



Teaching & Learning Newsletter

Autumn 1 2020

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Welcome to the first WeST wide secondary Teaching & Learning (T&L) newsletter, from now on these will be arriving in your inbox every half term. With an aim to collate and share research informed educational thinking around T&L. We hope that the content will support and inform your classroom practice and be used alongside your schools T&L principles to ensure that we are creating the most effective and impactful learning environments for our pupils.

If you would like to contribute to the newsletter, or discuss anything T&L please contact your in school T&L Lead.

Heading back to school this September has been an experience. Our classrooms look different, feel different, we are teaching from behind a line. This edition will focus on research informed strategies and techniques to help us teach effectively from our box! No gimmicks, just quality teaching first that prioritises instruction, explicit learning goals and taking all pupils with you. Linked throughout is further reading and useful blogs and vlogs to check out and discuss within your teams.

Online CPD - come along!

On Tuesday 29th September, 16.00 - 16.45 via MS Teams, I will be leading a voluntary CPD session on Teaching from the Front - techniques to try & why. If you are interested please **register [here to receive a meeting joining link](#)**. See you there!

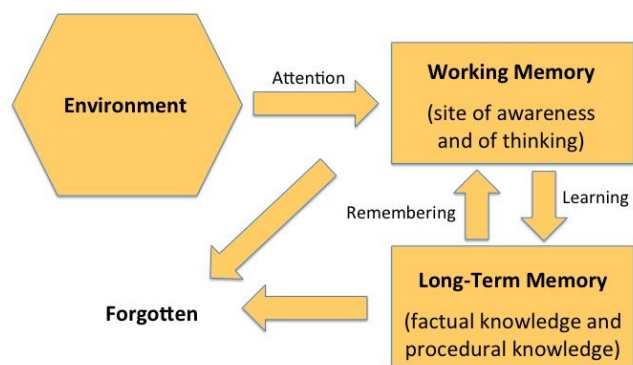
Hope you enjoy the read.

Ruth

RWoodhouse@westst.org.uk
Ruth Woodhouse
WeST T&L Lead

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They might be engaged, but are they learning?



Memory Model (Willingham, 2009)

Learning and performance is not the same thing. Soderstrom & Bjork (2015) made the distinction that ...

Performance is short-term (e.g the score on a test) while learning is long-term (e.g what you remember and can use tomorrow, next week, next month...)

As teachers it is vital then that we know how to ensure that learning is

occurring for our students (and know when it isn't!) and that we put into effect what we understand about the science of learning to help us set up our students up for success - not merely counting on "I have taught it, they have learnt it". Now more than ever, every minute must count and prioritising substance over performance is a given.

→ Direct Students Attention

Q: How precise are your knowledge goals for learners? Do all learners know them?

Tom Sherrington in his book, Rosenshine's Principles in Action explains how he believes this is the only way teachers can be rigorous and accurate in knowing if learners have 'learned' anything. As learners, it's hard to form a strong schema, practice retrieval or metacognitively evaluate our knowledge if you are unsure what the knowledge is meant to be and what success exactly and explicitly looks like.

Q: Are all students thinking about the key (to-be-remembered) knowledge? and not other things... Does anything need to go to make this easier?

Reflect on your planning, are you **only** directing students attention in ways that invites processing/comparison/recall/application/analysis of the 'to-be-remembered content'

Here are several questions to consider when planning:

1. What do I want students to be focusing on at each point in my explanation? (be as specific as possible)
2. Is there anything novel or new?

3. What prior learning or background knowledge do students need to access this?
4. Do they have the vocabulary to understand explanations/models?
5. What extraneous information or 'seductive detail' could distract that I can remove? (think text/images/talk)

*Minimising misconceptions through the design of explanatory sequences, Stubbs
Autumn 2020, Issue 10, Impact Journal, Chartered College of Teaching*

Teach Like A Champion (TLAC): 100% Cycle

Key Idea: Ensure that 100% of students are with you for teaching and learning, 100% of the time, 100% of the way.

Goal: Academic rigour for all.

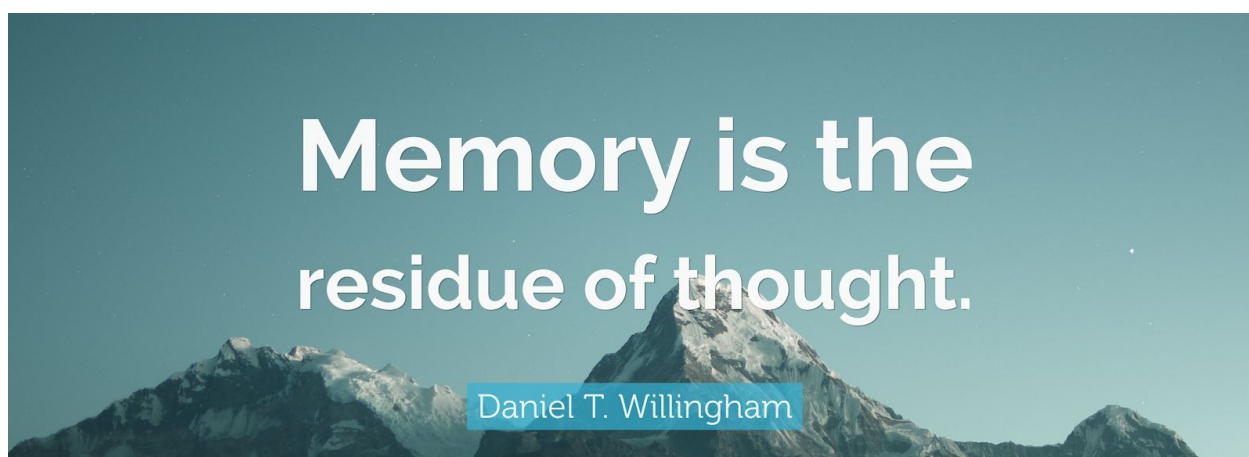
Implementation:

Getting 100% depends on three key principles:

1. Expectations You Can See ([Radar & BSL – Dance Moves](#))
2. [Rely on Firm, Calm, Finesse](#)
3. Use the Least Invasive Intervention

Find further reading and information on this cycle on pages: and also [here on Doug Lemov's Blog](#), they come with video examples of champion teachers nailing the cycle.

Our working memory is limited (research now suggests as few as 5 things!) and easily distracted and then overloaded with things happening around us. Focusing students attention on the most desirable information is key.



Recommended Read: [Why Don't Students like School? Daniel T Willingham](#)

Instruction: Explicit, direct, sequenced, chunked...effective.

Standing at the front, unable to circulate and come alongside students and groups will feel strange but there is an opportunity in these Covid age classrooms to practise and perfect **instruction**. None of Rosenshine's principles rely on the ability to sidle up to students or have them working in groups, those of you familiar with TLAC techniques will know that very often the 'champion' teacher is teaching from behind a podium, under a visualiser to neatly ordered rows of learners. Whatever your preference, this is where we are now and research tells us that we can have a lot of impact from inside our box, keeping it simple and routinised. Exciting.

→ The Principles of Instruction

Just in case you missed it, here is the original [Principles of Instruction Research-Based Strategies That All Teachers Should Know By Barak Rosenshine](#)

I hope you agree that Rosenshine's principles feel a lot like common sense and bridge the gap between research and classroom practice, something Tom Sherrington has built on with his guidebook Rosenshine's Principles in Action. If you prefer to watch, check out Mr.Sherrington's online [Rosenshine's Masterclass](#) for free.

This useful [one pager](#) outlines Rosenshine's principles and is something I would always have within sight when planning.

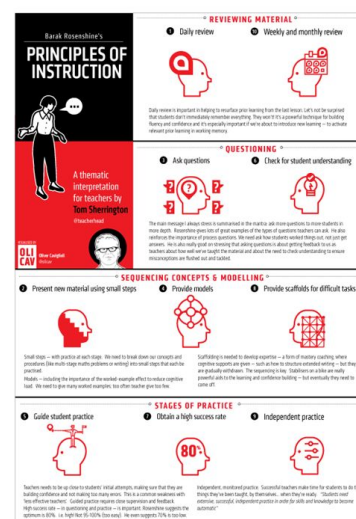
Q: How are you enacting these principles? What specific action steps are you taking?

Q: What is having the most impact on your learners? Take a look at the below list with your colleagues, which ones will you be practicing this week?

Using Sherrington's strands, below are some suggestions of ways to implement and enact quality instruction.

1. Sequencing Concepts and Modelling

→ Provide step by step instructions (text and images), deconstruct the process



- Zoom in, Zoom out - big picture of a subject then focus in on a detail, then zoom back out to connect the schema
- Plan enough time to practise each step
- Narrated modelling or metacommentary - talk through your thinking and processing whilst modelling (but don't expect learners to make notes, read or highlight at the same time...remember that working memory!)
- Ask learners to talk through a model, concept or process explaining the how and why
- Exemplars of excellence - discuss how and why this is excellence
- Misconception model - then live modelling as to how to correct and improve
- Scaffolds for a challenge - writing frames, sentence stems (speaking & writing) exemplars, self check and self correct common error list
- 3 is the magic number, do it, do it again, do it yet again. Or I do, we do, you do.

Scaffolding... "something teachers do in the process of teaching to move students towards independence and a long term aim. Not a way in which teachers make work easier for students."

Scaffolding by novice and expert teachers: The difference, Lorna Shires, Impact Autumn 2020, Issue 10, Impact Journal, Chartered College of Teaching

TLAC Technique #57: What to Do. Instructions, directions or explanations whether about behaviour, expectations or academics should be **SPECIFIC, CONCRETE, SEQUENTIAL AND OBSERVABLE.**

Read about What to Do on page 417 in TLAC 2.0 or listen to a short explanation of the technique [here](#)

Other TLAC techniques that demonstrate how to sequence concepts and model effectively are (TLAC 2.0, Doug Lemov):

T.48: Engineer Efficiency; T.50: Do it Again. T.4: Tracking, Not Watching; T.3: Standardise the Format. Techniques-T.37: Everybody Writes; T.42: Habits of Discussion; T.38: The Art of the Sentence; T.44: Batch Process; Technique 39: Show Call; The T.52: Make Compliance Visible; T.53: Least Invasive Intervention; T.61: Emotional Constancy; T.58 Positive Framing; T.59: Positive Praise; T.46: Strong Start; T.20: Do Now

2. Questioning

- NO hands up, use **#cold call** for targeted feedback or checking for understanding - Ben, what have you understood? Rather than Has everyone understood or Ben, do you get it?

"There are few things more inclusive you can do than to ask someone's opinion, especially when they do not yet know whether their voice is valued in a room. To ask a student who has not volunteered, "What do you think?" is to tell them their voice matters."

#ColdCall - Doug Lemov

- Frequency - just ask more! How many process questions do you ask in one lesson?
- Stretch it, reward 'right' answers with harder questions (encouraging metacognitive talk): how, why, more precise, with evidence, say more, develop, say it again but better, can anyone add to that?
- Wait time - thinking needs time, sometimes narrated time if misconceptions are present or they need some guidance
- NO Opt-out - it's not okay not to try, if you get "I don't know" go to another student for the answer and return, ask again, encourage the effort
- Call and response - everyone together
- Plan and write down your key questions
- Show me boards (mini white boards)- set the question, the aim and the timeframe

3. Reviewing

- Low stakes - not because it doesn't matter, because it's only focused on diagnosing what needs to be taught/retaught
- Specify the knowledge
- Inclusive - involve all students
- Frequent and pacy (does not have to take long or require resources)
- Checking is accurate & easy
- Quizzing - make it challenging but ensure students can experience success
- Spaced & Interleaved
- Elaborate, or tell the story - students respond to elaborative-interrogative questioning (how, why, connected to...)
- You will spend more time re-teaching material - this is okay!
- Daily routines develop fluency...stick with the short-term confusion at the start, tell the students that's normal and you are all persevering
- Then DO IT AGAIN

4. Stages of Practice

- Spend more time guiding practice - so asking process questions, rephrasing, elaborating, applying and summarizing new material

- The less confident learners (with the least prior knowledge) the more guided practice they will need
- Teacher guided practice looks like:
 - ◆ Thorough explanations during a learning task
 - ◆ High-frequency, short-answer questions to identify misconceptions
 - ◆ Plenty of modelling
 - ◆ Corrective or positive affirming verbal feedback
 - ◆ Pausing and reteaching when misconceptions occur (either whole class or 1:1)

Top Tip: Why not keep a table at the front of your room FREE so that you can rotate learners into that chair should they need 1:1, you need a closer look at their work.

- Obtaining a high success rate for all means it's time to push on to more independent practice
- Material students practice with in guided practice should be the same in independent to secure the level of success required
- Support or scaffolding can still be available throughout independent practice but gradual withdrawn (closed book, no writing frames, vocabulary covered up)

Q: Have you given students the tools or explicit strategies they need to be able to work independently? Have they practiced enough with your support to get it right independently? Do they know the standards in a form they can understand to ensure their independent checking is accurate?

Learning Lost? Don't assume, diagnose.

"If I had to reduce all of educational psychology to just one principle, I would say this: The most important single factor influencing learning is what the learner already knows. Ascertain this and teach him [sic] accordingly." (Ausubel, 1968, p. vi)

The EEF and Prof. Rob Coe has put together this short blog on 3 key things to consider when planning assessments and checking learning... check it out [here](#)

'Our research shows that students can be busiest and most involved with material they already know. In most of the classrooms we have studied, each student already knows about 40-50% of what the teacher is teaching.' (Nuthall, 2007, P24 The Hidden lives of Learners)

Q: How can you be 100% sure this is NOT happening in your classroom?

Baseline testing is not new, and no doubt you will have been doing some sort of assessment over the last few weeks. The EEF also highlights the necessity for **Effective Diagnostic Assessments** to be happening within the classroom, less formally but more frequently. It is this information which should then be shaping and guiding our targeted academic interventions, recovery learning, retrieval quiz questions and practice.

It will be important to differentiate between learning that has been forgotten due to extended absence from the classroom and material that hasn't been learnt properly. Effective diagnostic assessments are therefore rooted in classroom practice. Such assessment may include the use of verbal questions, short answer quizzes and multiple-choice questions etc. These low stakes approaches have the benefit of more precisely diagnosing gaps in learning and informing teaching than broader, time intensive mock exams.

Curriculum leaders may be keen to read more from the EEF here: [A tiered approach to planning 2020-21](#)

Q: What effective diagnostic assessment tools are you implementing ?

What are you doing with this data? Are you discussing student progress with your teams regularly?

- Well designed multiple choice questions (particularly helpful for explicitly targeting common misconceptions)
 - Live Mark - more time in class for responsive teaching and next steps are identified immediately for individual students
 - Retrieval Practice: quizzing, everything you know on a page, last year, last month, last week, verbal questioning, Knowledge organisers - read, cover, write, check
 - Space your key concept/knowledge questions on the curriculum map and keep asking them
 - Use Exit tickets or Do Nows to respond to diagnostic assessment that lesson, or next
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WeST T&L Book Club

We'll read a book and then get together over MS Teams to discuss! Totally informal, bring a coffee and meet (albeit from the shoulder up) colleagues from other schools. If you are keen and want to be involved, **[register interest here to receive further information.](#)**

Recommended reads gladly received.

Thanks!

Ruth

