



INSPIRE

Highlighting the latest in learning & teaching for the school community in Presentation Secondary School, Wexford

IN THIS EDITION

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Welcome to 'Inspire'

BY JOE ROLSTON,
EDUCATION AND SCHOOL PLANNING
COORDINATOR



A warm welcome to this very first newsletter on learning and teaching in Presentation Secondary School, Wexford. It is hoped that this publication will contribute to the continuing development of a learning and teaching culture within our school. 'Inspire' seems an appropriate title for this biannual publication, in reflecting what we aim to do here in the Presentation.

Throughout my 14 years in this school, I have always been hugely impressed by the willingness, openness and enthusiasm of our student body, both in-and-out of the classroom, along with the limitless skill-set that my teaching colleagues portray on a daily basis. This combination lies at the heart of why our school is such a great place to learn in a collaborative manner.

My thanks to everyone who contributed to this inaugural edition; I hope the content will appeal to all partners within our school community. Many blessings to everyone for the New Year ahead.

MESSAGE FROM OUR SENIOR LEADERSHIP TEAM



"Teaching is more than imparting knowledge, it is inspiring change. Learning is more than absorbing facts, it is acquiring understanding."

This is what our students & teachers do in our school every day. It is done to the highest level by all of our school community, which fills me with pride.

Thank you to Mr Rolston for putting together this inaugural edition of our 'Inspire' newsletter, which gives a brief snapshot of learning & teaching in our school. Thank you to all the staff and students who have contributed to this newsletter.

As Principal, here in the school, it is part of my role to lead learning & teaching, but I work with excellent colleagues, who are wonderful ambassadors for learning & teaching. There are many roles to leading learning & teaching, the following points below I am proud to say are carried out in our school in a collective & collaborative manner, where teachers & students work together.

Through collaboration we all:

- Shape a vision of academic success for all of our students, one based on high standards.
- Create a climate hospitable to education in order that safety, cooperation & collaboration by all stakeholders can prevail.
- Cultivate leadership in others so that staff & our students can take their role & place in our school vision. Everyone in our school has a part to play.
- Improve instruction & provide the necessary resources, such as timetable, curriculum & facilities to allow teachers to teach to their best and allow our students to learn to their capabilities.

I am constantly impressed by the enthusiasm of our both our students & staff with the variety of events & initiatives in our school, a quick snapshot below since the start of September:

- ***All 1st years had their induction as part of their transition to life at secondary school.***
- ***Congratulations to the Class of 2021 who received their LC results after an incredibly challenging Senior Cycle. Well done to the staff on the hard work & great results.***
- ***We marked the outstanding academic performance of the Leaving Certificate Class of 2021, including 30 students who achieved over 500 points, with five passing the 600-point mark. We wish them all every best wish on their journey beyond second level. The three girls with maximum points 625 received a bursary from the school.***
- ***We have held Online Parent Teacher meetings for 6th years, 3rd years, & 2nd years. Parent-teacher meetings are one of the most important activities of any school. They are a great opportunity for both the teacher and parents to work for the betterment of the student.***

- *We held Bonding Days for all year groups before Christmas, which were packed with activities to help them settle back into school life after the summer break. A big thank you to all the teachers involved.*
- *We held study skills for 3rd, 6th & 1st years, these Study Skills events increase confidence, competence and self-esteem. They can also reduce anxiety about tests and deadlines. By developing effective study skills, students may be able to cut down on the numbers of hours they spend studying, leaving more time for other things in their life*
- *Many Special Weeks were held recently linked with learning and teaching*
- *Climate Action Week*
- *Numeracy & Science Week*
- *Friendship & Stand-up week*
- *College Awareness Week*
- *One of our main areas of our school focus has been third level progression. Mr Nugent has had the opportunity to catch up with some of our past students on their experiences beyond our school & has created 3rd level profiles for past pupils around the school. All students can succeed, all can go to third level, or further pathways, after their Leaving Certificate.*
- *Testing of students was carried out for the following testing systems*
- *CAT4*
- *DATS*
- *PPADE*
- *Our Maths Support Centre is open Monday, Tuesday, Thursday & Friday at lunch. This is a very valuable resource for our students, thank you to the teachers involved.*
- *We are all very excited about our new Learning Hub, run by students, whose goals are to help other students in any way they can and to have fun while doing it. They plan to do this with the aid of speakers and workshops throughout the year. Best of luck to Mr Rolston & his Learning Hub Team.*
- *Looking forward to working with Nurture on trialling a platform in our school that puts the student at the centre of the learning experience with emphasis on Assessment & feedback*
- *A number of our staff are involved in the TL21 Programme, which is a workshop based Continuing Professional Development programme for teachers and school leaders that promotes innovative practice and professional learning communities in schools. Our school focus for this programme is Parental/Student Engagement and we are inviting senior students to attend the parent teacher meetings alongside their parents/guardians. The main reason behind this is that we, as a school, are looking to bridge the disconnect between the student learning in school and what is being portrayed at home.*

On behalf of the entire Senior Leadership Team: Mary Dooley, Caroline Ryan & I, we hope that you enjoy the first edition of 'Inspire,' which shows the excellent levels of learning & teaching carried out in our school.

"Never stop learning, because life never stops teaching."

Billy Ryan, Principal



Our Senior Leadership Team (L to R): Billy Ryan, Mary Dooley and Caroline Ryan

New Beginnings, as a First Year

by **Faye Dalton Kehoe**, Rang Beibhinn

My time in First Year, so far, has been nothing but enjoyable. Coming into a brand new school, with brand new people, can seem very daunting but the lovely people here have helped make my transition, from primary to secondary school, fun and exciting.

A usual day in the Presentation would start with me walking in through the main entrance and being welcomed by the music in reception. I will then get prepared for my first class. Some mornings, I have Maths first class. The manner in which this subject is taught is captivating and you're sure to be focusing on your work all the time. I enjoy Maths, as I never feel bored and always focused. A lot of my subjects are taught in this way and I find it really enjoyable to learn in the Presentation.

When I get home from school, I complete my homework and then study if necessary. I like to study after I do my homework, as I feel I won't have to worry about it when studying and I can put all my focus into my study. Using sticky notes helps me to remember important information. Usually, I study for an hour. There are a lot of sports teams in the Presentation, such as Gaelic Football, Camogie, Basketball and Soccer. I like taking part in Basketball after school on Tuesdays.

There are also a lot of committees in the school too, such as the Student Council, Green Schools and the Learning Hub, which is a new committee that has started recently. I am involved in the Student Council and the Learning Hub, which I am thoroughly enjoying so far. It is great to know that in the Presentation, the student voice is heard and being on these committees has made me realise this.

I really enjoy going to the Presentation and I'm looking forward to my future here!



TEACHER PROFILES



Our school in one word:

Accepting

My name is Ciara O'Muiri.
I teach Science, RSE and My Friends Youth.

I have been teaching for 3 years.

If you were Minister for Education, what immediate change would you bring to second-level education?

As the Climate Crisis is the biggest challenge currently facing humanity and future generations, I believe it should be taught as a compulsory part of the curriculum in schools.

What do you believe is the most important characteristic a teacher should have?
A teacher should be understanding, approachable, supportive, patient and kind.

What are the main highlights for you in your work?

The best part of my job is the interactions with students. I love helping them make connections between their learning and their lives. I love learning from them and I love watching them grow and develop into young adults.

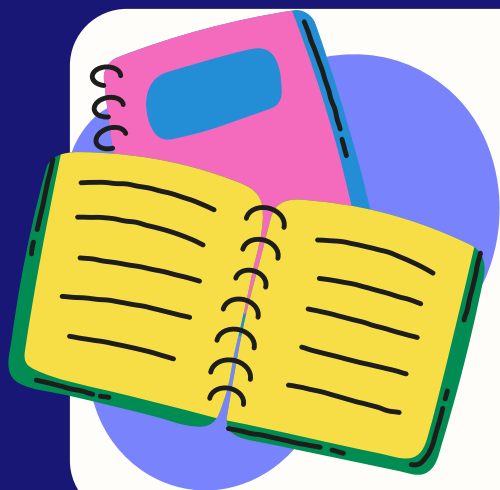
Where I
STUDIED

**UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE
CORK**

**HIBERNIA
COLLEGE**

My definition of
EFFECTIVE TEACHING AND LEARNING

I think it takes place in a safe learning environment. In my classroom, I try to foster positive relationships by encouraging students to be active participants as individuals and also as valuable members of collaborative groups.



Education Planning committee



Remit

Learning and teaching is at the core of life in Presentation, Wexford.

Role

The role of the Education Planning committee is to articulate, develop and promote learning and teaching and learning practice, in our school, consistent with best national practice.

The committee will consider matters in relation to the policy/practice of:

- development/oversight of a Learning and Teaching strategy
- attainment and assessment
- promoting a range of assessment practices, both formative and summative
- reporting
- curriculum development
- leaders/promoters of best educational practice
- inform/support the professional development of staff, relative to learning and teaching practice
- analyse national/international developments in relation to learning and teaching, with implications for practice and policy
- link in with the work of the Academic Council

Members

William Ryan, Mary Dooley, Caroline Ryan, Joe Rolston, Brid Kavanagh, Teresa Bradshaw, Donal McCarthy, Donna Marie Leacy, Niamh Cullen, Tom Stafford, Michael Doran & Brandon Cogley.



THE TEACHING, LEARNING & ASSESSMENT (TLA) FOCUS GROUP

A new Teaching, Learning and Assessment (TLA) focus group has been set up, in this school year, to complement the work of the Education Planning committee.

The focus group, made up of teachers from different subject departments, will be aiming to focus on implementing different practical learning and teaching strategies with their own classes, in their own time. The group will meet sporadically, over the course of the school year, to reflect upon and discuss the practicalities of these strategies, which will be reported back to and feed into the work of the Education Planning committee.

In the second half of this school year, the TLA focus group will be working with the team from Nurture, to trial their formative assessment platform through Microsoft Teams, as well as implementing some Retrieval Practice techniques with their students.



MEMBERS

JOE ROLSTON, DONNA MARIE LEACY, MARIA KENNY, TOM STAFFORD, FIONA KINSELLA, BRANDON COGLEY, CALUM O'SHEA, CIARA O'MUIRI, LYDIA MURPHY & KEVIN ROWE



The logo of Loch Sárman GAA is a circular emblem. It features a central shield with a blue background, a yellow border, and a yellow cross at the top. The shield is divided into three horizontal sections: the top and bottom sections are blue with yellow 'Y' patterns, and the middle section is green with red diamond patterns. A green banner wraps around the shield, displaying the text 'SCOL NA' on the left, 'TOIRBHÍRTE' on the right, and 'LOCH SÁRMAN' at the bottom. The shield is set against a red circular background, which is further enclosed by a yellow ring. The entire logo is surrounded by stylized blue and white decorative elements.



Our school in one word:

Inspiring

Inspiring

My name is Jimmy Grannell.
I teach Religious Education and
History and I have been teaching for
10 years.

If you were Minister for Education, what immediate change would you bring to second-level education?

**Reducing class sizes
would enhance the
learning experience of
students.**

Where I STUDIED

**MATER DEI
INSTITUTE
(DCU)**

TRINITY
COLLEGE,
DUBLIN

What do you believe is the most important characteristic a teacher should have?

Respect, as it is the foundation of positive relationships.

What are the main highlights for you in your work?

Making a positive impact on a student's day.

Making a positive impact on a student's day.

my definition of
EFFECTIVE TE

My definition of
EFFECTIVE TEACHING AND LEARNING

For effective learning and teaching to take place, it is necessary to foster a culture in which both flourish. Collaboration, reflection, reluctance and a shared moral purpose are key elements but, most importantly, the student must be at the centre of it all.



Presentation Secondary School, Wexford

Learning Hub

"Where leadership and learning combine."



The new members of the Learning Hub team met recently to discuss the plans for the school's new Student Learning Hub.

An exciting new student initiative has begun in Presentation Secondary School, Wexford: the Student Learning Hub. This student-led hub is where students are helping each other with how to become more responsible and active in their own learning, as well as supporting each other in developing their leadership skills and student voice.

There will be a focus on both academic and non-academic learning (learning for life). Different students within the team will have responsibilities for different areas to work on and the whole Learning Hub leadership team will meet regularly to reflect upon and discuss progress, providing feedback etc.



The Learning Hub Senior Prefects (L to R): Isabelle Roche, Emmeline Turley and Aoife Burke.

The Learning Hub team will be responsible for: organising regular morning/lunchtime **student teach-meets, pop-up stations, Hub newsletter, liaise with Student Council and body on students' experiences of learning (surveys etc), update noticeboard/social media feeds, organising guest speakers, as well as establishing links with other student groups in other schools and with local community groups.**

The student teach-meets will begin in January!

Stay informed via Twitter (@PresWexHub) or Instagram (#preswexhub) for updates!

Life in Third Year

by Emily Cullen, Rang Deirdre



I very much enjoy being in school here, as I find that I'm surrounded by people my own age, who are going through similar experiences in their education, which is reassuring.

I'm enjoying Third Year so far, but it is definitely more difficult and sometimes it's frustrating but I love coming to school every day to see my friends and learn new things.

I believe that school also has a social aspect to it and that it is important to come and mix or socialise with others, as it contributes greatly to your well-being and it is important to feel connected and familiar with your school environment, as it is part of your daily life for so long. As a Third Year student, being present and attentive throughout your secondary education is very important and if you turn up and try your best to take in information that is presented to you in each class, it helps greatly for future reference.

At the moment, there is a lot of talk about the Junior Cycle exam. I feel it is daunting to think of sitting a State Exam, this year, however, I have to remind myself everyone else in this year group is in the same boat.

I believe that participating and contributing your ideas in class is very important as it's a way to give your ideas and receive feedback or corrections that can improve your rate of work.

Participation in class also helps others to learn from each other.

I find preparation is key to doing well in school. Throughout my time in the Presentation, I've realised for myself that being prepared is key - "fail to prepare, prepare to fail" is a motto that represents school life very well. I find study is daunting sometimes, especially if it is for a big test or exam and I have a lot of material to cover. To make this less stressful, I like to plan ahead so I find writing a study plan is very rewarding, as it helps me get through a lot of material in a good way, a study plan allows you to see how you spend your time and ensures you are setting aside enough time for each subject. They also help you to avoid procrastination and memorise material effectively.

Activities outside school are very important for my mental health. I enjoy playing camogie and Gaelic football with my local club. I try going to at least two hours of sport a week to get a break from homework/school work, which gives me a chance to relax and get some fresh air. Exercise helps me manage stress and keeps me healthy, physically and mentally. I also play sports for the school, as this allows me to get to know people in who you may not see that regularly and it's also a great way to build connections, as well as being very enjoyable.

Overall, I would say that I am enjoying Third Year so far and I am looking forward to what's to come for the rest of the year.

INTRODUCTION TO RETRIEVAL PRACTICE

Retrieval practice has been defined as ‘the act of recalling learned information from memory (with little or no support) and every time that information is retrieved, or an answer is generated, it changes the original memory to make it stronger.’ (Jones, 2020) Therefore, it is any strategy that involves students retrieving material that they have previously learned from their long-term memory.

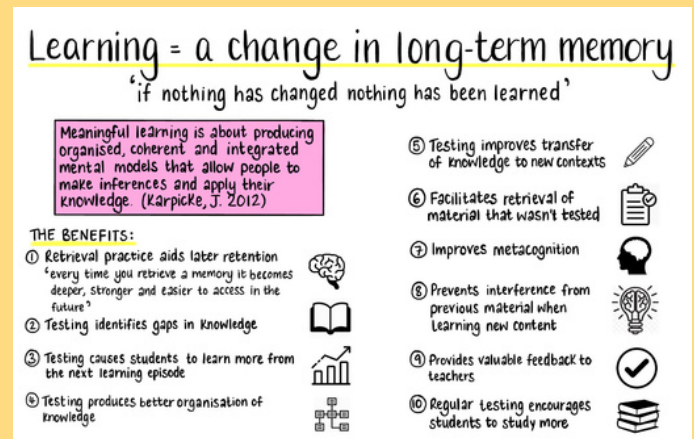
Retrieval practice is a learning strategy, not an assessment tool, so it is used to cement learning, strengthen memory and improve long-term retention. It is to be used to support the learning experience.

THE RETRIEVAL PRACTICE TRILOGY

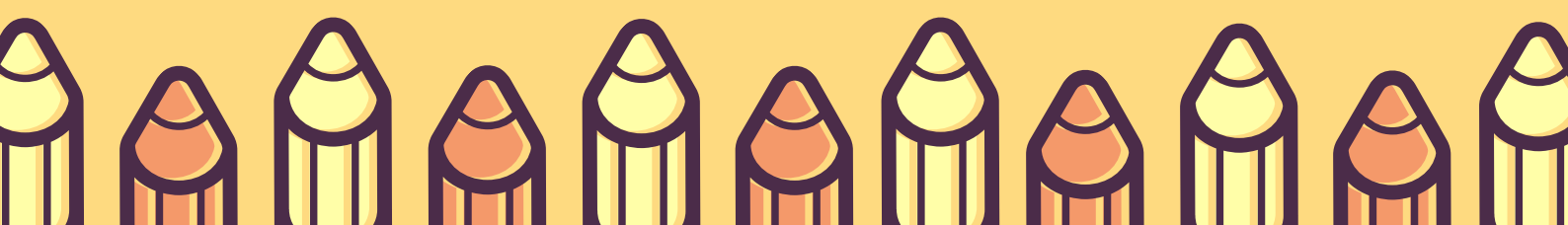
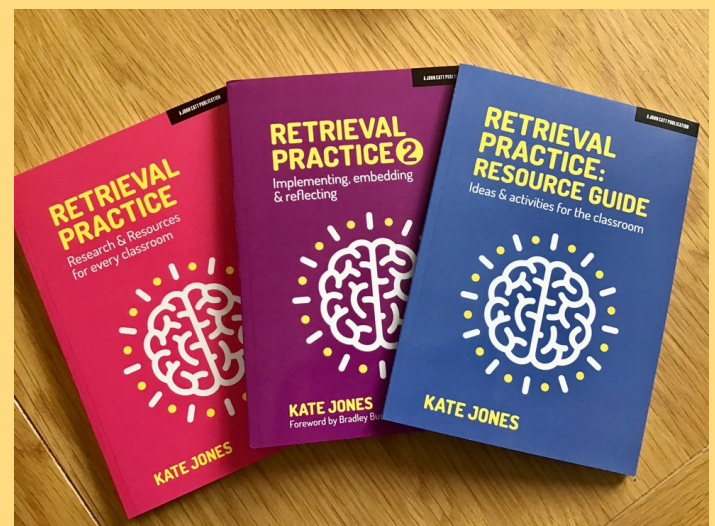
Kate Jones is the go-to source for all things pertaining to retrieval practice. Her excellent trilogy - on this area - are landmark publications in educational research and come highly recommended should you wish to develop this in your own practice. The content is delivered in a very accessible style.

Follow Kate (@KateJones_teach) on Twitter.

There is an abundance of different retrieval practice strategies that can be used to great effect in the classroom and they are cross-curricular, not subject-specific, in terms of scope and engagement.

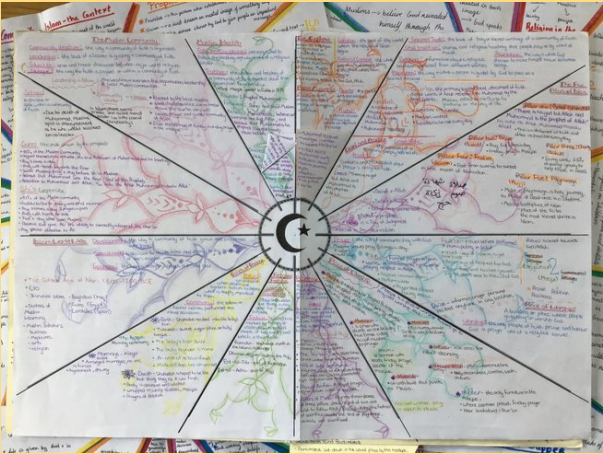


Graphic by Grace Hudson



RETRIEVAL PRACTICE IN THE CLASSROOM

Kate Jones provides more detailed use of six specific retrieval practice strategies that can be used with students in the classroom. However, there is a wide variety of other strategies available to use too, like retrieval (revision) clocks and thinking quilts (see images below).



The above is an example from a former Third Year Religious Education student, who was using **retrieval (revision) clocks** on the key areas in their study of Islam.

Pictured on the right, **thinking quilts** are an effective way to scaffold key learning on a certain topic within a subject. They can be colour-coded to aid visual interaction. This is an example of a Leaving Certificate Higher Level English student completing retrieval work, through colour-coding, on key characteristics relating to the character of Othello in Shakespeare's play. Students associate the key quotes to specific characteristics of the titular character.

Retrieval Practice in the Classroom

- ### 1 Retrieval Practice Placemat

Example questions:

 - What keywords did you use last lesson?
 - State 3 key facts from last lesson.
 - Explain a key concept from last lesson.
 - Ask your partner 3 questions based on the content covered this term.
- ### 2 Brain Dumps

→ Dumping as much information from the brain about a specific topic

→ Low effort, HIGH impact!
- ### 3 Cops & Robbers

 - Cops – students write as much as they can from memory about a certain topic.
 - Robbers – students get out of their seats, sharing and stealing ideas from their peers.
- ### 4 Retrieval Grids

→ A grid with a range of questions that vary in the level of difficulty.

→ Each question is worth a certain amount of points. The points increase with the level of difficulty.
- ### 5 Flash Cards

 - How effective flashcards are depends on how they're **USED**!
 - It is important that students consciously recall the answer to the question on their flashcards, either verbally or through writing.
- ### 6 Flashback Friday

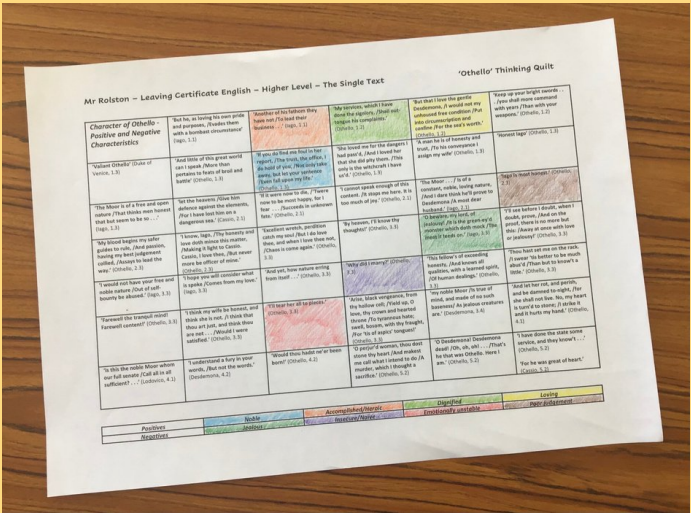
→ As an end of lesson task on a Friday ask students to create a series of 5-10 questions based on the lesson content.

→ Students answer these a week later.

Choose a settler to complete

Create a list of 5 keywords from last lesson and explain how they all link together. 	Create a mind map of key terms and phrases from last lesson. 	Create 5 multiple choice questions based on last lesson.
Create 5 true or false questions based on last lesson. 	Choose 5 important keywords about the current topic and explain why you chose them. 	Summarise what you learnt last lesson in 4 lines or less.
Create 5 revision flashcards based on last lesson. 	Create an assessment style question based on last lesson and a student friendly mark scheme. 	Create a list of 5 keywords that link this topic to your previous topic.

A great way to get students settled and focused on the learning experience is to get them to complete a retrieval settler in the first 5-10 minutes of class.



TEACHER PROFILES



Our school in one word:

Inclusive

My name is Breda Murphy.
I teach Irish, English and SPHE.
I have been teaching in this
school since 2009.

What do you believe
is the most important
characteristic a
teacher should have?
**Kindness and a
sense of
humour.**

I taught in Presentation,
Wexford for a year in 2007
and then rejoined the
teaching staff two years later.

Where I
STUDIED
UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE,
DUBLIN

*What are the main
highlights for you
in your work?*

That has been the many
successes the camogie
teams have had over the
years, when I was
involved with Mr Walsh.
We had such fun!

My definition of
EFFECTIVE TEACHING AND LEARNING

For me, it would be the balance between communication and reflection. Teachers and students get things wrong, every day. It's important to recognise that and know that is okay. Reflecting on your mistakes and talking about them is the best way to learn.



My Transition Year so far

BY ELLA BARRY

My experience of Transition Year has been jam packed so far, from drumming workshops to practicing for our musical.

This year, I get to taste of a multitude of subjects to aid my subject choice at Leaving Certificate. I have already tried Music, Geography, European Studies, Politics, Business and History. They have been extremely interesting and honestly if I could study them all for Leaving Certificate I would!

It was nice coming from the same subjects for three years at Junior Cycle to an interesting variety of subjects in Transition Year, where you get to explore new subjects every 8 weeks.

We have done a variety of workshops including creative writing, cake decorating and drumming which were brilliant fun and a great bonding experiences for the whole year.

Work experience is a great way to improve your social skills and get involved in your community also I know, personally, I was able to get a part-time job from my work experience, much like many other students. With charity work, you get involved in the community. Workshops and new subjects may help point you towards your future career and experiences can shape the person you become.

“As a whole, Transition Year is a fantastic way to grow as a person and experience new and exciting things. All in all, I would 100% recommend Transition Year to everyone.”

Ella Barry

In focus: Teaching as a career

by Lydia Murphy,
History and English teacher



I always had a desire to have a career in education. I say desire, but it was, without a doubt, a deep, burning ambition of mine to be a teacher one day. From a very young age, I had been struck by the difference teachers made in my life and how inspired I was by them on a daily basis. My teachers always put my education first and engaged me from the moment I set foot into their classrooms.

I was lucky enough to attend secondary school in Colaiste Bríde in Enniscorthy. It was during my time there that I discovered a profound love and passion for English and History. So much of the passion I had instilled in me has to be credited to my teachers who gave me a platform to express my thoughts and opinions without judgement. This was only heightened when I entered University College Dublin and had the opportunity to study literature and historical events I had never heard of previously. I never saw learning as a chore. I saw it as an opportunity to develop myself and to learn more about the world around me.

I think the greatest gift in teaching is working with so many amazing people. I love helping students to see their full potential and helping to guide them on their paths to success. I, then, have the greatest opportunity in watching them grow into wonderful young adults. It is also imperative to work closely and collaboratively with enthusiastic colleagues to support the teaching and learning process in schools. Teaching is a fun part but learning is the most important part. I am a firm believer in lifelong learning. We are never finished educating ourselves. Every single day in school, I am afforded the opportunity to learn something new. This is not something I take for granted.

There are many things that come to mind when I think of effective teaching and learning. First and foremost, I believe that a classroom should be a respectful setting where students are free to express themselves and can flourish and develop holistically. It is also paramount to me that the needs of all my students are met and that there is equality of opportunity for all. It is essential that I should adapt, constantly, to our changing world and collaborate with colleagues to establish innovative teaching methodologies. These practices and a willingness to learn from teachers and students ensure effective teaching and learning takes place.

My teaching subjects

Studying History is crucial as it develops an awareness of our past. We gain an understanding of how people lived and behaved. It also allows us to acknowledge a change that has occurred and how those changes have contributed to the society we live in today. I love that the subject gives students a platform to debate right from wrong and good from evil. English, too, provides us with similar opportunities. Studying different types of literature allows us to see things from others's perspectives and opens up a world of creativity. English allows students to express themselves through writing and enhances our understanding of complex topics and issues.

COLD CALLING: THE #1 STRATEGY
FOR INCLUSIVE CLASSROOMS -
REMOTE AND IN PERSON

BY TOM SHERRINGTON

Based on my experience working with hundreds of teachers in numerous contexts, I'd suggest that one of the strategies with the biggest impact on the overall effectiveness of lessons is the routine use of cold-call questioning. More and more I find that, rather than merely promoting it, I am strongly advocating it, basically saying: every teacher should use cold calling as their default questioning mode. I feel strongly about it.

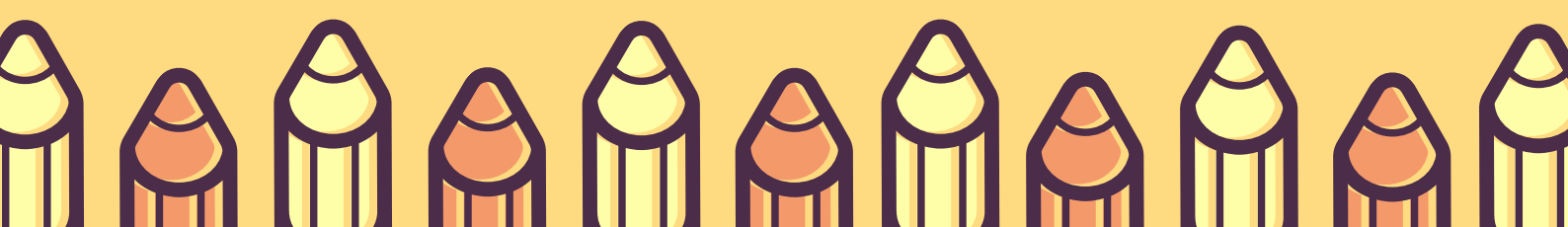
Why? Because, from what I see, there is a gulf between these two scenarios:

A: The class is dominated by questioning where the teacher engages primarily with students who volunteer with hands up or by simply calling out. It's the norm. It can seem lively on the surface but nearly always it's just a few students who dominate while others are marginal; passive; silent. They might be thinking; they might not be. It's possible to think nothing and say nothing and nobody will notice. Usually this goes along with questions of the type: *Can anyone tell me.....? Can anyone remember....? Who knows.....? Does everyone understand? Who has an answer for... ?* Some students usually have answers – so others just don't have to. Thinking is optional. Some students' default is just to wait for someone else to answer – because they always do.

B: The class where the teacher nearly always selects who should respond next by name. No hands up; no calling out – it could be anyone. This is the norm. Students all anticipate being asked to respond, sharing their thoughts; everyone mentally prepares an answer to every question in readiness for being selected. They are all involved. Nobody dominates. Over time, everyone contributes. Questions are addressed to the whole class followed by a pause and then.... *Michael, what were you thinking? Safia, what answer did you get? Shafiq, how did you explain it?* Thinking is required from everyone; everyone is included.

Scenario A is very common but why would you accept this when you could generate Scenario B?

This is the power of **cold calling**, when the teacher chooses who to respond and it could be anyone. It's a strategy named and promoted strongly by Doug Lemov in 'Teach Like A Champion' and features prominently in our 'WalkThrus' materials were our five step process looks like this:



An example might run like this:

- Ask the question: *Ok, everyone let's see. What's a good way to work out 12×17 ?*
- Give thinking time: (No hands up, no calling out; scan the room as they think, keeping the focus)
- Select someone to respond: *Right, so Kelly what were you thinking? (warm, invitational). "I think it's 204."*
- Respond to the answers. *Yes, that's the right answer. What was your method? "I did 10×17 and then 2×17 and added them up"*
- Select and another student: *Great. And Abdi what about you. What method did you use? "I did 10×12 makes 120 7×12 is 84 and then add them for 204". Well done – how does that compare to Kelly's answer?*

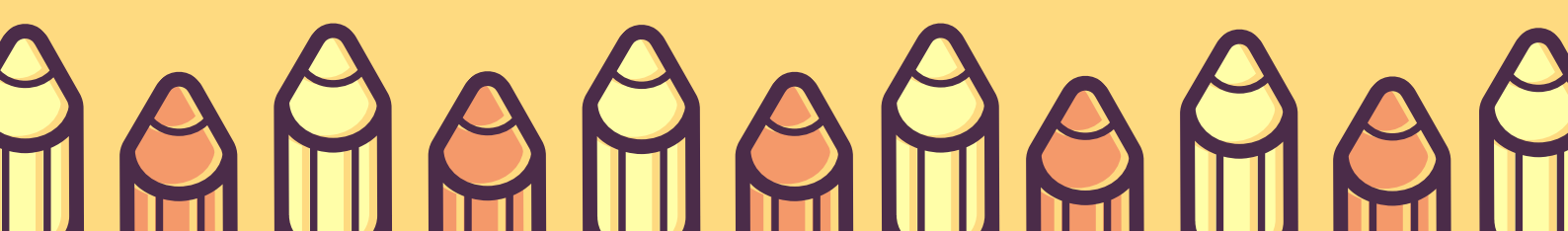
In the cold call scenario, Kelly and Abdi anticipate being asked; they think and engage; it's the norm. It's safe, friendly, supportive and inclusive. If they were wrong or unsure, the teacher finds out and can respond, offering appropriate support or instruction. The Scenario A experience could be very different. The teacher asks: *Does anyone know 12×17 ?* Michael knows. He puts his hand up. He's correct. The teacher thanks him and moves on. Kelly and Abdi had barely registered the question, let alone thought of an answer. This happens all the time so they don't even expect to give an answer when questions are asked.

What's the key to cold-calling working so well?

The spirit is inclusive and invitational; it's never a 'gotcha': The absolute key is that students do not feel caught out or exposed. It's the opposite. Asking students to answer is a warm invitation to participate. *David, what were you thinking? Yusuf, did you have an answer? Yasmin, which three did you pick?*

Everyone's contributions matter. The teacher conspicuously always reaches into the corners of the class; there are no no-go areas; no silent tables. The message is simple and explicit. *I need to know what you are thinking if I'm going to help you the best I can. And you all matter to me. All of you, no exceptions.*

Accountability and inclusion go hand in hand: The routine use of cold call establishes the students' mental habit – the norm – that when a question is asked, they need to listen, engage and think. The teacher will ask people they choose; they always do. It's not a big deal; it happens all the time. The effect is that students always feel involved; they can't opt out. That routine level of accountability helps them to focus their attention and also communicates a sense that they belong; they are included; they matter.



Everyone is made to think: (or at least – it makes more students think, more of the time)

As we know from Willingham, 'memory is the residue of thought'. If students don't think, they can't learn. Cold calling as a routine is the most effective way to maximise thinking during dynamic, responsive question and answer exchanges. *I'm not asking you to think if you feel like it I'm creating the conditions where you are more likely to think because you know I may ask you to give an answer. (And that's good because if you're struggling, I'll find that out and can then help you.)*

The responses are responsive: A key element to cold calling is that you engage with the answers. You are checking for understanding. If they are right, you probe further; if they are wrong or unsure, you offer support; if they could improve the quality of response, you can give them another go to say it again, better. This deepens their thinking and improves your knowledge of them as learners

Tom Sherrington is a Physics and Maths teacher, since the 1980s, based in England. This post is taken from his very popular blog on teacherhead.com. He has written very popular educational research books on learning and teaching and is the co-author of the hugely popular 'WalkThrus' series with Oliver Caviglioli.

This blog-post was posted on 17 February 2021.

Cold Call Adaptations for Confidence-Building

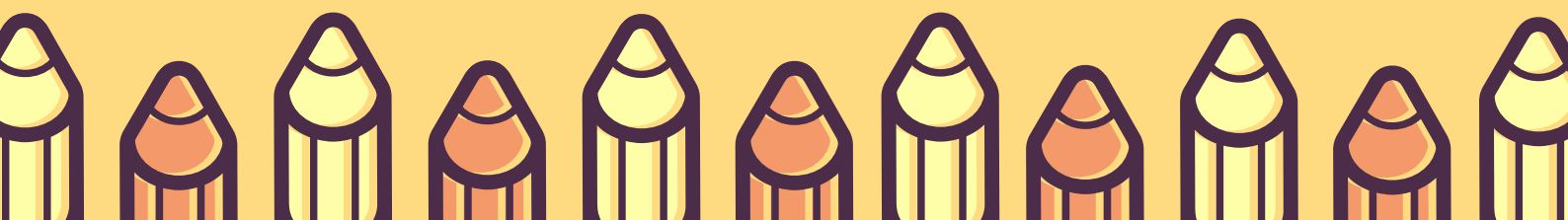
There are lots of strategies you can use to ensure students build confidence in giving verbal answers in front of others. The Uncommon Schools team model a lot of these in their remote learning webinars.

Pre-Call: This is when you tell one or more students that you will ask them to respond after you've given an explanation, read a passage or watched a video. *Ok, John and Sabrina, after the video, I'd like you to summarise the key points for us.* This gives them that extra bit of notice to prepare. Other students know they too could be cold called afterwards but John and Sabrina get some prep time.

Batched Cold-Call: This is another Uncommon Schools gem, when you tee up a number of students to answer in one go. *Right, now I've explained my examples, I'd love to hear your versions. I'll start with Michael, then Daisy, then Samuel.* You then ask them one by one. It gives Michael and especially Daisy and Samuel a heads up. They can get ready. Any sense of 'gotcha' is removed entirely. It also helps the teacher plan to spread questions. It's a technique a good committee chair will use – and works a dream in lessons.

Rehearse and Affirm: This is where, first, you have given all students an opportunity to share their answers non-verbally through a means you can see: whiteboards (Show me!); in the chat stream on a remote call; on their books as you circulate in a classroom; on a quizzing application or form where you see individual answers. You select answers that are correct or interesting and then cold call the students to ask them to expand. *Robyn, what a great answer. Could you explain how you came to that conclusion? Jason, well done, B is the correct answer. How did you know that?*

This technique has the effect of giving Robyn and Jason confidence in their understanding before they give their answer publicly. They already know they are right. It's a technique that is great for the less confident students; you build them up by asking them to explain their good ideas or correct answers you've already seen – rather than them feeling it's a risk offering answers at the point when they are still unsure.



LIFE AS A SIXTH YEAR STUDENT

Written by Emmeline Turley

The Leaving Cert and the current pandemic (which seems to be more determined to stick around than the money in my bank account) has brought with them new sets of adventures and challenges for me to experience this year.

I feel closer than ever to the people in my year. I am extremely grateful for the friends I have made during the past six years in the school. However, the looming possibility of predictive grades has definitely increased the amount of class tests in some subjects, as is the case in the vast majority of other schools.

From where I am sitting, I think the fear and uncertainty regarding June 2022 has doubled the quantity of class tests for certain subjects. It's quite understandable that this is so, because theoretically the more tests you do, the more accurate your average result will be. I am finding it challenging, though, to properly prepare for a test when there are so many of them within short time frames of one another but I do recognise that this is a hard thing to balance during these unpredictable times.

"I am hoping to study English and Music in college once I leave school. I don't particularly know what I will do after that, but I want to travel the world and experience all the different cultures life has to offer."



On a lighter note, I really like how a lot of my classes are broken up to include a short break in the middle. It makes me more attentive. I also like how the majority of my hour-long classes are divided up into covering different areas of the Leaving Cert course. For example, in Maths I can go from taking notes to doing practise exercises to attempting actual exam paper questions. It lets me see for myself the way questions are actually phrased in the Leaving Cert.

I love when the atmosphere in class is more of an open discussion because I can listen to other people's opinions on how they would go about answering a question or hear their own interpretations of certain concepts. I also find it easier to grasp definitions when teachers use stories to explain them.

I don't have a general formula for how I study because it differs from subject to subject. I tend to use Quizlets to learn vocabulary for French, while I approach Irish essays by learning off a few sentences orally and then writing them down. For my sciences, Biology and Chemistry, I go through my notes and write out the terms and definitions I am unsure of on sticky notes. I focus more on doing exam paper questions for these subjects because their marking schemes are so precise. I also do the same for Maths. For English, I go through my resources and make a shortened list of key quotes for texts. I will usually watch a video on YouTube the night before a test because they introduce me to new ways of interpreting a piece. Finally, for Music I listen to my set works in my earphones and pick out the features I can hear. Then I turn to my score to identify the ones I missed. Doing exam paper questions for this subject is also helpful.

My typical school day consists of pressing the snooze button an unspoken number of times and giving Usain Bolt a run for his money as I speed walk down to my bus at half past seven. Depending on the day, I'll meet with my first year Meitheal class during break and go to either the library, the music room for group singing, a Learning Hub meeting or lovingly annoy my friends in the balcony at lunch. If I don't have music lessons, choir or jazz ensemble, I'll go home and spend an hour doing homework and I'll study for tests. Afterwards I will go downstairs and play piano and sing for a while.

TEACHER PROFILES



Our school in one word:

Welcoming

My name is Damien Nugent.

I am a Guidance Counsellor and I teach Business and Careers.

I have been teaching for 9 years.

This is my sixth year in this school.

If you were Minister for Education, what immediate change would you bring to second-level education?

I would reduce the student-teacher ratio in every school and employ more teachers. This would allow for teachers and students alike to have more time in classes to engage, build relationships and to blossom with one another.

What is your own personal definition of effective learning and teaching?

To work with students and know that I have helped them to take the next step in any aspect of their life, inside or outside of the classroom, is a huge ambition of mine.

What do you believe is the most important characteristic a teacher should have? I really feel that patience is the most important. When you are working with young people 'patience is the ability to count down before you blast off' (Mohd Abdul Mubeen).

Main highlights **FOR ME IN MY WORK**

One of my main highlights is the unpredictability of my role as Guidance Counsellor within our school, everyday is different and you never know what can happen. I cherish working with Senior Cycle students and exploring areas of interest that they have in regards to life after school. A real highlight of my week is my 3rd year Business Studies class, where we tackle the real world of business. Also, being involved with students outside the classroom with regards to extra-curricular activities with the Under 15 soccer team. Finally, the opportunity to work with a very supportive, knowledgeable and dedicated staff every single day.



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SUBJECT IN FOCUS: POLITICS & SOCIETY

by Donal McCarthy,

History, English and Politics & Society teacher

Author of 'Citizen' textbook for CSPE, with Educate.ie



Six years ago there was no such thing as a Politics and Society teacher in the state. I had been teaching History, English and CSPE for over a decade in the Pres. Then, in 2016, the school took part in the pilot for Leaving Cert Politics and Society, with that first class sitting the debut exam in 2018. During the last five years, I have spent two on an intensive CPD course, including six overnight residential events, and two years seconded to the PDST, training hundreds of new Politics and Society teachers, delivering the same course.

Happily, the school now has a new department with Valerie Redmond and Rikki O'Leary taking classes from 2018 onwards. In terms of a learning curve, it has been pretty much vertical, with probably as many planning dead ends as successes but, since the subject became the first to have a "new senior cycle" style specification, and a very innovative approach to student voices in the classroom, I thought it might be of interest to some to share some of the ways becoming involved with the subject has changed my teaching:

- *Democratic Classroom:* Sewn into the specification, in Strand One, is the concept of trialling a more democratic style of classroom management, with students having a say in assignment frequency and deadlines, classroom discussion etiquette and being encouraged analyse power and decision making in the school community and if they see fit campaign for changes around rules. This obviously has to be very carefully experimented with...and can look completely different depending on what the maturity levels of a given class are.

- *Discursive Classroom:* Although there is a written terminal exam, like other subjects, a huge proportion of the learning in class happens through discussion and debate. Covid has really made this difficult, since last year, but in a typical year the majority of a class hour would be spent, not on teacher input but on group research tasks and discussion. I have had to design (and then during Covid, adapt) a whole toolbox of strategies and methodologies to provoke debate in class. These range from digital polling and instant response apps, to placemats, news review sessions, standing/walking debates and sometimes just good old fashioned playing devil's advocate. This is crucial, as, in this subject, a student who has just learned the material, but not developed a position, is at a big disadvantage.

- *Less Textbook, more Twitter:* There was no textbook for the subject for the first couple of years and having gotten used to life without one, I feel unlikely to go back. The subject demands a level of topical, up to date knowledge that a textbook just can't capture. It seems likely that a lot of the upcoming humanities-based Senior Cycle specifications will also have an element of this....demanding knowledge from the students of the changing world around them that educational publishers will struggle to capture in a 4/5 year printing cycle.

Overall, the experience of taking on a new senior subject has been challenging but also re-energised my approach, even in my other subjects. I hope too that the subject has had a modest impact on the school community beyond the Politics and Society classroom with students using their voice on the social, cultural and political issues that affect their lives and an increasing number of our students choosing social, legal and political third level options.

TEACHER PROFILES



Our school in one word:

Revolutionary

My name is Tom Stafford.
I teach Science, Chemistry and
Biology.

I have been teaching for 6 years.

*If you were Minister for Education,
what immediate change would you
bring to second-level education?*

I would implement changes around how
students are examined. I would love to see a
continuous assessment approach, which would
take the emphasis off one final exam in 6th
year. Students' work and assessments, from
2nd to 5th year, would contribute towards their
final second level result.

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What do you believe
is the most important
characteristic a
teacher should have?
**Compassion. An
eagerness to see all
students succeed and an
ability to understand the
student perspective.**

*What are the main
highlights for you in
your work?*

Being able to help students
reach their full educational
potential and goals in
learning, whatever that may be
for them.

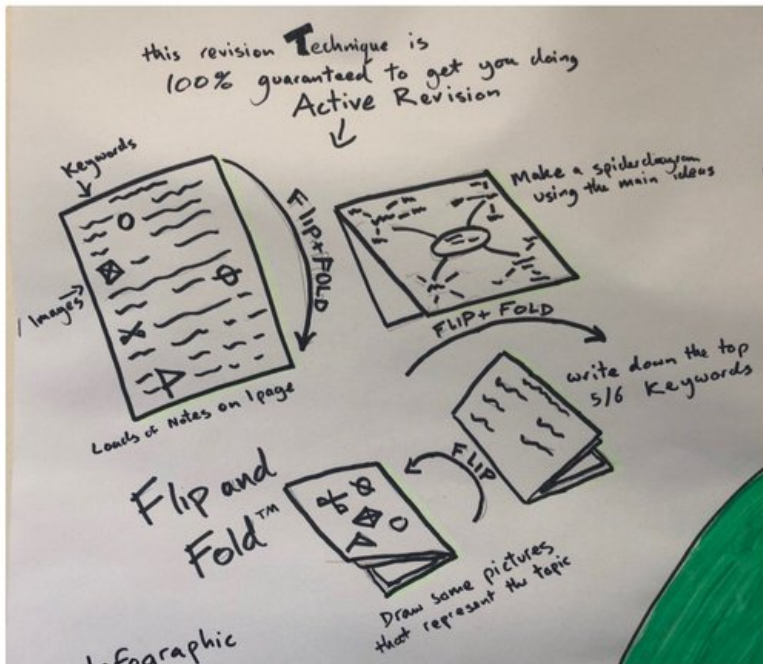
My definition of

EFFECTIVE TEACHING AND LEARNING

Is where all learning styles and students are catered for. An
environment whereby both the student and teacher understand
what the best approach is for student achievement and where there
is an understanding that all standards of learning are different and
must be nurtured.

STUDY TIPS

Highlighting a practical strategy that can be used to develop and support active study.



'FLIP AND FOLD'

- 1) Write your notes on an A4 sheet
- 2) Fold the sheet in half and create a summary map
- 3) Fold the sheet again and summarise the whole topic in 5-6 anchor/key words
- 4) Flip over the sheet and summarise the topic with a few images

STUDYING AND REVISION: What does the science say?

✓ MOST effective at improving your long term memory



Retrieval practice

ANSWERING QUESTIONS, having to RECALL information.

Spacing

Doing little bits often; not all at once (don't cram!)

Ref: Dunlosky et al, 2013

Avoid distractions

You WILL concentrate better without distractions. Simply being able to SEE a mobile phone, even if it is not yours, reduces attention, concentration and performance by 20%.

Ref: Thornton et al, 2014



Sleep

A good night's sleep before studying allows your memory to consolidate information more effectively.

Ref: Walker and van der Helm, 2009

Summary notes

Students who make their own summary notes at the end of lessons and topics did 10 - 17% better in assessments than those who did not.

Ref: Peiper and Mayer, 1986



✗ LEAST effective at improving your long term memory

Highlighting notes

Looks pretty, but effect is negligible.



Rereading notes or book

Helpful in early stages, but MUST be followed by answering questions or quizzing to embed the knowledge.

Ref: Dunlosky et al, 2013



Listening to music whilst studying

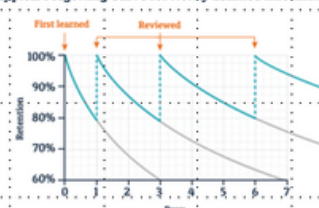
Studying in silence can improve exam performance by up to 60% more than when listening to music with lyrics.

Ref: Perham and Currie, 2014

Regular review and revision is needed to embed knowledge in your long term memory.

Ref: Muir and Dros, 2015

Typical Forgetting Curve for Newly Learned Information



STUDY TIPS

Highlighting a practical strategy that can be used to develop and support active study.

HOW TO TAKE NOTES

THE CORNELL METHOD

ABOUT

The **Cornell** note-taking method was devised in the 1940's by Dr Walter Pauk, at Cornell University.

- ✓ Efficient method of taking notes
- ✓ Encourages reflection
- ✓ Makes an effective study guide for revision and exam preparation

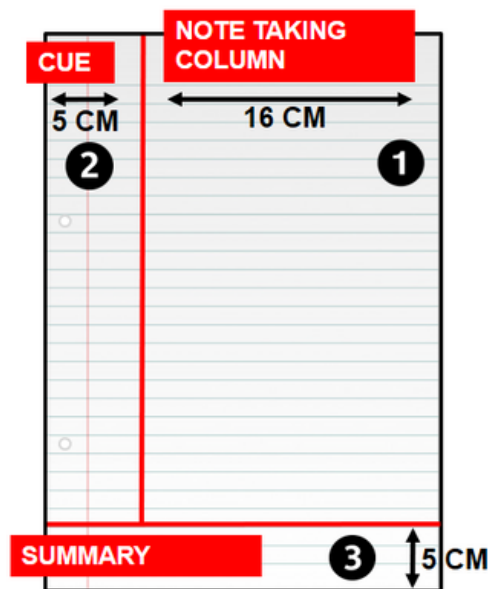
HOW

Divide an A4 page into the three sections as shown.

You can use different dimensions for each section if you prefer

Each section has a specific purpose:

-  **RECORD**
-  **QUESTIONS**
-  **REVIEW**



- 1** Write your notes in this section **during the lesson**
 - Use **any format** you like to record these notes (for example, mind-mapping)
 - Record only the **important information** (don't write in full sentences)
 - Focus on **ideas** rather than the actual words

- 2** This section is for **recall**.
 - Do not write** in this section **during the lesson**
 - The cue section is created **when you review your notes**.
 - Do this **as soon as possible** after the lesson
 - Cues are **in the form of questions** that you can use the notes to answer.

- 3** A **summary** of the notes taken
 - It should be **concise** focusing on **key ideas** only
 - Written in **your own words**
 - NOTES + CUES + SUMMARY** should show how all ideas fit together

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CORNELL NOTE-TAKING METHOD

This method of note-taking is a much more active way for students to interact with their class notes, rather than the robotic 'copy and paste' approach from textbooks/PowerPoints etc.

The CPD corner



News and updates for teachers

The learning & teaching survey

Teachers will be invited to take a survey on their personal experiences of teaching, learning and assessment practices in the New Year!

Our Education Centre

The Wexford Education Support Centre offers a very wide range of workshops and webinars on many different areas pertaining to second-level education.

Two members of our teaching staff are currently involved in running very successful online Communities of Practice.

Anna Carr coordinates the Community of Practice for SETs and SENCOs and Joe Rolston coordinates the Community of Practice for English teachers.

For updates on all upcoming online CPD: visit www.ecwexford.ie or follow @WexfordEdCentre on Twitter.



Wexford Education
Support Centre

WHO DARES TO
TEACH MUST
NEVER CEASE
TO LEARN

JOHN COTTON DANA

TEACHERS WHO
love teaching
TEACH CHILDREN
to love learning.

Coming soon . . .

The Teaching, Learning and Assessment (TLA) "take-away" noticeboard in the staff room - practical resources to take away for instant use with students!



The CPD corner

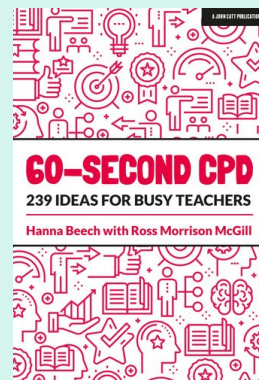


News and updates for teachers

Subject cluster workshops

Our teaching staff are scheduled to have their respective subject cluster workshop for 2021-22 on Tuesday 29 March 2022. Similar to the 2020-21 workshop, this will be an online event.

The Recommended Read



'60-second CPD' by Hanna Beech with Ross Morrison McGill is a highly practical read for the ever-busy teacher.

The book is packed with extremely useful ideas and theories (239 to be exact!) to inspire and refresh the ways in which we approach teaching. It is specifically designed for the busy teacher who is always looking to improve their own professional practice in-and-out of the classroom.

The ideas are structured within certain categories like learning environments, behaviour, curriculum, engaging parents, feedback, leadership, mental health and wellbeing and teaching and learning amongst others. The book is laid out in a very accessible manner, a 'dip in-and-out' formula. This is an essential textbook for any teacher looking to reflect upon and improve their own practice.

An tSraith Shóisearach

Junior
CYCLE

Junior Cycle Talks
PODCAST
PODCHRAOLADH JuniorCYCLE

Junior Cycle podcasts

The Junior Cycle for Teachers (JCT) support service regularly release podcasts from their 'Junior Cycle Talks' series. Many subject areas/topics are explored. Available on www.jct.ie or on music streaming services like Spotify.



*"By learning you will
teach; by teaching
you will learn."*

**THE NEXT EDITION OF
'INSPIRE' WILL BE ISSUED IN
MAY 2022.**
