matter. They emphasise the importance of understanding the impact of dominant and subversive masculinities at all levels of schooling, on both boys and girls. 'What is original about this book is that it marries theory and practice in a way that speaks to the everyday realities and concerns of teachers who work with boys in schools' Associate Professor Wayne Martino, The University of Western Ontario 'What is impressive about Teaching Boys is the way in which Keddie and Mills pull together the best research on boys and schooling with the best research on pedagogies.' Professor Bob Lingard, The University of Edinburgh.
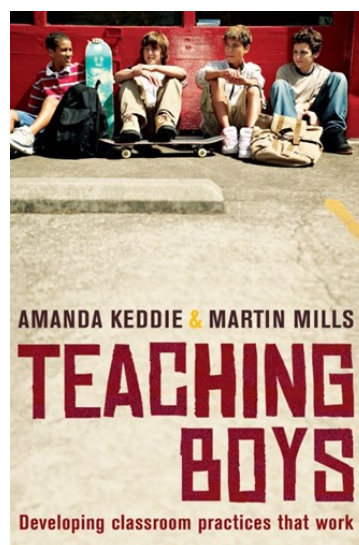
Closing the Vocabulary Gap

As teachers grapple with the challenge of a new, bigger and more challenging school curriculum, at every key stage and phase, success can feel beyond our reach. But what if there were 50,000 small solutions to help us bridge that gap?

In Closing the Vocabulary Gap, Alex Quigley explores the increased demands of an academic curriculum and how closing the vocabulary gap between our 'word poor' and 'word rich' students could prove the vital difference between school failure and success.

This must-read book presents the case for teacher-led efforts to develop students' vocabulary and provides practical solutions for teachers across the curriculum, incorporating easy-to-use tools, resources and classroom activities. Grounded in the very best available evidence into reading development and vocabulary acquisition, Closing the Vocabulary Gap sets out to:

- help teachers understand the vital role of vocabulary in all learning;

- share what every teacher needs to know about reading (but was afraid to ask);

- unveil the intriguing history of words and exactly how they work;

- reveal the elusive secrets to achieve spelling success;

- provide strategies for vocabulary development for all teachers of every subject and phase.

With engaging anecdotes from the author's extensive personal teaching experience woven throughout, as well as accessible summaries of relevant research, Alex Quigley has written an invaluable resource suitable for classroom teachers across all phases, literacy leaders and senior leadership teams who wish to close the vocabulary gap.
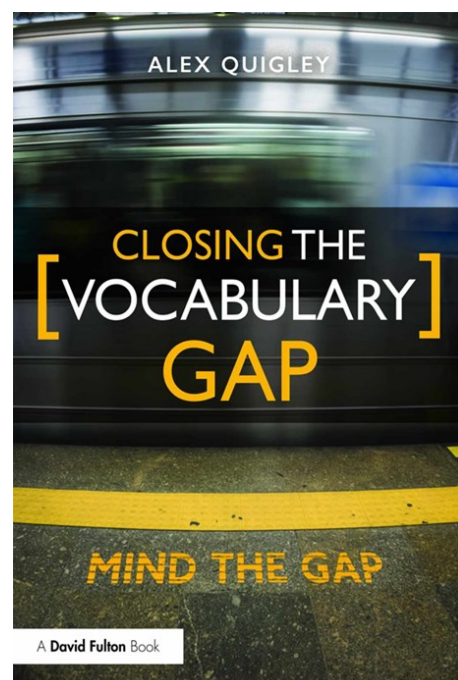
Daisy Sirk

Cognitive Load Theory (CLT)

## What is it, why is it important, and how can it be moderated?

What it is?

CLT was theorized by John Sweller in 1988

Cognitive Load" refers to the amount of information the working memory (WM) can hold at one time. CLT is built upon to model of how humans process information [figure 1]. In the three parts of this model, sensory memories filter out a lot of sensory information we absorb each day. the information that is not filtered out enters the WM where it can be either discarded or processed. If processed, the information is categorized into "schemas", or mental structures that people use to organize knowledge. If these schemas are routinely practiced, they become "automation", and the behavior becomes effortless to retrieve.

Why is CLT important?

CLT can help make information intake more effective

Humans can only hold around 5-9 pieces of informaiton in before their memory reaches its capacity. CLT is important because having knowledge of how humans process memories will benefit teachers on how to best convey information to ensure their students transfer that sensory info into their working and long-term memory WITHOUT overloading their student's memories. CLT also explains two ways that memory can be extended: (1) visual and auditory information is processed separately, meaning that using one process gives the other process a break, and (2) WM treats an existing schema as a single item, meaning drawing upon an established schema can expand the capacity of the WM by adding that new information into a single item without taking up any new space in the WM.
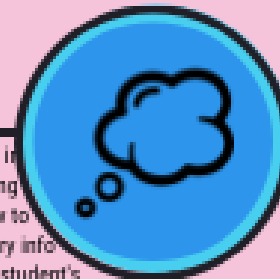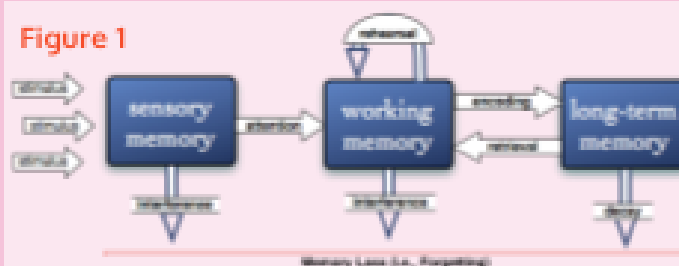
How can it be moderated?

Careful moderation can lead to better learning

Teachers can aid their students by moderating their cognitive load. Some suggestions to moderate this load include pre-teaching, which will help students establish schemas that extend their WM. teachers can replace some of the visual information with auditory information. This reduces cognitive load on the visual WM by also using the auditory memory space. Finally, repeating and applying new information with students is a valuable activity. By repeating information, that information's schema becomes automate, meaning the student is only sing their long-term memory. This frees up their WM for other information.

Figure 1

References
https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/cognitive-load-theory.htm

http://theelearningcoach.com/learning/what-is-cognitive-load/

Seven new insights into teacher autonomy

New research suggests that teachers' perceived autonomy over what they do in their jobs and how they do it is strongly associated with greater job satisfaction and intention to stay in the profession.

The analysis from the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) is the first large-scale quantitative study of teacher autonomy in England and its importance for retention. Alongside the study, NFER have collaborated with the Teacher Development Trust to bring together guidance on this research to support schools to implement recommendations made through the report.

Teachers report a higher level of influence over classroom activities such as the teaching methods they use and how they plan lessons, and lower levels of autonomy over curriculum, assessment and their professional development goals. On average, teachers also have a lower level of autonomy over their work compared to similar individuals in other professions.

The study finds that teachers' perceived influence over their professional development goal setting is the area most associated with higher job satisfaction and greater intention to stay in teaching. Around half of those with the lowest autonomy reported they are intending to stay in teaching in the short term, compared to more than 85 per cent of those with the highest autonomy. One of the main recommendations in the report is that school leaders should harness teacher autonomy to benefit both pupils and staff when considering policy and practice changes.

School Workforce Lead at NFER, Jack Worth said, "Autonomy plays a significant role in teachers' motivation. Giving teachers greater influence over how they do their job has the potential to increase job satisfaction, which in turn is important in tackling teacher retention. At a time when the school system cannot afford to lose valuable teachers, improving autonomy, workload, satisfaction and retention could help address the teacher supply challenge. *"We recommend that school leaders and the Department for Education should review how teacher professional development is designed and delivered. When teachers have greater involvement in their professional development goal-setting, and in school decision-making more widely, they are motivated to perform and stay in the profession."*

These latest findings come a year after the government published its teacher recruitment and retention strategy. The system faces a sub-stantial and growing challenge of ensuring adequate teacher supply, especially in the secondary sector. Figures last year showed that despite the number of secondary pupils rising for the fourth straight year, the number of secondary teachers had declined, as it has done each successive year since 2012. Improving teacher recruitment and retention is one of the most important policy issues facing England's education system today.

Ensuring that teachers have greater involvement in their professional development goal setting is one of several positive recommendations made by NFER. To coincide with the study, the Teacher Development Trust has issued a resource designed to support senior leaders in schools and Trusts to consider how to give more autonomy in these areas, including a case study of a school that has implemented this type of approach. This resource explores how performance management and appraisal systems can either support or hinder teacher autonomy over their professional development goals.

Chief Executive David Weston of the Teacher Development Trust said, *"This report highlights how autonomy may be a crucial key to solving the growing problem of teacher recruitment and retention. There has been a welcome recent focus on teacher workload but we know that what concerns teachers is not just the amount of time worked, but the relevance of tasks they're being required to carry out. School leaders and policy makers need to carefully consider how accountability and performance management systems are supporting the right types of teacher autonomy, raising morale and improving retention.*

"Ultimately, we need to make a big investment in school leaders' understanding of effective professional development so that we can act upon the findings from this report and wider research."

The free resource is available to download via the Teacher Development Trust website from http://tdtrust.org/autonomy20

Need Support in school? Please reach out to your line manager or…

What to do if you need support

If you're a teacher who is stressed or worried about anything you can call **Education Support's** free and confidential 24/7 emotional support helpline on 08000 562 561.

STAFF HANDOUT

Curriculum jargon buster

Intent, implementation and impact

	INTENT	IMPLEMENTATION	IMPACT
Definition	What you want pupils to know and be able to do. **Not** a vision or mission statement.	How you teach your intended curriculum	The extent to which pupils have learned what you intended them to learn, and how you know this
Examples	• A long-term plan (such as a curriculum map), showing the knowledge and skills you want pupils to gain at each stage, and by the end of their time at school • Your rationale for why you've made these choices	• Teaching methods • Classroom resources • Sequencing and structure • Assessment	• Outcomes in externally set assessments • Pupils' destinations (e.g. further or higher education or employment) • Conversations with pupils that demonstrate they know, can do, and remember more than they did before

Curriculum breadth vs depth

	BREADTH OF CURRICULUM	DEPTH OF CURRICULUM
Definition	The range of subjects taught across the whole curriculum, and the span of knowledge within each subject	How deeply specific topics within each subject are studied
Examples	• A broad curriculum focuses on all curriculum subjects (for example art, PE, PSHE) not just core subjects (English, maths and science) • A global history curriculum that spans a wide range of time periods and places • An RE curriculum that covers many religions (beyond Christianity, Islam and Judaism)	• How deeply a pupil understands key concepts (e.g. can they explain the concepts in their own words or teach someone else?) • How well pupils understand the underlying links between different subjects and ideas

Substantive vs disciplinary knowledge

*Sometimes known as **declarative** and **procedural** knowledge.*

	SUBSTANTIVE	DISCIPLINARY
Definition	The content that is taught as fact	Understanding about how knowledge is established, verified and revised
Examples	- Properties of materials - Rules of netball - Pythagoras' theorem - Events leading up to the First World War - Plot of Romeo and Juliet	- How historians come to conclusions and judgements - Carrying out an experiment - Writing persuasively

Core vs hinterland knowledge

	CORE	HINTERLAND
Definition	Basic knowledge and facts to be learned and retained	Contextual knowledge, to provide deeper meaning, frame delivery, or give a sense of depth to a subject
Examples	- Displacement and volume theory in maths - Basic understanding of safety in the home - World War 2 facts and dates	- An anecdote about a mathematician e.g. Archimedes' bath story - Telling a personal story to explain the dangers of fire or household risks - Talking to grandparents about their experience of World War 2 or visiting places that were bombed

These terms were first used by Christine Counsell.

Threshold concepts

	THRESHOLD CONCEPTS
Definition	Concepts that enable pupils to better understand other ideas/concepts
Examples	- Understanding characteristics of 2D shapes before exploring 3D shapes - Understanding gravity and friction, to aid understanding that external forces affect the motion of objects

Teaching & Learning

Spaced interleaving

	SPACED INTERLEAVING
Definition	Organising and sequencing learning within other learning, rather than presenting learning as consecutive blocks
Examples	• Introducing a new topic to assess current understanding, teaching unrelated content to allow thinking time, then recalling the new topic again to embed learning • Splitting humanities over the term rather than blocking weeks, e.g. alternating geography and history lessons within the term rather than having a 'geography term' and then a 'history term' • Recalling specific learning, e.g. what were we learning about this time yesterday?

Vertical vs horizontal structure

	VERTICAL STRUCTURE	HORIZONTAL STRUCTURE
Definition	Introducing curriculum aspects in an ongoing progression throughout the school year and as pupils progress through year groups (knowledge is built on prior learning)	Curriculum aspects are introduced to pupils in different year groups at the same time (knowledge is integrated and interrelated)
Examples	• What pupils learn in one lesson is built on in the next • Pupils learning to write phonetically before being taught irregular spellings • Learning about Elizabethan London before teaching Shakespeare	• A whole school theme taught at the same time to all year groups e.g. a whole school project on A Midsummer Night's Dream • Whole school assembly themes

Cumulative vs segmented vs spiral curriculum

	CUMULATIVE CURRICULUM	SEGMENTED CURRICULUM	SPIRAL CURRICULUM
Definition	Knowledge builds on and expands previous learning	Adds new skills or knowledge that are related to current context or events, or separate from existing knowledge	Revisits previous learning and adds new knowledge that is age- or stage-appropriate

	CUMULATIVE CURRICULUM	SEGMENTED CURRICULUM	SPIRAL CURRICULUM
Examples	• New spelling and grammar concepts are introduced year-on-year • Maths skills and knowledge building on pre-existing maths skills and knowledge	• Skills learned on a specific geography field trip • Skills are developed as part of a one-off project, e.g. fundraising for Red Nose Day • A one-off topic reflecting current events, e.g. teaching the history of the Olympics during the Olympics	• Persuasive writing taught each year, with increasing complexity, e.g. from writing a short letter in year 1 to writing a complex argument in year 6 • The same religious festivals are returned to each year, with increasingly complex knowledge taught each year

A curriculum can contain more than one of these approaches.

Context dependent vs independent

	CONTEXT DEPENDENT	CONTEXT INDEPENDENT
Definition	Curriculum that is taught through pupils' lives or experiences	Curriculum that isn't related to pupils' lives or experiences
Examples	• Teaching data handling using a class vote on pupils' favourite sport or food • Teaching about the history of the local area or community and how this relates to pupils' lives today (e.g. a project about the Empire Windrush)	• Concepts in maths or science that are unrelated to personal experience • History that's taught without reference to pupils' modern day lives • The introduction of concepts beyond pupils' lived experience, e.g. what it's like to live in another country or be from another culture

Teaching & Learning

Support for Revision? Ideas from TeacherToolkit

Here are 10 apps to consider:

1. **gojimo.com**

This can be accessed via PC or the app downloaded on to tablets. All the quizzes relate to different specs and are set up and ready to go. Many levels can be accessed from GCSE to A level. It is managed by staff or students to test knowledge.

2. **socrative.com**

This allows teachers to create simple quizzes that students can take quickly on laptops or via classroom tablet computers or their own smartphones. Quizzes can be true/false, multiple choice, graded short answer or allow open-ended short responses. Activities can either be teacher-paced (for use during a classroom discussion) or student-paced (for use as a more traditional class-end "exit ticket" or quiz). There's also a gaming element: the "Space Race" feature can set up a quiz so that teams of students can compete against one another to launch rockets into space.

3. **quizlet.com/live**

Many know about how Quizlet can be used to create keyword flash-cards online and give out to students but Quizlet live allows these to be practised in the class. The added bonus is that pupils must work together as only certain pupils in one group will have the correct answer. This means that everyone has to be involved and no one can take over and answer them all.

4. **kahoot.com**

Another great app for creating timed quizzes for added competition for key words or ideas. Kahoot can be used online or as an app so that pupils can work in teams or alone to get the correct answer to personalised questions. Also, a fab feature for progressions is Kahoot ghost that allows the same pupils to try to beat their own scores! This is great to show revision progress from the start of a lesson/session compared to the end.

5. **memrise.com**

Though just for languages, this app can be very useful for all school with many more pupils covering a language to meet EBacc qualifications. This is a useful app for all languages and uses videos to help learners.

6. **bubbl.us**

A visual thinking tool for structuring information, helping students better understand, remember and generate new ideas.

7. **revisionbuddies.com**

This is an app with a cost but it might be worth a whole school looking at getting it and allowing access for pupils. It can provide short bursts of revision for many GCSE topics and tracks progress too. It even allows the pupils to access past papers and mark schemes.

8. **goconqr.com**

This app allows pupils or teachers to create mind maps and flashcards using key terms. Banks of subject resources are freely available and mind maps can be set as a video to show different themes.

9. **wordflex.com**

This app is another way of using a dictionary and with an increased focus on key terms and a content-rich curriculum. This could be useful across many topics.

10. **keltymentalhealth.ca/breathr**

Exam season can be stressful for pupils and mindfulness can be a way to combat this and improve grades overall. Taking time at the start of a revision lesson or an exam to focus and relax can be a useful tool for achieving top grades. This app is easy to use and puts lots of mindfulness activities in one place.

10 Apps To Aid Pupil Revision

GRIT; GROWING RESILIENCE IN TEENS

Grit has been launched in South Warwickshire by the Area Behaviour Panel as a funded programme to help hard to reach youngsters. Alcester Academy has committed to being part of this. It is being led by Marie Rooney.

What is GRIT?

Grit is formerly a programme that came from America and was entitled 'Youth at Risk'.

Grit are a team of people dedicated to improving the mental health and wellbeing of teenagers through a unique and innovative program designed to help reduce anxiety and self destructive behaviours by building resilience. Resilient teenagers - resilience being the ability to recover from difficult situations - are more prepared to seek new experiences and opportunities and take reasonable risks in order to achieve their goals.

The team are aware of the increasing pressures that teenagers today are facing which results in low self esteem and anxiety. This can then lead on to self destructive behaviours which can be distressing for both the teenager and those close to them.

The GRIT programme is a 12 week programme divided into Phase 1 and Phase 2. It uses a combination of exercise to help channel and focus overwhelming emotion and anger combined with therapeutic interventions to help boost self-esteem and confidence.

Alcester Academy will initially select 2 students to go through this programme in June as a funded pilot. These students are most likely to be in Year 9/10. The school will assign a Grit staff ambassador to work alongside these students as they work through the pilot. The students will then receive weekly support from an external mentor in order to maintain the positive contact as they begin to turn their life around.

https://gritcharity.org/

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Teaching & Learning

What is cultural capital?

For the first time the new Ofsted framework requires schools to develop their pupils' cultural capital. In this blog post we provide a quick summary of some of the history, academic thinking and definitions of this key term.

Where did the term cultural capital come from?

In the 1970s Pierre Bourdieu, a French sociologist, developed the idea of cultural capital as a way to explain how power in society was transferred and social classes maintained. Karl Marx believed economic capital (money and assets) dictated your position in a social order. Bourdieu believed that cultural capital played an important, and subtle role. For both Marx and Bourdieu the more capital you have the more powerful you are.

Bourdieu defined cultural capital as 'familiarity with the legitimate culture within a society'; what we might call 'high culture'. He saw families passing on cultural capital to their children by introducing them to dance and music, taking them to theatres, galleries and historic sites, and by talking about literature and art over the dinner table.

Since its publication in English in 1984 Bourdieu's book, Distinction, has had a significant and lasting impact on academic discourse about class in the UK.

Defining cultural capital today

1. Bourdieu identified three sources of cultural capital: objective, embodied and institutionalised.

- Objective: cultural goods, books, works of art

- Embodied: language, mannerisms, preferences

- Institutionalised: qualifications, education credentials

2. More recent work on the idea of cultural capital by a range of academics[1] has added technical, emotional, national and subcultural forms of cultural capital to this list.

Technical: marketable skills, e.g. IT

Emotional: empathy, sympathy (things businesses might look for in employees in management positions)

National: 'operates on the assumption of the existence of traditions, in both high and popular culture, which generate and justify a sense of belonging and an occupancy of a governing national position … It is a form with limited exchange value because it is not rare … in operation, to lack it acts as a handicap, rather more than its possession supplying a route to profit and preferment.' Bennett et al (2009) p258

Subcultural: Groups built around cultural specifics, where individuals need particular cultural knowledge and behaviours to belong to the sub-set.

Cultural consumption and notions of 'high art' have changed over time. Today's prominent academic researchers have coined the term 'cultural omnivore' (Peterson 1992, Peterson & Kern 1996): someone who mixes interests in a wide range of forms of culture, both those seen as historically 'legitimate' by society, and emerging forms – such as Grime music.

'Cultural capital' in this new sense is embodied by an individual who is knowledgeable about a wide range of culture and is comfortable discussing its value and merits. It is characterised by the experience and skill to be able to deploy the appropriate knowledge in any given situation: a job interview, a conversation with a neighbour, building a work network and so on.

The benefits of cultural capital

Evidence suggests that the cultural capital passed on through families helps children do better in school. The education system values the knowledge and ways of thinking developed by acquiring cultural capital, both abstract and formal. As adults, cultural capital helps individuals to network with other adults who have a similar body of knowledge and experiences, and who in turn control access to high-paying professions and prestigious leadership roles, for example in government.

In their 2009 book Culture, Class, Distinction Bennet et al, describe this system of privilege:

'This is the reproduction circuit associated with schooling and formal education. Those parents equipped with cultural capital are able to drill their children in the cultural forms that predispose them to perform well in the educational system through their ability to handle "abstract" and "formal" categories. These children are able to turn their cultural capital into credentials, which can then be used to acquire advantaged positions themselves.'

The book describes the ways that cultural capital can be turned into educational and economic success.

Evidence of the power of cultural capital

Studies by organisations such as the Sutton Trust have probed this issue of how types of education and family background confer advantages on some children. The report Parent Power shows how wealthy parents buy in extra schooling (including in arts subjects) to push their children ahead of their peers in exams and to secure entry to more prestigious schools and universities. Projects such as The Class Ceiling have shown how recruitment into top professions, including banking and law, is made easier by the level of cultural capital

of the applicants.

A range of other reports back up these findings, including publications by the Social Mobility Commission and books such as Social Mobility and its Enemies by Lee Elliott Major.

The paradox of cultural capital and schools

The new Ofsted framework requires schools to consider how they develop their children's cultural capital to help them succeed in life:

As part of making the judgement about the quality of education, inspectors will consider the extent to which schools are equipping pupils with the knowledge and cultural capital they need to succeed in life. Our understanding of 'knowledge and cultural capital' is derived from the following wording in the national curriculum:

'It is the essential knowledge that pupils need to be educated citizens, introducing them to the best that has been thought and said and helping to engender an appreciation of human creativity and achievement.'

Ofsted School Inspection Handbook 2019

At the CLA we assume that Ofsted has introduced this new duty because it believes that it will level the playing field; ensuring that background plays less of a role in determining social mobility and educational success.

However, there is a risk that the new Ofsted requirement will drive entrenchment of one type of culture. As it is stated above, the Ofsted definition is intrinsically linked to teaching children 'the best that has been thought and said.' This phrasing is a direct quote from an 1869 essay by Matthew Arnold Culture and Anarchy:

'The whole scope of the essay is to recommend culture as the great help out of our present difficulties; culture being a pursuit of our total perfection by means of getting to know, on all the matters which most concern us, the best which has been thought and said in the world.'

Culture and Anarchy page 7

This definition is troubling when taken in a modern context for a number of reasons: it is passive; it does not adequately cover all cultural forms or expressions (particularly music, dance or visual arts); and it has the potential to be used to entrench notions of class structure.

Instead, the CLA believes that we should enable our children to stand on the shoulders of those that have gone before and create new and exciting forms of culture; things which may well help them fuel solutions to society's problems, build our creative industries and help UK plc to survive the turmoil of Brexit. We want definitions of cultural capital to celebrate and embrace the different backgrounds, heritage, language and traditions of all the children living in this country.

If the definition of cultural capital remains narrow then we risk a paradox: some children will gain the keys to advancement and this will help to maintain the status quo.

'This leaves us in the paradoxical position that cultural education can simultaneously be a route to personal advancement, while entrenching class division at the level of society. This contention is clearly evidenced by the fact that the poorest state schools lack arts provision, while private schools invest heavily in the arts.'

John Holden, Visiting Professor University of Leeds, Cultural Fellow, King's College, London

The CLA believes strongly that this new Ofsted requirement constitutes an opportunity for schools to define the cultural capital that their children need and to think more widely than existing 'legitimate culture'. This will ensure that their pupils are confident creators, able to be the 'cultural omnivores' that can make informed decisions about what culture they consume and participate in, and can articulate why it has value.

References:

Bourdieu, Pierre (1984) Distinction, Routledge

Peterson, Richard (1992) 'Understanding audience segmentation: from elite and mass to omnivore and univore', Poetics, 21:243-258

Peterson, R. A. and R. M. Kern (1996) 'Changing highbrow taste: from snob to omnivore', American Sociological Review, 61:900-907

See:

Bennett, Tony et al (2009) Culture, Class, Distinction, Routledge

Holden, John (2010) Culture and Class, Counterpoint

Thornton, Sarah (1995) Club Cultures: Music, Media and Subcultural Capital, Polity

Teaching & Learning

Topical calendar for this academic year—

[BBC Teach for resources—Educational Calendar](#)

March

Women's History Month - Teaching Resources

A collection of classroom resources to mark Women's History Month and International Women's Day on 8 March.

World Book Day - Teaching Resources

A collection of classroom resources to use with your pupils on World Book Day (5 March 2020).

National Careers Week - Teaching Resources

A collection of classroom resources focused on careers guidance in support of National Careers Week.

Shakespeare Week - Teaching Resources

Explore our collection of classroom resources to mark Shakespeare Week.

World Poetry Day - Teaching Resources

A collection of primary and secondary classroom resources to celebrate World Poetry Day with your pupils.

April

Easter - Teaching Resources

Explore our collection of primary and secondary classroom resources to use with your pupils this Easter.

Stephen Lawrence Day - Teaching Resources

A series of short films exploring identity, diversity, institutional racism and justice that can be used to mark Stephen Lawrence Day on 22 April.

May

Mental Health Awareness Week - Teaching Resources

A collection of classroom resources created to raise awareness of topics like stress, relationships, loneliness, altruism, sleep, alcohol and friendship.

National Numeracy Day - Teaching Resources

A collection of classroom resources for teaching numeracy at primary and secondary level.
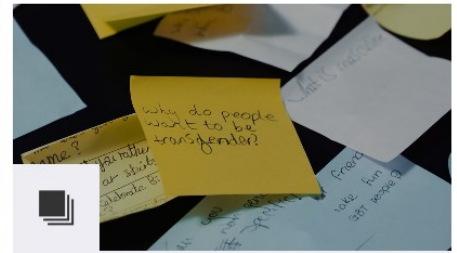
June

D-Day - Teaching Resources

A collection of classroom resources to mark the anniversary of D-Day, the biggest air and seaborne invasion in history, which took place on June 6, 1944.

National Writing Day - Teaching Resources

A collection of classroom resources for inspiring creative writing in primary and secondary school classrooms.

RSE Day - Teaching Resources

These classroom resources have been created to support you in teaching relationships and sex education (RSE). These could be used to mark RSE day with your class on 27 June.

July

50th anniversary of Apollo 11 Moon landing - Teacher Resources

Classroom resources that can be used to explore the 50th anniversary of the Apollo 11 Moon landing with both primary and secondary students.

ClickView

Many congratulations to James Bowater @AlcesterAcademy for

recently being approached by ClickView

in order to provide educational content to them.

@Mr_BOWATER

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