



# Teaching & Learning Newsletter

Spring 2 2021

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As we head towards Easter and Spring, hope is in the air that we are going in the right direction for life and school to return to some kind of normality. I know how much you are looking forward to getting back into your classrooms and reconnecting with your students and colleagues. In this edition I have collated thinking and good advice on what our key priorities should be when planning for our return to the classroom. I hope it is useful.



I would also like to invite you (if you are a tweeter) to follow [@westcountryST](#) to keep up to date with goings on across the trust and interesting educational, teaching & learning titbits. If you want to share something brilliant from your school don't forget to include us in a mention [@westcountryST](#) - we love a retweet.

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 me directly or your in school T&L Lead.

## Online CPD - coming soon...

Our next online CPD session will be on **Tuesday 23 March, 16.00 - 16.45** via MS Teams. Your T&L leads will be in touch shortly with the session overview and registration link.

Hope you enjoy the read.

*Ruth*

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Ruth Woodhouse

WeST T&L Lead






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# Re-establishing routines and expectations

If you haven't already, now is the time to revisit your school's model of teaching and learning, the principles and expectations of what quality first teaching should look like and feel like for every pupil in your school. Remember a little bit of recall never hurt anyone!

Refreshing our own thinking on the importance and impact of consistent, clear, high expectation systems and routines - that's behavioural and academic is vital. Returning to school is a good opportunity to reset and remodel the scholarly, calm and purposeful expectations we have to ensure that no moment of learning is wasted and that all students feel safe and they can make the best out of their learning without disruption and confusion.

As we know by now quality first teaching and learning remotely mirrored that of the classroom, utilising evidence informed strategies that support learning and remembering

Approach	What is it?	Why include it?	Examples (online / offline)
 <p><b>Activate</b></p>	Prompting pupils to think about what they have learnt previously, that will help them with their next steps.	An important aspect of metacognition is planning how you'll approach a task, using what you already know.	<p>Pupils watch a relevant video, then write down everything that they remember about it Pupils complete a short quiz (either auto- or self-marked)</p> <p>Pupils read a relevant textbook passage, then summarise the key points from memory Pupils add to a partially complete concept map</p> <p><b>Tip: This can be as simple as reminding pupils of relevant vocabulary and could be combined with a review of previous topics.</b></p>
 <p><b>Explain</b></p>	Explicitly teaching strategies to pupils and helping them decide when to use them.	Metacognitive strategies are most effective when they are context-specific, especially if pupils understand when and why to use them.	<p>Use self- or pre-made videos, focussing on explaining your thought processes (why), as well as demonstrating the strategy itself (how) Use a visualiser to model your thinking, as you complete a series of worked examples</p> <p>Use examples in textbooks, giving additional guidance about when and why strategies are used Use a series of worked examples, with particular emphasis on explaining each step: for example, by annotating them</p> <p><b>Tip: Limit the amount of new information you introduce in a particular session, and break explanations into short chunks, where possible.</b></p>
 <p><b>Practise</b></p>	Pupils practising strategies and skills repeatedly, to develop independence.	Pupils need to practise new strategies, to develop independence. Scaffolds and support are needed at first, but should decrease over time.	<p>A video leading pupils through a series of practice questions, reducing the guidance with each example A series of questions with partial prompts for each one, and links to further help online when needed</p> <p>Scaffolding—knowledge organisers, essay prompts, bookmarks, structure strips, sentence starters Model answers to questions, with prompts for pupils to explain each step or analyse why they were carried out</p> <p><b>Tip: Consider how tasks can be split up into components, and help pupils to practise these individually before combining them into larger tasks.</b></p>
 <p><b>Reflect</b></p>	Pupils reflecting on what they have learnt after they have completed a piece of work.	Self-regulated learners use tasks they have completed to evaluate what went well, and what they will do differently next time.	<p>Videos taking pupils through key learning points for the group as a whole, after they have submitted (or marked) a set of work. Include prompts to help pupils with self-evaluation</p> <p>Short quizzes after activities, supporting pupils to think about what they have learnt, what they had trouble with, and any further help that they think is needed</p> <p>Prompt sheets that help pupils to evaluate their progress, with ideas for further support</p> <p><b>Tip: You can introduce prompts before you reach the end of a learning sequence too, so that pupils can monitor their progress and access appropriate support, if needed.</b></p>
 <p><b>Review</b></p>	Revisiting previous learning after a gap.	Retrieving things from memory, particularly after you've started to forget them, aids long-term retention.	<p>Short online quizzes that include questions from previous topics, as well as more recent ideas</p> <p>A 'brain dump' of everything that pupils can remember about a previous topic, with a follow-up activity to correct anything that was wrong, and add anything that was missed, using textbook or other resources</p> <p><b>Tip: A review needn't be a complex task—simply trying to summarise a topic for somebody else is a helpful review.</b></p>

Adapted from the EEF guidance report [Metacognition and Self-regulated Learning](#)

[Support resources for schools and parents | Education Endowment Foundation | EEF](#)

Doug Lemov said that it is “*the mundane which leads to the sublime*” and what he meant by that was that great teaching, a wonderful classroom atmosphere and engaged, participating students doesn't happen by chance or is it dependent on a certain type of teacher character with a certain level of charisma... Lemov believes that it is with conscious effort and planned, consistent behaviours that we can establish good habits and good routines and expectations that then lead to the joy factor, for both teacher and student.

*“...order and joy go together, the best way to have students take pleasure in learning is to build culture and expectations and procedures intentionally so things work right and so students KNOW they’ll work that way.”* Doug Lemov

Linked below, is one of my favourite TLAC clips, I show it often because I think it illustrates the power and impact of committing to systems and routines so that joy and learning can flourish.

**Watch the video, its less than 2 minutes and think about or even better, discuss with your department colleagues:**

[Sarah Wright Shows How Joy and Order Go Together - Teach Like a Champion](#)

1. What behavioural routines and expectations has the teacher implemented and practiced with the students to get to this point?
2. How does the teacher show she appreciates the students thinking and effort?
3. How does the teacher use clear, succinct instruction to support 100% participation?
4. How has the teacher prepared the students for a successful and purposeful turn and talk? What expectations would need to be in place for this to happen?
5. What does joy and order look like in your classroom?

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## What have we been missing?

Back in May 2020 when we were heading back into the classroom post Lockdown #1 **Tom Sherrington** shared his thoughts on **re-establishing pedagogical norms and routines** with the [Teacher Development Trust](#) (recorded webinar) and consequently [wrote a blog](#).

He felt that the priorities to focus on should be:

- **Classroom Interaction**
- **Learning Goals**
- **Checking for Understanding**
- **Guided Practice**

So here are my thoughts on what that means for our classrooms and some top tips for implementation.

## Classroom Interaction

- Plan explicit time to reiterate, remodel and rehearse key routines, transitions, entry and exit routines, talk routines and questioning strategies.
- Be precise about your praise - make your positive reinforcement strategic and differentiate between acknowledgement and praise.
- Students will want to talk! Of course they will, so plan ways to do this with clear expectations attached, Building Ratio Through Discussion, Chapter 9, p311 in Teach Like a Champion 2.0 outline 3 nice techniques to try.

See **Habits of Discussion** in action here:

[Christine Torres Crushes the 'Habits of Discussion' - Teach Like a Champion](#)

See **Turn and Talk** being modelled and practiced with a class for the first time here:

[Eric Snider Installs His Turn and Talk Routine - Teach Like a Champion](#)

## Learning Goals

- Students will be returning to your classrooms with varying experiences of learning throughout lockdown and one of the trickiest parts of remote teaching has been knowing what each student has understood and remembered... so it might be helpful to think about it, from a students perspective, as Sherrington suggests:

**Look back:** What should I know by now? What key knowledge and experiences should every student have had during lockdown?

**Look Forward:** What should I know and remember by summer? Between now and summer what key knowledge and experiences should every student have.

- Be strategic about what your learning goals need to be, don't assume, don't panic about 'getting through/catching up on content' or just forge ahead with the curriculum regardless. **Your decisions on what and how to teach key knowledge and experience has to be informed by evidence that is underpinned by data.**
  - ★ Plan super low stakes knowledge checks
  - ★ Produce big picture reference checks for what has been covered during lockdown, look at the totality of what students should have understood and together you can evaluate how far they have got. **Think: mind maps, chapter summaries, topic checklists, knowledge organisers\*.**

## \*Further Reading: Knowledge Organisers

I'm a big fan of knowledge organisers and when used well they support retrieval practice at home and in the classroom, develop independent learning strategies, identify and teach key vocabulary (Tier 2 and 2) and support students in evaluating what they know and what they still need to master.

Check out this short 2 min read on [returning to the knowledge organiser](#) by **Durrington Research School**. They have also shared in more detail the research schools journey with

[implementing effective knowledge organisers and tackling the misconceptions here](#) if you are interested in finding out more.

The **Chartered College of Teaching** Impact journal [summarise the pedagogy and purpose of knowledge organisers here](#) and also have some fine examples in their CPD packs readily available to CCT members.

Finally on **Knowledge Organisers and curriculum design** that identifies key learning goals and then delivers so that students get the best opportunity to learn it and remember it **Reach Academy Feltham's Jon Hutchinson (@jon\_hutchinson\_)** shares their journey and includes editable KO templates and musings on: [Beyond Knowledge Organisers; building the best curriculum in the world.](#)

### Check for Understanding (CFU)

Probably the most powerful and informative part of any lesson, and whilst teaching remotely one of the trickiest to implement for all students as frequently and as easily as when we are in the classroom.

- It is important to make students feel good about learning by engineering success right from the start. **Making it normal and expected that students will have uncertainties and gaps that you are only too willing to explore with them.**
  - ★ Ask 'what have you understood?' rather than 'Have you understood?'
- Plan for lots of low stakes retrieval practice. Remember this does not have to be all and only quizzes. Knowing that talk has been missed, think about other retrieval techniques you could employ: Summaris, Tell a Story, paired quizzes, demonstrate and/or perform, elaborate, use retrieval challenge grids or oracy placemats to get structured talk happening.



### Further reading: Retrieval for every classroom

Retrieval Queen Kate Jones explains about how and why Retrieval Practice Challenge Grids for the classroom are a good idea.

<https://lovetoteach87.com/2018/01/12/retrieval-practice-challenge-grids-for-the-classroom/> and Blake Harvard shares he's thoughts on why Kate's retrieval practice placement is so great: <https://theeffortfuleducator.com/2019/06/16/lfqinc/>

## **Guided Practice**

The close support and well planned questioning of guided practice has been missing from lockdown learning and being back in the classroom will allow us to prioritise guiding students through learning new knowledge and bolstering confidence before they attempt work independently.

Tom Sherrington says *“As far as the distancing rules allow, get close to student work, making the steps small enough to practise repeatedly with tight feedback loops so you can see students getting things right, doing things well, intervening to re-explain or re-model as often as needed – individually or whole-class.”*

- Rosenshine (2012) found that more successful teachers spent longer guiding pupils’ practice through explanations and modelling than less effective teachers.
- After pupils have been exposed to high-quality explanations and models, they can begin to be involved in the knowledge recall or procedural process. This is where pupils begin to take ownership over parts of the task with the support of the teacher as a scaffold or guide.

### **Consider:**

Why is practice important?

Why is guided practice important?

How will you use questioning to guide practice?

What can you provide to fuel motivation when pupils practise?

What does guided practice look like in your lesson?

### **Further reading:**



This excellent resource is a [60 minute interactive session from Teach First](#), taken from their **Early Career Framework**, self-directed study programme - but I think it's useful for any teacher at any stage of their career!

This module looks at **Guided Practice**, with videos, reflection points and questions and input from experts. Specifically covering:

- Why is practice important?
- Obtain a high success rate
- Guided practice
- Supporting writing through guided practice

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