



INSPIRE

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

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Welcome to 'Inspire'

BY JOE ROLSTON,
EDUCATION AND SCHOOL PLANNING
COORDINATOR



It is great to be back again, issuing our third edition of 'Inspire' - a New Year brings with it all the hopes, goals and aspirations that we tend to have for the the next twelve months ahead and I hope it is a year of learning and growth for everyone. While a new calendar year hits us, our school community continues to be a thriving place to learn, both in-and-out of the classroom. We should never forget, or take for granted, how fortunate we all are to study, work and learn in such a vibrant school community, as I hope this edition of 'Inspire' portrays. Wishing everyone who is dipping into this learning and teaching newsletter every blessing for 2023. This edition is dedicated to our late friend and colleague, David O'Sullivan.



David O'Sullivan

Friend, colleague and teacher

In early October, our Presentation, Wexford community lost a highly valued member of our teaching staff. For many years, we were fortunate to call David O'Sullivan our friend, colleague and teacher.

David was a learned man, in more ways than one.

Conversations in the staff room were always lively and humorous when he was present, ranging from matters of theology, philosophy, literature, education and Irish culture to the sporting ups and downs of various soccer and GAA teams, as well as his beloved Kingdom of Kerry.

In all manners of life, David was respectful, kind, soft-spoken and unassuming, a man of faith and a family man at heart.

His presence is deeply missed in our school.

May he Rest in Peace.

David had a lot of time for the poetry of Gerard Manley Hopkins, so it is with the words of his poem 'Spring' that this piece concludes upon.

***Nothing is so beautiful as Spring –
When weeds, in wheels, shoot long and lovely and lush;
Thrush's eggs look little low heavens, and thrush
Through the echoing timber does so rinse and wring
The ear, it strikes like lightnings to hear him sing;
The glassy peartree leaves and blooms, they brush
The descending blue; that blue is all in a rush
With richness; the racing lambs too have fair their fling.***

***What is all this juice and all this joy?
A strain of the earth's sweet being in the beginning
In Eden garden. – Have, get, before it cloy,
Before it cloud, Christ, lord, and sour with sinning,
Innocent mind and Mayday in girl and boy,
Most, O maid's child, thy choice and worthy the winning.***

This edition of 'Inspire' is dedicated to David's memory.

MESSAGE FROM OUR SENIOR LEADERSHIP TEAM



"Time flies. It's up to you to be the navigator."

It is hard to believe that we are over half way through the school year, it only seems like last week I was writing my first piece for the 1st edition of Inspire & while time does indeed go fast, learn as much as you can while you are young, since life becomes too busy later.

Sadly, during the course of the last term we lost a friend, colleague, teacher & mentor to many. David O'Sullivan was one of life's true gents, a committed & dedicated teacher of Irish and Religion. His passion and love of the Irish language was obvious, he passed this love on to so many students, many going on to study Irish at 3rd level. It was testament to the type of person and teacher David was with the large turnout of former past pupils at his funeral celebration. The many students who David taught had a love for his subjects – they also loved being in his classes – though unassuming in nature – they loved his lessons. He was a gentle soul but loved the fun and craic too – whether it was getting involved and dressed up for the 6th year matches at Christmas or summer, taking part in the Christmas carols, playing five a side soccer, and dressing up for a Halloween or world book day. We keep his wife Ann, his daughter Catherine and all of his family and friends in our thoughts & prayers. I can say it was a pleasure to have known him and worked with for the past 7 years. We have lost one of the good people.

Thank you to Mr Rolston for putting together this 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. 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 last Inspire Newsletter:

- All 1st years had their induction as part of their transition to life at secondary school. –
- Congratulations to the Class of 2022 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 2022, including 36 students who achieved over 500 points, with three 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.
- 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 third 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.
- 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.

- 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 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.
- Thank you to our Guidance team Ms Kavanagh & Mr Nugent who brought 6th years to the higher options. Where our students have to experience many opportunities & further Pathways after school.
- Senior prefects & Head Girl Team met with Principal recently – discussion was around how T&L and life in general in our school feels like.
- A huge thank you to all the past pupils who took part in our further pathways initiative with their college profiles. These are be visible outside classrooms
- Our Learning Hub leaders have been very busy as of late:

Check & Connect teach-meets with all 160 first years over 3 weeks – giving tips on organisation, learning how to learn, sweet treats & Costa Coffee vouchers galore!

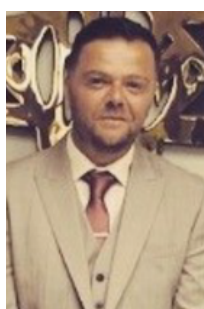
Learning Leaders held a great teach-meet on effective study techniques ahead of exam week. Lots of areas covered, questions asked & free resources shared.

- Recent Information Evenings included: o 19th September: **Transition Year Parents Night** o 28th September: **1st Year Parents Information Night** – 20th October: **Open Night** – 5.00pm – 8.30pm o 9th November: **6th Year CAO Information Night** – 6.00pm o **6th Year PSTC** – 12th October o **3rd Year PTM** – 18th October
- Student Bonding has been held for all year groups including: o **1st Year Induction** – 1st September o **2nd Year Bonding Day** – 9th September o **5th Year Bonding Day** – 13th September o **6th Year Bonding Day** – 20th September o **3rd Year Bonding Day** – 23rd September
- The following Special Weeks have been held – thank you to all staff & students involved o **Attendance Focus Week I**: 26th September – 30th September o **Friendship Week/Stand Up Week**: 17th – 21st October o **Science, Maths & Technology Week**: 7th – 11th Nov o **College Awareness Week**: 21st Nov – 25th
- Study Skills were held for the following years groups: o 6th & 3rd Year – 14th September o 2nd & 5th Year – 5th October
- Testing carried out – PPADE & DATS

On behalf of the entire Senior Leadership Team: Mary Dooley, Caroline Ryan & I, we hope that you enjoy this 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

TEACHER PROFILES



Our school in one word:

Welcoming

My name is Anna Carr.
I teach Geography, SPHE and
I am an AET coordinator, so
great variety in that role.
I have been teaching, in this
school, since 2005.

What are the main highlights for you in your work?

Seeing students grow in confidence and progress at a level appropriate to their individual needs. To see students develop life-skills and social skills that will benefit them once they finish their time with us here in school. There's always a great sense of achievement when meeting a past pupil or their parent and hear how successful they now are in life, even though perhaps the academic nature of school didn't suit them. Getting the chance to be that 'one good adult' for some students over the years is a massive honour and privilege.

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

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

I would develop a Junior Cycle programme to fit between Common Level in subjects and the L2LP programme, there's a huge gap between these and so many students could benefit from achieving success at a level appropriate to them.

I would also develop a continuation of L2LP for Leaving Certificate. I firmly believe at present the needs of many learners are not being met with the current programmes available.

I would also develop an intensive training programme for all teachers in Additional Educational Needs and teaching students with English as an Additional Language.

Where I
STUDIED

**UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE,
DUBLIN**

**TRINITY
COLLEGE,
DUBLIN**

My definition of
EFFECTIVE TEACHING AND LEARNING

Developing rapport, so that the student wants to try their best, trying to adapt and include them in school life, once they feel they belong and that someone believes they can achieve, they will learn and teaching will be effective.

COOPERATIVE LEARNING - DEVELOPING COLLABORATIVE PRACTICES

A new collaborative model of sharing practice has begun in Presentation Secondary School, Wexford in 2022-2023, as part of the school's Croke Park hours. The cooperative learning model operates as a type of 'Check and Connect' for members of the teaching staff, who meet up in their assigned cross-curricular groups once every term on a particular theme relating to learning and teaching.


- Teachers are placed in groups of 5-6 for the duration of the academic year
- 5 meetings throughout the year (one per term)
- Group dynamics take into consideration age and stage of career, gender, subject areas
- Teachers are given a 3 week window to arrange a meet-up with their group, aided by an assigned link teacher
- The meet-ups can take place in school, online or out of school (over a coffee or lunch)
- The aims are to develop collaborative dialogue around relevant areas of learning and teaching, with the hope that teachers will visit each other's classrooms to observe practice and student learning in action


COOPERATIVE LEARNING 22-23

FOCUS ON KEY ASPECTS OF LEARNING & TEACHING IN YOUR CLASSROOM

AREAS OF DISCUSSION IN YOUR MEET-UPS

1 27 SEPTEMBER - 14 OCTOBER QUALITY TEACHING PRINCIPLES	2 14 NOVEMBER - 2 DECEMBER HOMEWORK PRINCIPLES	3 16 JANUARY - 3 FEBRUARY FEEDBACK PRINCIPLES
4 6 MARCH - 24 MARCH ASSESSMENT PRINCIPLES	5 24 APRIL - 12 MAY LITERACY/ NUMERACY PRINCIPLES	






COOPERATIVE LEARNING
27 SEPTEMBER - 14 OCTOBER

EFFECTIVE TEACHING PRINCIPLES POSSIBLE AREAS FOR DISCUSSION

- WHAT IS YOUR OWN PHILOSOPHY ON TEACHING?
- WHAT DO YOU THINK IS THE IMPORTANT VALUE THAT A TEACHER SHOULD HAVE?
- WHAT WOULD BE YOUR OWN APPROACH TO TEACHING YOUR SUBJECTS?
- WHAT WOULD BE YOUR GO-TO STRATEGIES TO EMBED STUDENT LEARNING?
- HAS COVID-19 CHANGED THE WAY YOU TEACH OR VIEW TEACHING AS A CAREER?
- IF YOU HAD TO DESCRIBE YOUR STYLE OF TEACHING IN THREE WORDS, WHAT WOULD THEY BE AND WHY?
- DO YOUR CLASSES FOLLOW A PARTICULAR STRUCTURE?
- HOW DO YOU START AND FINISH A CLASS?

Groups are given prompt questions as a means of generating discussions



COOPERATIVE LEARNING
14 NOVEMBER - 2 DECEMBER

HOMEWORK PRINCIPLES POSSIBLE AREAS FOR DISCUSSION

- WHAT DO YOU THINK THE PURPOSE OF HOMEWORK IS AND IS IT NECESSARY?
- WHAT IS YOUR OWN RATIONALE WHEN GIVING HOMEWORK? HOW DO YOU CORRECT IT?
- WHAT DO YOU THINK OUR STUDENTS GAIN FROM HOMEWORK?
- DO YOU FOLLOW THE HOMEWORK TIME ALLOCATION FOR EACH YEAR GROUP?
- DOES HOMEWORK TEND TO BE ASSIGNED IN A TICK-THE-BOX MANNER OR DOES IT ADVANCE THE LEARNING IN YOUR SUBJECT?
- DO YOU ASSIGN HOMEWORK AT THE BEGINNING OR END OF A CLASS?
- DID COVID-19 CHANGE THE WAY IN WHICH YOU THINK ABOUT HOMEWORK?
- DOES/WOULD THE LEARNING AND TEACHING EXPERIENCE IN YOUR SUBJECT IMPROVE WITH THE ADDITION OR REMOVAL OF HOMEWORK?

Other aims of this initiative are to learn from each other's experiences, in a cross-curricular way, while also being a positive support to each other, in reconnecting with colleagues in the post-COVID world.

STAFF TEACH-MEET SESSION

DEVELOPING COLLABORATIVE PRACTICES

Back in October, a very successful teach-meet was organised. Many members of the teaching staff volunteered their time and effort to share, with their colleagues, an area of learning and teaching that was of particular interest to them. The staff were then invited to sign up to a number of different teach-meet sessions over the two-hour block.

These teach-meets are a great example of the power of teacher-led CPD, in the sharing of good practice. Thank you to all the teachers who volunteered to facilitate a session, it was a great afternoon of discussion, sharing ideas and developing collaborative practice.

List of teach-meets that took place

Teresa Bradshaw & Brendan Brophy - AEN terminology - WordWall

Lydia Murphy - Consent: a whole school approach

Sandrine Pac-Kenny - EdPuzzle - Assessment

Joe Rolston - Student Voice - Student learning experiences & strategies to support student voice

Rikki O'Leary - Wriggle Connect

Jimmy Grannell - Blooket

Cian Doyle = Coggle and Mentimeter

Deirdre Colfer - Teams Assignments

Craig Carroll - Visualisers in class

Mo O'Brien - Multi-Factor Authentication & Passwords

TeachMeet

TEACHER PROFILES



Our school in one word:

Student-centred

My name is Maria Kenny.
I teach Science, Biology &
Agricultural Science (I have taught
Chemistry and Physics too).
I have been teaching for 14 years.

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

Remove the points system for CAO.

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



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

**Helping others
succeed both inside
and outside of the
classroom.**

Where I
STUDIED

**UNIVERSITY
OF LIMERICK**

**UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE
DUBLIN**

My definition of
EFFECTIVE TEACHING AND LEARNING

**Having a positive impact on students and
helping them to develop life long skills.**

In focus: My reflections on teaching

by **Caroline Ryan**,
Deputy Principal / Science teacher



As a child I was constantly plaguing any adult that would give me the time of day with questions about the world. When I reached secondary school, here at Presentation, Wexford, I was lucky to land in Mrs. Irish's Science class. Finally, here was a full subject and a fantastic teacher dedicated to answering all my questions. So, it was no surprise when, on leaving school, I headed to UCD to study for a degree in Chemistry and Pharmacology. I envisaged myself white-coat clad developing theories and making discoveries – a la Marie Curie the second!

At the end of my fourth year, I was making decisions about postgraduate studies. A friend of mine had always dreamt of teaching and so on a free afternoon I decided to keep her company while she completed her application for the HDip, as the teaching qualification used to be known. Just for fun, I filled out an application too and the rest as they say is history!

I had only intended in staying for a year but from the moment I stood in front of a class, I knew that teaching was what I wanted to do. I began my career in Muckross Park College in Donnybrook, Dublin and spent 9 years there. Following a career break, which I spent travelling and working around Australia and Asia, I settled back in Wexford and was lucky to get a job at Presentation, my old school, filling in for Mrs. Irish! Things had come full circle.

It is hard to put into words how much I loved teaching Science. From introducing First Years to Science experiments to training Senior students how to correctly analyse results, every class is different and has its own challenge. It is a real privilege to be able to answer questions and help students understand the world around them. The sense of wonder and achievement when students gain an understanding of everyday phenomena is fantastic. I have also been lucky to be able to guide students competing in Young Scientist and Scifest competitions.

Just under six years ago, a new opportunity came up and I decided to apply for the position of Deputy Principal. My first year in this role was a sharp learning curve. I have had the opportunity to be more involved in school planning and administration and now get the opportunity to help students in lots of new ways outside of the classroom, whether to give emotional support, help or advice, I really enjoy these interactions. It is wonderful to see a smile forming on a previously worried face. I also have a lot of contact with parents, which I enjoy.

For me, teaching is helping every student reach their own potential. Creating a learning environment where every student feels valued and comfortable to ask whatever question is on their mind or for help when they need it is key. I get a real thrill seeing students who had previously struggled achieve their goal.

If I were to sum up what I like most about my job it is the interactions with people, and every day is different!

Faye Dalton Kehoe, Rang Beibhinn

The journey into 2nd year



My name is Faye, I am a Second Year student here at the Presentation. So far this year has been quite busy but I have enjoyed it all.

Last year, I was a First Year student. I came into this school for the first time and was very unfamiliar to the lifestyle of secondary school. I was figuring out what way things worked and adjusting to this new aspect of my education. I was making new friends, finding my way around, learning about new subjects I had never studied before in primary school, meeting new people such as my teachers and having male teachers for the first time, because in primary school all my teachers had been female! I was discovering a lot whilst settling into secondary school.

Here I am in Second Year. I have settled into the Presentation and I am much more familiar with my everyday life here in school. I have learned a lot since the beginning of First Year and I feel as if I have matured much more as well.

I wouldn't say that Second Year is immensely different from last year but there are certainly new changes, such as Higher Level and Ordinary Level in some subjects. Last year, everyone studied the same common level in their subjects but, this year, you are split into different level classes, dependent on the subject. You may have a completely different class and teacher to what you did last year. This year, the only subjects this occurs in are Maths and Irish. I study Higher Level in both and my teachers have changed.

Another thing that is new to me this year are CBAs. They are class based assignments, which are essentially projects you have to complete over a course of a few weeks. They have to be completed in class with the time you are given. We have a CBA in every subject except Irish, as that will be completed in 3rd year. So far, I have concluded my Geography, History and Religious Education CBAs and my Science CBA is ongoing. They can get a bit overwhelming at times, when you have multiple CBAs to complete, as they overlap each other. It can also be a bit difficult to come up with a topic, as you need to consider a lot when your trying to decide.

This year there is much more talk about the Junior Cycle compared to last year. This year, we are being made well aware of it and how to prepare better for it. Our peer mentors came into our class one day to advise us on different ways to study and lots of the study techniques that work best for them. The Learning Hub leaders also had a teach-meet on study techniques and each member made a slide on what study technique they use, which was very helpful.

One thing that I really feel I have improved on since last year is my time management and how to balance school with my extra-curricular activities. I feel as if I have a greater understanding of it now and it has really benefited me this year, especially while completing the CBAs.

I hope the rest of the year goes as well as it has been going so far and I am looking forward to my future here at the Presentation!



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!

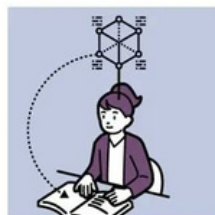


Faye featured in our first edition of 'Inspire' last year. She now writes about how she's getting on moving into 2nd year!

SEVEN MYTHS ABOUT RETRIEVAL PRACTICE

Kate Jones explores common retrieval practice misconceptions to help demystify for teachers and leaders how to get the most from using it.

In *Seven Myths about Education*, Daisy Christodolou argues teachers are often encouraged to teach in ineffective ways. If teachers don't understand the underpinning principles of a strategy, they are likely to remould it to the point where it is no longer effective. There aren't many strategies more prone to lethal mutation than retrieval practice.



Retrieval practice is the final part of learning

Memory is essential for critical thinking. Students will have difficulty writing an evaluation in an exam if they cannot recall the main ideas. So developing students' recall strength is essential. But teaching students to apply what they recall is equally important.



Retrieval practice must take place at the start of the lesson

It's common practice to begin a lesson with retrieval practice. But that doesn't mean all lessons should begin this way. To maximise learning time in a food lesson, a teacher might do retrieval practice when students have put their food in the oven.

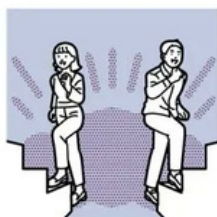


Retrieval practice must be the same across every subject

Teachers should seek to add variety to their repertoire of retrieval practice strategies. Doing the same type of quiz in every lesson is repetitive. Schools can diversify their offer by using multiple-choice questions, pair and self-quizzing and brain dumps.



KATE JONES



Retrieval practice must be different across every subject

In schools where retrieval practice is new, it might be sensible to implement a standardised whole-school approach. Doing so can help build a culture where students aren't afraid to get answers wrong, reducing their anxiety about tests.



Retrieval practice must be written

Outdated and flawed quality assurance and performance management systems fool teachers and leaders into thinking if students haven't written it, they haven't learnt it. It wouldn't be reasonable to expect students to write their answers to a retrieval quiz in a practical PE lesson.



Retrieval practice involves drill and kill

Drilling is the idea that students perform short bouts of repeated practice, such as choral chants. Drilling is good for building fluency when learning new words or a new skill in music or PE. But drilling is one of many retrieval practice techniques you can call on.

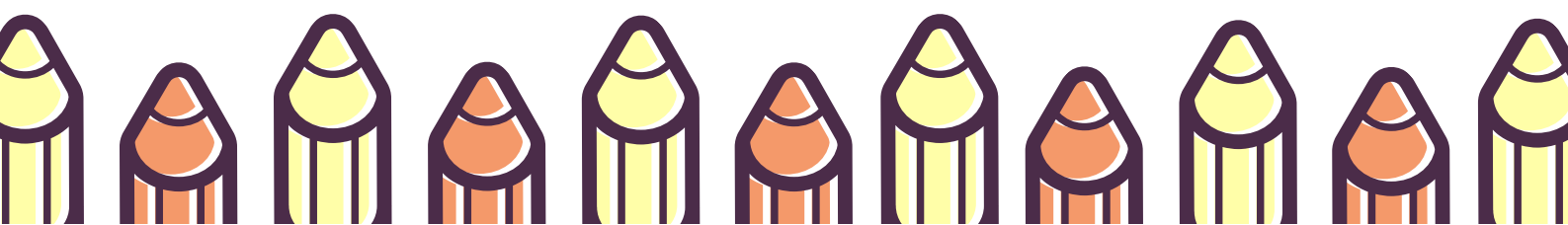


Free recall is always the best type of retrieval

Free recall involves retrieval without any cues or prompts. This is effective because it requires effortful retrieval but initial retrieval success for younger learners is more likely to be achieved through cued recall or multiple-choice questions.



RETRIEVAL PRACTICE IS ESSENTIAL FOR EVERY CLASSROOM AND EVERY LEARNER. SCHOOLS SHOULD PROMOTE A CONSISTENT USE OF RETRIEVAL PRACTICE BUT CONTEXT TRUMPS CONSISTENCY.



*Define excellence, live
model it, and celebrate
student successes.*



DEFINING EXCELLENCE

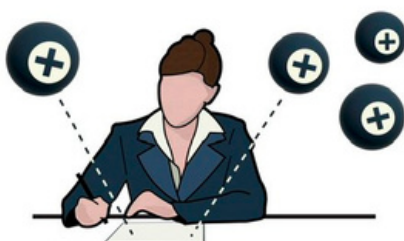
AN APPROACH TO WHOLE CLASS FEEDBACK

BY ANDREW ATHERTON | [@_codexterous](#)

STEP 1

HIGHLIGHT WHAT YOU LIKE

Use highlighter to draw attention to what is going well. As you read student work, highlight anything that you like. This is the equivalent of saying *Great point* or *Well done*. It helps to show students you have read and paid attention to their work as well as playing an important metacognitive role later in the feedback process.



STEP 2

FIND COMMON MISCONCEPTIONS

Consider patterns of misconceptions across the class that you can reteach. As you read, pay particular attention to any common errors or misconceptions that arise in multiple pieces of work. Such misconceptions likely demonstrate a need to reteach a particular skill or topic. This is itself a highly valuable use of a feedback lesson.



STEP 3

FIND EXAMPLES OF EXCELLENCE

Pinpoint several examples of excellence that you can find then share and live model with the class. Be especially attentive for any examples of excellence from the student work you are reading. This will play a vital role later in the process, and offer concrete examples for us to model, share and celebrate with the class.



STEP 4

CREATE A SHARABLE TEMPLATE

Collate and print a student friendly version of your feedback. This could include a numbered list of **NEXT STEPS** allocated to students based on the common misconception you identified as well as a **Together Task** for all to complete in the feedback lesson. There should also be space for you to define and live model the examples of excellence.



STEP 5

WHAT DID YOU DO WELL?

Ask students to re-read their work and pay attention to what you highlighted. Ask students to re-read their work so it's fresh in their mind, but, as importantly, to pay close attention to what you highlighted. Ask them to consider why they think it's highlighted and what it is that they're doing well.

STEP 6

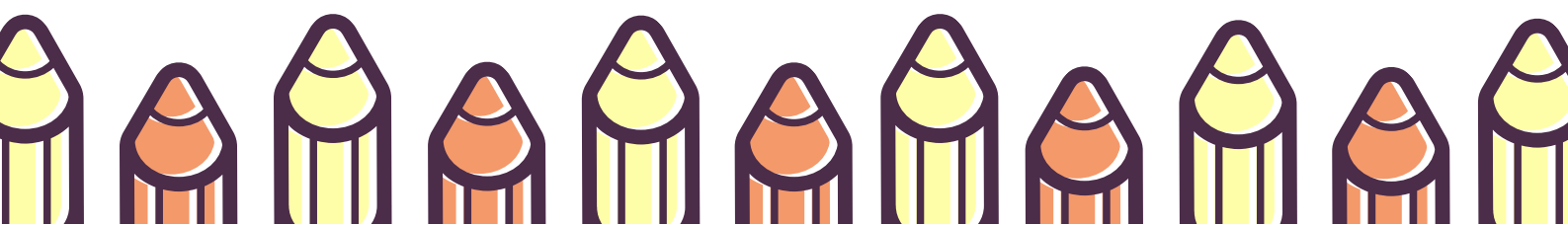
SHARE EXCELLENCE EXAMPLES

Live model and celebrate the examples of excellence you identified. On your own copy of the feedback sheet, in a blank space, define two examples of excellence then live model them, narrating as you do why they're excellent. Make it clear these examples come directly from student work. This is about making excellence concrete.

STEP 7

COMPLETE THE TOGETHER TASK

Ask all students to complete a single task that will move everyone forward. As a final part of the process, set students to work on a single task that, based on what you have seen, will have maximum impact. This could be further practice of the examples of excellence, but in a slightly different context or a completely different task.



It would be inexcusable for a driving instructor to hand her client the keys and expect them to figure it out. Why should it be different in teaching?

Successful modelling is essential to help secure student progress. The challenge is bridging the gap between showing students how to do something and the students being able to do it themselves. Modelling is context-specific, but there are some general principles that you can adopt to secure student progress.



- 1 SHOW THE WHOLE PROCESS – NORMALLY, THEN SLOWLY
- 2 BREAK DOWN INTO PRACTISABLE STEPS
- 3 NARRATE YOUR THINKING; CHECK FOR THEIR UNDERSTANDING
- 4 USE MULTIPLE EXAMPLES WITH BACKWARD FADING
- 5 RUN MULTIPLE, SHORT WE DO/YOU DO LOOPS

Five Ways to Secure Progress Through Modelling

2 BREAK DOWN INTO PRACTISABLE STEPS.

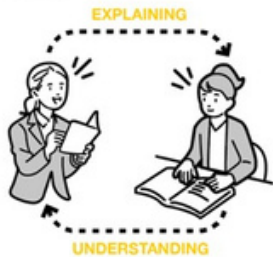
A whole task will always have individual steps that you can model. Identify each step, model them and provide opportunities for students to practice them. In writing, this will be sentence and paragraph types as students build towards finished essays.

Air ascends at the equator *because*
Air ascends at the equator *but*
Air ascends at the equator *so*



3 NARRATE YOUR THINKING; CHECK FOR THEIR UNDERSTANDING.

Metacognitive talk — narrating your thinking — is a vital part of modelling. But it doesn't matter how good your explanation is if you don't check students' understanding. Narrate your thinking as you show each step. Model, narrate, check for understanding and repeat.



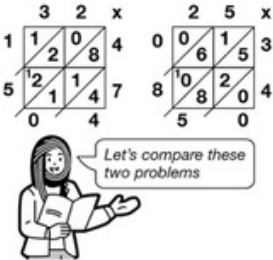
1 SHOW THE WHOLE PROCESS – NORMALLY, THEN SLOWLY.

Whatever you are modelling, it helps to show it in its entirety — at full speed — before showing it slowed down. Providing worked examples shows students what to aim for, but breaking it and slowing it down shows them how to get there.



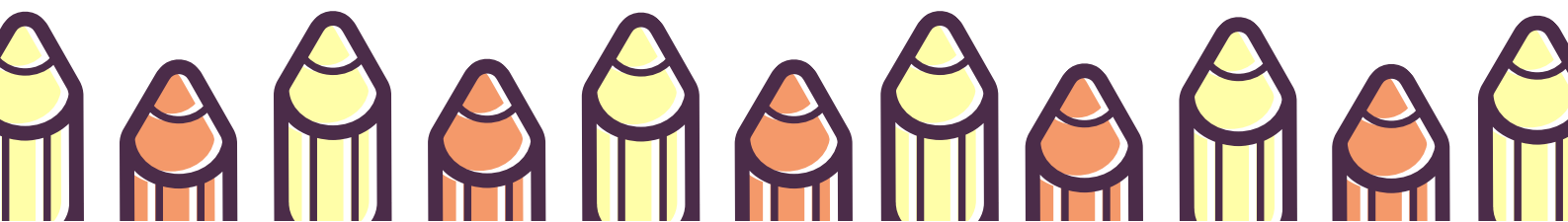
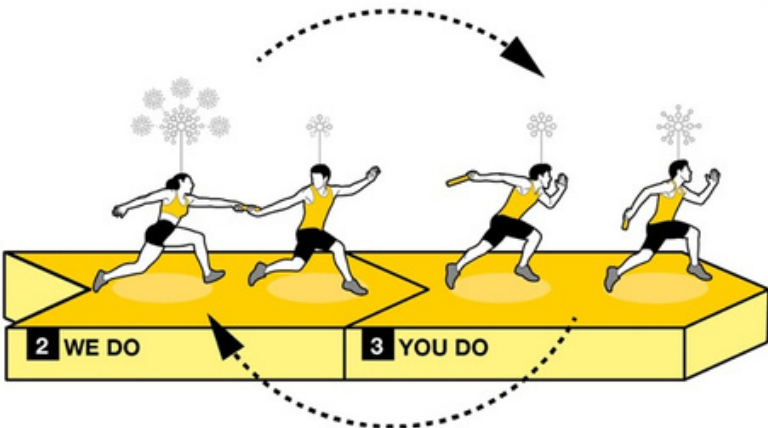
4 USE MULTIPLE EXAMPLES WITH BACKWARD FADING

Showing multiple examples reveals the required steps; for example, modelling two similar math problems side-by-side shows how the method works. After modelling the two methods, provide partially worked examples that gradually become less completed.







5 RUN MULTIPLE, SHORT WE DO/YOU DO LOOPS

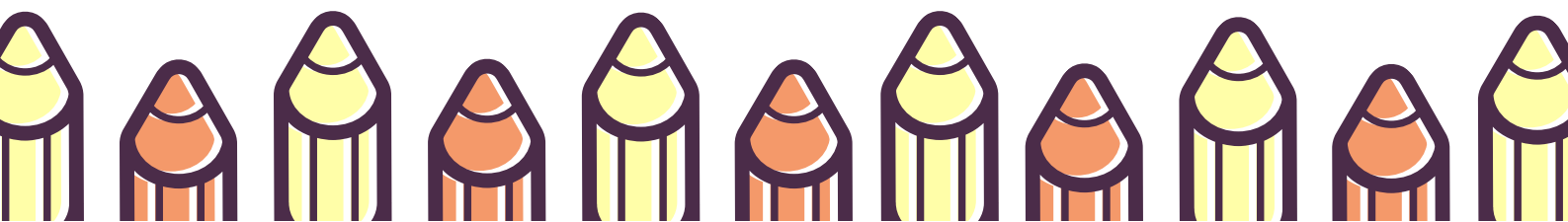
The I do, We do, You do principle offers structure to the modelling process. The trouble is that the teacher can't know if her students will be successful on their own until they give it a go. But unlike a baton exchange, where competitors only get one shot, you can repeatedly re-run the We do, You do phases of instructional modelling. Work on a task with your students using backwards fading, and then let students try it solo. Re-run the We do phase for those that aren't successful before handing the baton over again for the You do part.



Five Ways To: Enrich learning for everyone, not the few.

#7 of series. Created by:
TOM SHERRINGTON &
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SCENARIO 1	SCENARIO 2	SCENARIO 3	SCENARIO 4	SCENARIO 5
Organic, tutorial-style discussions	Group Tasks	High Challenge Problem-solving	Student-led inputs	Open-ended Tasks
<div><div>TOM SHERRINGTON</div><div><p>The buzz and dazzle created from the responses of a few students – or even most students – can mask the slow drifting and falling back of the students with the least confidence and knowledge.</p></div></div> <div><p>Some teaching methods can feel rewarding but allow some students to lag, not participate or depend too heavily on the work of their peers. It's not that these techniques are wrong, but they can be insufficient for enriching all students. Tasks that focus on</p><p>teaching to the top, such as high-challenge open-ended tasks, are most prone to running this risk. Unless we do something about it, the less confident students will feed confused and opt-out. Here are five scenarios Tom frequently sees on his school and college visits.</p></div>				
<div><div>CONSOLIDATE ORGANIC DISCUSSIONS</div></div> <div><p>The teacher shares her wisdom, making random notes as she goes: the modern-day chalk and talk. The issue here is some students aren't contributing, and the board of notes gets</p><p>confusing. The solution is to run through the main ideas with the least confident in mind: simplify, summarise, generally spell things out, consolidate and practise.</p></div>	<div><div>STRUCTURE GROUP TASKS</div></div> <div><p>Unstructured group work results in some students learning almost nothing. To solve this, state in advance that each group will have one representative at the end of the</p><p>task, but don't declare who. Also, inform the class that each group only succeeds when all its members complete the task and allocate sub-tasks to specific individuals.</p></div>	<div><div>TIER CHALLENGE IN PROBLEM-SOLVING TASKS</div></div> <div><p>Classes often contain high-performing students ready to tackle challenging problems and students who still haven't grasped the main ideas. One solution is to create tiered sets</p><p>of problems and tasks that have incremental levels of challenge. The idea is that everyone needs to reach a certain level before beginning independent practice.</p></div>	<div><div>MAKE STUDENT-LED INPUTS INTERACTIVE</div></div> <div><p>Generative learning shows using students to teach one another works. But it's important both deliverers and recipients benefit equally. To achieve this, build in checking</p><p>for understanding routines and tasks that require the listener to engage with the material. Make time for all students to present; this doesn't have to be in the same lesson.</p></div>	<div><div>SCAFFOLD OPEN-ENDED TASKS</div></div> <div><p>Open-ended tasks allow students to use a range of responses, content and media for sharing them. They provide a break from the daily diet of instructional teaching. To get</p><p>the most from these tasks make them occasional, provide scaffolds, worked examples and all the resources your class will need.</p></div>



Five Ways To: Do Daily Review

#5 of series. Created by: **TOM SHERRINGTON & DAVID GOODWIN** | @teacherhead | @MrGoodwin23 |
www.teacherhead.com | www.organiseideas.com

Teachers often begin lessons with retrieval practice. There are good reasons to start by reviewing what was covered in the last lesson so students can activate acquired knowledge and make early tenuous connections. The **Do Now** concept from *Teach Like a Champion*, the **Lesson Starter** concept or *Rosenshine's Daily Review* from principles of instruction will likely influence your review routines.

QUIZZING. TEST AND CHECK

QUIZZING CAN BECOME repetitive if you always do a five-a-day quiz of the same style every lesson. You need to seek to create variety in your quizzes.

In all three quizzing examples below, all students review what they know and what they've forgotten, allowing the teacher to focus on common errors.



BOARD QUIZ

Students are given time to answer questions from the board before self or peer checking their responses.



PAIRED QUIZ

Students take turns quizzing each other using a knowledge organiser or similar resource.

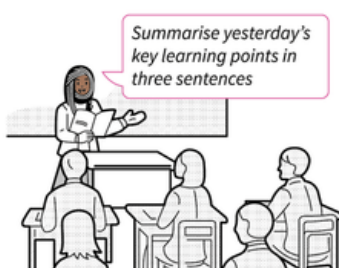


SELF-QUIZ

Students quiz themselves using cover and check resources, such as flash cards and unlabelled diagrams.

PAIR SHARE: REVIEW AND CHECK

ASK STUDENTS TO review the previous lesson or a specific concept and compare notes with a peer. Use Think, Pair Share to guide students to summarise the key ideas from last lesson or to rehearse an explanation of a central concept.



WRITE A PARAGRAPH

THE TASK IS to activate recent knowledge by writing about it in a short checkable paragraph. This can be structured or more open-ended, depending on student confidence.

Students can then share their paragraphs via a 'show call' process or by the teacher spotting good answers when circulating, sharing them via a visualiser or reading them out.



MULTIPLE-CHOICE CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING QUIZ

SET A SMALL NUMBER based on the recent lesson material.

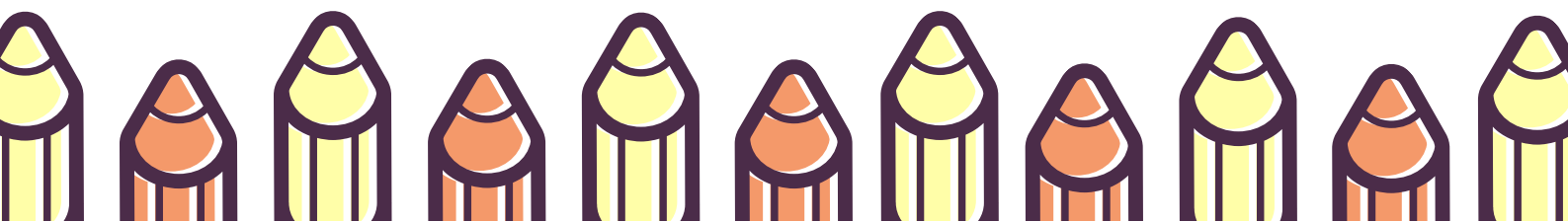
There are several main advantages to this approach. You can use mini-whiteboards, broadening your insight into what all students are thinking. Secondly, MCQs are good at diagnostically identifying misconceptions. Finally, you can design a range of questions requiring students to engage with all potential answers. For example, which of these is the best correct answer and why?



SOLVE FAMILIAR PROBLEMS

TRY SETTING QUESTIONS or a task using ideas students were tackling in the last lesson. Problem sets are a set of questions like yesterday's so students can check they can remember how to do them. Goal Free problems are more open-ended. For example, students read a passage and write down as much as they can about the language features.

Read the passage and write down as much as you can about the language features.



In focus: Additional Educational Needs in Presentation, Wexford

by **Róisín Stenning**,
AET coordinator / Geography teacher



The Presentation has a long history of being a welcoming and inclusive school, where students from all backgrounds and abilities are given the opportunity to fulfil their potential. As a past pupil, I witnessed the development of the Learning Support Department as it was then. I can remember students getting support, but there was never any fuss or stigma attached. My predecessor had such a gentle manner and was a passionate advocate for those who found school more challenging than others. Over the years, we have seen many changes. Gone are Resource hours which were granted to individual students and required a diagnosis and instead in its place are Special Education Teaching hours (SET). This is more in line with the previous ex-quota Learning Support hours, which were given to schools to support those without a diagnosed need and were accessed via in-school assessments. The modern model, although not without flaws, means that more students can access support than ever before and parents do not have to fork out huge amounts of money for a private assessment.

The Reasonable Accommodations in Certificate Examinations (RACE) system changed also to reflect the new model and even though it means a massive increase in work for the Additional Educational Needs coordination team, it is a more equitable system for our students. When applying for a Spelling, Grammar and Punctuation Waiver, we must gather samples of students' work, which has been completed under exam conditions. We must do an error rating of over 500 words, from two subjects, for each student. This is on top of running individual standardised assessments, within 12 months of the application date. To apply for a reader, students need to read between 450 and 550 words from past papers. We need to do an error rating for this and time it to get their rate of reading. For assistive technology, the DASH must be administered to get a student's handwriting speed. Once a student is eligible for these supports, we then need to fill in the application form outlining the supports and interventions that each student has received during their time here. Before the change in rules, I didn't have any applications for Learning Support students (without a diagnosed need), this week I sent off twelve applications for those eligible out of the fifteen that I screened. This is just one coordinator's caseload.

Changes to the rules around Irish exemptions also mean that the responsibility, assessments and paperwork also fall to the AEN team in the school. When reports for assistive technology come in, we must source quotes for the equipment, detail how it is essential to the student in question and send off the application form and necessary reports. If it is granted, we then need to purchase the equipment, ensure the school has paid for it and submit receipts to the Department of Education in order to receive a refund. We also work closely with outside agencies such as NEPS and the HSE, as well as with private psychologists. Coordinators are often asked to fill out lengthy forms for professionals that our students are attending outside of school. Luckily there is a great staff here who often help to provide us with information for these forms. Also with the need for students, at the top of the continuum, to have an individual support plan, we are so appreciative of the feedback from the staff who fill these out and help with target setting throughout the year.

In focus:

Additional Educational Needs in Presentation, Wexford ~ continued

Since I started in this job, over a decade ago, the core coordination team has risen from three to six members and we could do with another pair of hands to be honest! Our SNA team has also risen from none, to one and then the current three and a quarter, which further reflects the growing needs of our students. Our SNAs provide invaluable support to both staff and students. With their support, students are making good use of our Sensory Room and accessing it when they need to throughout the day. They also ensure that students, who may have opted not to go on trips previously, as now experiencing all facets of school life.

A common misjudgement is that working in the AEN Department is an easy job with only two or three students at a time, however anyone who has joined our Department quickly realise that there is a lot more to it. Finding a balance between drowning in paperwork and bureaucracy and the joy in helping a student navigate the choppy waters of school life is the key to not just surviving in the role, but thriving. No two days are the same and you get to see a side to students that they hide from others. In one day, we can switch from basic grammar and reading to algebra, to social skills and self-regulation. We can be running the Vocabulary Enrichment Programme and be asked to help with a student having an anxiety attack, our doors are always open.

You develop lasting relationships with whole families and share in both the ups and downs over the years. Seeing our students graduate and go on to work or further study is always the biggest win. Watching their independence develop and their full personality emerge makes us proud. Receiving cards and notes as they leave help us to realise that we are making a difference even when we feel as if we are swimming against the tide. We don't win all the battles and we can't control what goes on outside the school gates, but we can provide a safe space for our students to try their best always and that is what makes me continue to turn up every day for a job that I love.



TEACHER PROFILES



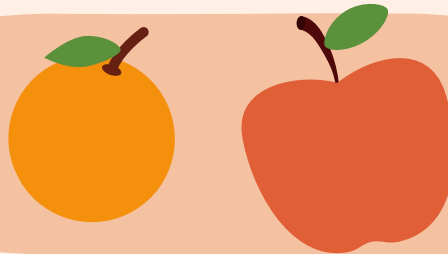
Our school in one word:

Inclusive

My name is Amy Redmond.
I teach Music and Religious
Education.

I have been teaching for 11 years.

What do you believe
is the most important
characteristic a
teacher should have?
**Empathy and
patience.**



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

To vary how I teach, trying
different ways to keep
students interested and
motivated to learn.

Where I
STUDIED

**MAYNOOTH
UNIVERSITY**

**UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE
DUBLIN**

My definition of

EFFECTIVE TEACHING AND LEARNING

**To allow students to participate in
empowering activities, in which they
understand that learning is a process and
mistakes are a natural part of learning.**

THE NUMBER ONE PROBLEM/WEAKNESS IN TEACHING AND HOW TO ADDRESS IT



BY TOM SHERRINGTON

I see a lot of lessons – hundreds of them in multiple contexts – and I’m going to suggest that there is one very common challenge that teachers face that is often not addressed well enough, even by experienced teachers. In my view, it’s the single biggest reason for lessons being ineffective or certainly less effective than they could be; it’s the main reason for learning not happening, for weaker students to fall behind and, over time, for gaps to widen. The prevalence of this issue is the main reason I feel we do more to address the needs of disadvantaged students and under-achieving subgroups by trying to teach everyone better instead of chasing interventions (to address underachieving groups, teach everyone better). There’s just so much mileage in this; so much slack to take up.

The problem is this: in a class of multiple individuals, it is not straight-forward to find out how successfully each individual person is learning, identifying what their difficulties or gaps are and then to use that information to close their learning gaps with appropriate responses. Compared to a 1:1 tutoring situation, the level of responsiveness to each individual student’s varying success rate is very low.

All too often, faced with this ever-present difficulty, teachers cut corners and do not structure lessons so that they focus on flushing out difficulties, errors and gaps in recall and understanding.

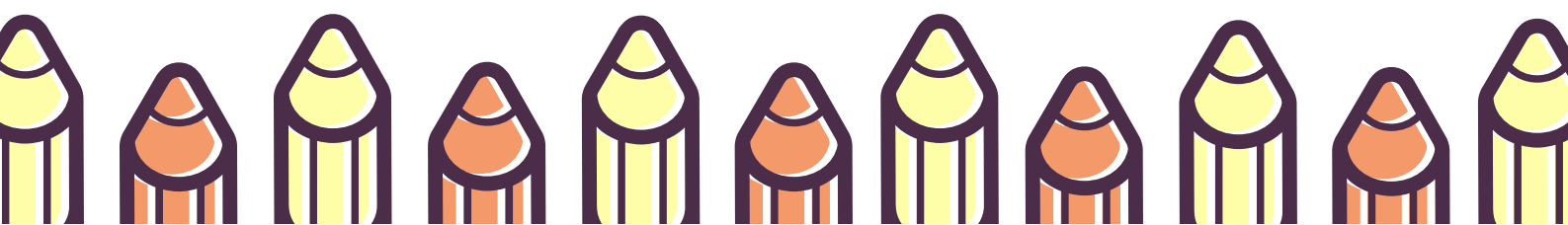
They rely too heavily on collective responses and a generalised sense of student success rate without consciously and deliberately attending to each and every individual. As a result, the least confident students can pass from lesson to lesson, going through the motions of lesson activities, being present, caught up in the general flow, without having their individual learning issues addressed; their learning gaps go undetected at the point of instruction and often remain.

Let me illustrate with six examples alongside some possible solutions:

- Teacher mindset
- Ineffective testing or checking protocols
- Exposition without checking for understanding
- Weak questioning or response techniques
- Excessive scaffolding
- Poor Vocabulary Development

Teacher mindset:

Sometimes I use the simplified idea that the ideal goal of a learning sequence is for ALL the students to learn ALL the material; for them ALL to achieve the learning goals. It’s not enough to be happy that SOME students learned SOME of the material. Sometimes the difference between these two positions is extreme – unnecessarily so. It’s very very common for a teacher to be satisfied (even relieved and delighted) that at least one student knows an answer. (I’m using “answer” as code for “success” in any subject area). This is a world away from them focusing on whether anyone at all still does not know the answer.



Solution:

For, me the biggest shift we need to make is to switch into the right mindset:

- From “Does anyone know?” to “Does everyone know?”
- From “Can anyone do it?” to “Can everyone do it?”
- From “Well done to those getting it right” to “Let’s find out who still can’t get this right and help them out”.
- From a dominant emphasis on seeking affirmation in correctness to familiar routines around seeking out residual errors and difficulties.

Ineffective testing or checking protocols.

A teacher sets out the knowledge students should have and, later, sets a recall test. They go through answers one by one, asking ‘who knows the answer?’ and taking the one volunteered answer, praising and affirming the correctness. This tells them nothing about who didn’t get it right.

Sometimes they don’t even ask.

- A teacher asked the class to name five types of structure. Instead of asking them all to list all five, checking all know all five, he asked if *anyone* knew each one. Five different people named one structure each! Most students didn’t even attempt an answer because they weren’t asked to.
- A class of 25 is set 10 questions. That’s 250 possible right/wrong responses. The teacher hears a correct response for each question (from student putting their hand up) purring with joy, affirming the correctness, oblivious to the other 240 responses (many of which were totally wrong).

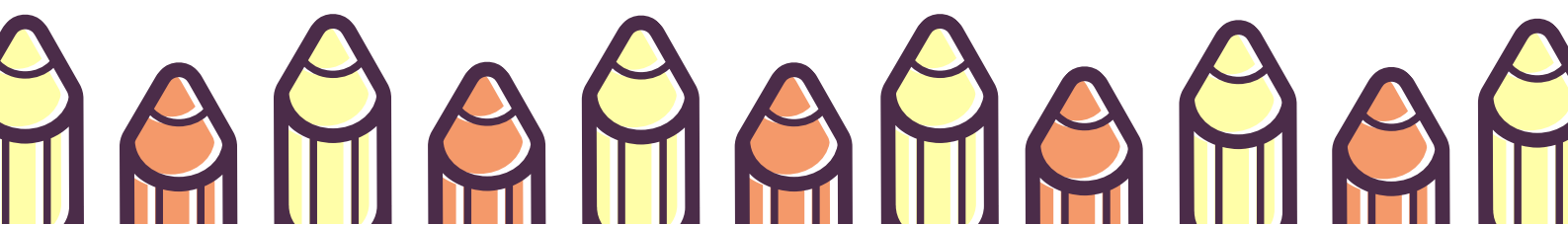
This is way too common. Teachers assume that students will hear the correct answers and self-edit accordingly. But that doesn’t necessarily happen – especially for the weakest students.

Recently I’ve been in at least three of these situations where the student next to me got less than 50% on a recall test and, not only did the teacher not pick it up, their wrong answers were not sought out, discussed and explained and the students left none the wiser – beyond knowing that they had more stuff they did not understand!

Solution:

- Make ‘all knowing all’ the explicit goal. Set this expectation with students.
- Use a good repertoire of retrieval practice techniques that involve all students: 10 Techniques for Retrieval Practice
- Structure checking processes such that all students can check all the knowledge in hand, answering all the questions. (eg if asked to name Henry VIII’s wives, check each person knows all six, not ask six people to name one each).
- In discussion, focus on error at least as much as correctness.

In the examples above, ask all students all the questions and give answers all at once for students to self-assess and, for sure, discuss them. But then, take as much time as you can to find out where the errors lie. You could ask who got 3/5 or 8/10 on the quiz and then ask which answers they got wrong. They’ll be reasonably confident and happy enough to say. This gives you the opportunity to talk about errors and problems that many others are likely to have and it opens the door to other similar questions. A post-test process should be about finding out where the errors lie – that should feel like the whole point. *I am testing you to find out what you still need help with.*



Exposition without stopping to check for understanding.

Sometimes teachers make a big assumption that learning will be happening just because they are speaking. *I've explained it; I've said it out loud; I've told my engaging story; I've given my expert exposition; I've regaled the class with my witty engaging anecdote in my normal charismatic style that they love and that makes me so popular.....* so they must have understood and learned what I was talking about.

Nope!

It's just so common for students to be left with all manner of confusion despite a teacher's expert, engaging exposition – and the teacher does not stop to check if this has happened. Even very experienced, very charismatic teachers can fall into this trap – the delusion that they inspired everyone into deep understanding through sheer charisma.

Solution:

- Making checking for understanding a solid, integrated part of any learning sequence. Doubt yourself. *Am I getting this across to everyone?* Give explanations in short enough chunks that allow you to stop to see if people are with you. This isn't a case of looking into your students' eyes for warm approval... you don't ask 'is everyone with me?' You check: *Let's check you've understood so far: Simone, could you summarise the story so far; Michael, could you explain the process for us.*

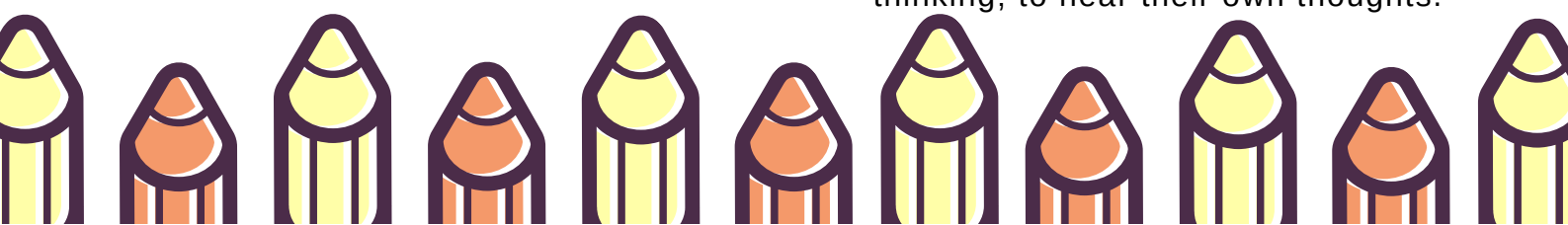
Of course you don't have time to check that every student has understood every word at every point but if you routinely stop to check, sampling the class, you get some idea and this makes you think about whether to re-explain, re-teach, re-focus. The sampling concept is key.

Weak questioning or response techniques

Echoing the issues with testing procedures, weak questioning allows lessons to be driven exclusively by the students who know, rather than the students who don't. I've seen many many lessons where 2 or 3 students answer all the questions and the teacher has used their responses as the gauge for the level of understanding in the room. 'Hands up' or 'call out' questioning is widespread as the default mode of questioning. It is possible to sit in far too many lessons as a low-confidence or shy learner and never be asked to contribute, never be asked to explore your ideas or understanding – because other, more confident students chip in and dominate and this is just how things are all the time.

Solution:

- View the purpose of questioning as providing feedback to you: have I explained this well? Do we have enough understanding across the class to justify moving on? Sample enough students to get a reasonable picture.
- Use a good repertoire of questioning!
- Cold Call and Pair-Share should be absolutely routine. I really feel that if more pair discussion, tightly focused and time managed, was built into lessons, involving all students, a lot more practice would be happening and more misconceptions and difficulties would emerge. If you listen in discreetly as all students air their ideas – it gives a powerful insight. There is great power in giving students space to rehearse their thinking; to hear their own thoughts.



Excessive scaffolding

As I've explored in previous posts, terminate the tyranny of the task. Lessons can be excessively task-focused with all manner of supports and scaffolds giving students a feeling of doing things without identifying whether they are learning things. As ever, it is the weakest students that suffer the most here. They might have a neat book, a completed table and a paragraph of some kind, but, take the supports away – do they understand the ideas? Often they don't, despite having completed a task, because they could do it without thinking very hard or needing to explore their own schema.

Solution:

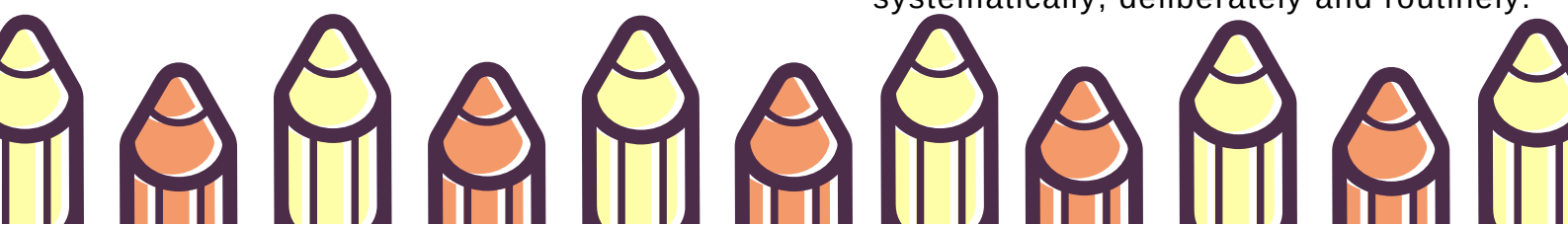
- Switch the emphasis from task completion to learning. Instead of 'have you done it, are you ready, have you finished?', make the dominant query "now, have you learned and understood it?" and check.
- Use guided individual practice extensively and intensively. Circulate looking for success with specific details in the tasks and be ready to re-teach key points. (Some teachers rescue weak questioning with much more effective supervision of guided practice sometimes neither of these is effective enough).
- Introduce the routine use of 'books closed and check' as independent practice so that students learn to process their knowledge at a deeper generative level. If it is an anticipated routine that, when doing a task, they will have to do it unsupported in the end, it builds confidence in the long run. If the only time students are truly made to work independently and unsupported is in an exam room, it is a disaster.

Poor Vocabulary Development

The final example is also extremely common. New words are introduced by the teacher in their explanations, board-work, texts, PowerPoint slides – often repeated and used by the teacher multiple times – on the assumption that this is sufficient for the students to absorb them into their vocabulary. It is just so incredibly common for key terms not be given explicit rehearsal time during lessons so that the weakest students do not even get to say them once. Recently I saw a lesson where the term 'erosion' was introduced to explain a process in geography. The boy next to me could not say it and even struggled to read it from the text, despite the teacher having said 'erosion' himself, many times. The boy resorted to 'the water *destroys* the rocks' because 'erosion' had eluded him and the grammar of erosion/erodes hadn't been explored at all. I'd suggest that the cumulative effect of poor vocabulary development strategies is significant.

Solution:

- Design curriculum deliberately with vocabulary and reading embedded in the planning so that target words are known by all students and teachers.
- Ensure that all new words that are introduced are included in routine the process of deliberate vocabulary development: Engineer activities that ensure ALL students say the words, practise using the words, put the words into sentences, read the words in context and, later recall the words. Do this, systematically, deliberately and routinely.



Final word:

If you read this and think ‘well of course – any good teacher does this already’ and take umbrage, let me suggest that in at least 50% of lessons I observe, one or more of these issues arises; sometimes it is marginal, sometimes it’s a chronic situation.

All too often, the culture in the classroom motivates students to hide their errors and mask their lack of understanding instead of making it feel safe and normal to volunteer it. All too often, the teacher is oblivious to the extent of understanding or lack of it and presses on with a trail of misunderstandings and half-learned knowledge bits in their wake.


Our learning safety-nets are full of holes and children are falling through them every day. Sometimes every lesson. And that’s where gaps widen. Turning it around, if we address these issues, it is also how the gaps can be closed.

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, as well as being editor of the 'In Action Series' of educational research books, published by John Catt Publications.

This blog-post was posted on 4 October 2019.

THE #1 PROBLEM

NOT KNOWING IF INDIVIDUAL STUDENTS ARE LEARNING



A summary of Tom Sherrington's blog post


1

The problem is this: In a class of multiple individuals, it is not straight-forward to find out how successfully each individual person is learning, identifying what their difficulties or gaps are and then to use that information to close their learning gaps with appropriate responses.

<https://teacherhead.com/2019/10/04/the-1-problem-weakness-in-teaching-and-how-to-address-it/>

TEACHER MINDSET


Problem | Mindsets determine practice. So, if you're satisfied when only some students succeed in learning, you will seriously restrict the horizons you set for the majority in your class. Ideally aim for all students to learn all the material. Reality will differ but the results will improve.



Solution | A switch in mindset moves from "Does anyone know?" to "Does everyone know?" and "Can anyone do it?" to "Can everyone do it?" — a switch from searching for mere self affirmation to regularly seeking out errors and difficulties in your students.

INEFFECTIVE TESTING OR CHECKING PROTOCOLS


Problem | Explaining something doesn't in itself mean students have understood. So unless the teacher checks for this, they are likely to assume all is well. Asking for volunteers — "who knows the answer?" — tells you nothing about the majority of students, only the favoured few.



Solution | The goal of the teacher should be one of 'all knowing all'. This can only happen with a comprehensive repertoire of retrieval practice techniques that involving all students. Use processes that enable all students to self-check they know all the knowledge.

EXPOSITION WITHOUT CHECKING FOR UNDERSTANDING


Problem | Even an engaging explanation from a knowledgeable teacher doesn't safeguard students from confusion and misconceptions. This is a trap even for the very experienced and often charismatic teacher. Maybe even more so, given how engaged the students look.



Solution | By positively doubting the effectiveness of your explanation, you will remember to integrate checking for understanding into your sequence. Sample students' understanding by asking them to summarise what they've heard. And support them by probing further.

WEAK QUESTIONING OR RESPONSE TECHNIQUES


Problem | Ensure your questioning provides a representative sample of your class. Don't rely on 2 or 3 students for feedback on the effectiveness of your explanation. So, obviously, avoid hands up or call out questioning. Identify and support the low-confident, shy students.



Solution | Change your view of the purpose of questioning. Shift it to being to provide you with feedback. So make Cold Call and Think, Pair, Share an integral part of your routine. Give all students this chance to rehearse their thinking and hear what it sound like.

EXCESSIVE SCAFFOLDING


Problem | Equating task completion with learning is an insidious error. Neat diagrams and handwriting are not an indication of understanding. Scaffolds can create these situations as teacher and students let the glow of completion blind them to the thornier issue of understanding.



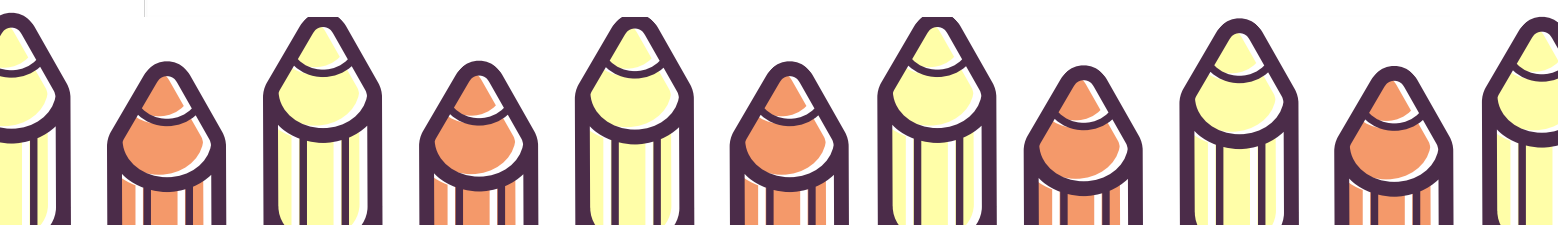
Solution | Make the explicit switch to understanding, not mere completion. Circulate to look for points that need re-teaching. A powerful strategy is 'books closed and check'. Anticipating this, students will learn to process the content more thoroughly — it's all self-generated.

POOR VOCABULARY DEVELOPMENT

Problem | Another common assumption is that introducing new vocabulary will invariably result in its assimilation by students. Not so. With this superficial approach, some students won't even be able to say or read the word. Repeated rehearsal activities are essential.



Solution | Design in the deliberate teaching, practice and testing of new vocabulary. Engineer activities where all students say the new words and practise using them in sentences, reading them and recalling them in subsequent retrieval practice.



SUBJECT IN FOCUS: **LEAVING CERTIFICATE PHYSICAL EDUCATION (LCPE)**

by **Deirdre Colfer,**

LCPE, Physical Education and Science teacher,
Co-author of 'Winning Formula' for LCPE and resources, with Gill



Five years ago, we were extremely privileged to be announced as one of sixty-four schools nationwide to be part of Phase One of LCPE. I had participated in the consultation process a number of years earlier and when Mr Ryan said I would be teaching it from September 2018, I was delighted. Finally, there was a subject for the students with an aptitude and talent for sport and physical activities!

The subject is examined in three ways: project, performance assessment and written exam. The project, worth 20%, is a combination of writing and video, completed between October and December of Sixth Year. This project involves students collating data and videos on their performances, analysing these and formulating three performance goals to improve on. They then design a training or practice programme to follow for each area. The final part of the project involves reanalysing their performance, progress they have made and reflecting on the process.

The performance assessment is worth 30%, submitted as a video that is recorded and edited between January and March of Sixth Year. Students choose one of three physical activities that the class has been practising throughout Fifth and Sixth Year. The majority of students in Presentation choose circuits/weights with interval training, which is also popular nationwide. This element of assessment is a fantastic opportunity for students to show their proficiency in movement skills and techniques required and can be compared to the practical in Music, the oral in languages and the visual coursework in Art.

The exam is worth 50% and is based on theory varying from fitness testing, physiology, psychology, biomechanics, diet and nutrition to contemporary issues in sport such as ethics, technology, business, women in sport and government policies. The theory is broad and deep and plays a key role in the project as well as the written exam. Many students are surprised initially by the amount of theory, but once we are submersed in it, they discover how important each topic is to sports-and-physical activities.

I completed a degree in Sports Science and Biology before I completed my teacher training. This really stood to me, especially for Biomechanics, fitness testing and programming. Having qualified in the UK, my experience of the GCSE and A Level assessments in PE was also a fantastic help when embarking on a brand new subject based on specification (outcomes) rather than a prescribed curriculum and in line with the new Senior Cycle. I also completed a Diploma in Strength and Conditioning through Setanta College, to brush up on my knowledge and learn the new best practices to apply to my teaching.

Overall, the past five years of teaching LCPE has been about me learning, as much as it has been me teaching. The research I undertook while writing the book, delivering online webinars for other teachers, creating resources for the PE Teachers' Association and working as an examiner for LCPE over Easter and Summer holidays has really stood to me. I absolutely love the subject and like to think that this is reflected in the enthusiasm I bring to my classes and helping students reach their potential and achieve their best.

TEACHER PROFILES



Our school in one word:

Welcoming

My name is Rikki O'Leary.
I teach Geography and CSPE, but have taught Politics and Society and ICT in the past too.
I have been teaching for 10 years.

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

In terms of my own subject, Geography, I would love to see the link between Geography and Politics explored further at Junior Cycle level. A lot of the geographical decisions around the world made by politicians has a massive influence on our society and I would like to see this introduced to students nationally, via the Geography curriculum.

What are the main highlights for you in your work?

For me, the main highlight is seeing the progression of each student during their time with us here in the Presentation, whether this is progression in the classroom or progression in extracurricular activities, it's very rewarding to see each student reach their potential.

Where I
STUDIED

**UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE
DUBLIN**

**HIBERNIA
COLLEGE**

What do you believe is the most important characteristic a teacher should have?
Approachability. I feel that in order to teach effectively it is essential that a teacher can be approachable. This helps foster a positive relationship between the teacher and students and helps create a good work ethic for both.

My definition of
EFFECTIVE TEACHING AND LEARNING

I feel it's the ability to make a positive impact on a student's life and academic career, including the capacity to teach important skill sets and to hopefully foster a love of the subject.

SETTLING IN TO FIFTH-YEAR

Written by Catherine Brennan and Felix Somers

Hi there, we're Catherine and Felix and we're going to try dispel some of the mystery around one of the more "forgotten" years, 5th year!

5th year so far has been quite a surprising, for sure. You think you know what you're heading into, just for that idea to be flipped on its head. Everyone always says going into 5th year is a big transition, however, we're not sure we really believed them until our first few LC classes. It's so different, but not necessarily in a bad way. Sure it's a lot of work at a phenomenal pace, but it's so interesting and since we chose these subjects it's difficult to complain.

The most difficult part of the transition is going from complete freedom in TY to a more restricted schedule and becoming used to that. As well as that, it can be quite mentally challenging. Going from the calmness and simplicity of TY to the intensity of 5th year can be quite draining. Not to mention any personal things that crop up just as you think you've gotten comfortable where you are. Thankfully, we've got a great group of friends who are always there when we need them and since we're all in the same boat, it's hard to find anyone who won't give you a hand when you need it.

As we said before, the transition can be quite alarming. For example, we used to be able to pretty much breeze through the Junior Cycle course and TY not finding anything too difficult. So imagine our shock when we started 5th year and learnt that regular studying is necessary? And we'll be honest, we're not fans!

There's a really noticeable contrast in expectations for Leaving Cert, from now having to know definitions in precise detail, to having to write pages upon pages for an essay. As well as that, you now might need to writing your own notes at home or do homework til 8 or 9 at night. This all sounds quite negative, but you do genuinely settle in easy enough after a while, with the help of a routine and a good Spotify playlist!



L to R: Felix Somers & Catherine Brennan

Aside from the academic transition, the rest of 5th year is actually quite fun. We're given more leadership roles and have more friendly relationships with our teachers. As well as that, everyone is a bit more mature thanks to TY, which teachers are very aware of and they give you more responsibility for your own learning. So, yes, at first, 5th year is quite intense and by no means a stroll in the park, but by the time you hit Christmas there are definitely more positives than negatives.

A great thing about 5th year is that we can choose the subjects we want to study. For us, that means goodbye business subjects, and hello sciences and essay-heavy classes.

I (Catherine) ended up doing two sciences, Physics and Chemistry and funnily enough, they're not as scary as I'd have thought. In physics, well there are only two exam students including myself, so no matter how hard a particular chapter is, it's hard to get annoyed because the novelty of such a small class has not worn off. Chemistry, however, is actually that bit harder, but that just means it's so much more satisfying when you finally understand something. Both are really interesting, I love finding out how things work, such as what's going on in atoms or how my glasses help my eyesight. As well as that, you can now send friends very niche jokes that only those in your classes will get!

SETTLING IN TO FIFTH-YEAR ~ continued

And I (Felix) chose one science, Biology, as well as History. I'll be honest, I only picked Biology for the dissections. It's a fun subject, very learning heavy and with every experiment is a write up, all of which can be tedious to do but otherwise it's an interesting subject to take... but it will never compare to History. Yes there are a lot of essays and learning but it's worth it. It's my favourite subject I've ever taken, more so in Leaving Cert than Junior Cycle. I actually changed from Politics and Society to History the day before 5th year started, after reading the Politics exam questions and I'd like to go back and thank myself. If you have an interest in English, I'd recommend History.

We both do Geography and French. Geography is one of our favourites, always loved it at Junior Cycle.

Catherine was that person who'd point out things like terracettes and u-shaped valleys on tv or on holidays. Thankfully, even now it's really just expanding what you learnt at JC, like volcanoes and rocks, but with about 60 essays thrown in, which someone probably warned us about but we didn't listen. And French, well, it was never our best subject, but never underestimate how fun it is to be able to say something to someone that they just don't understand! And of course, it will be a great help when travelling.

The big three subjects aren't really that different from JC. Maths is quite complicated but very fun once you understand what's happening. Again, not being great at languages, Irish was never the go to for us. However, we study poems and plays other than just grammar and, of course, those Irish stories are rarely boring. The final subject is English, and, once again, one of our favourites. We don't just study poems, but the poets themselves, as well as classic movies like 'The Shawshank Redemption' and famous Shakespearean tragedies like 'Hamlet'. We could go on for the rest of this piece talking about how much Catherine loves Hamlet or how Felix hates Yeats!

One thing people always say to our year is that we're "so lucky" we didn't do the Junior Cycle, thanks to Covid-19. However, lucky is not the word we'd use. Sure, it was great not to have to study for months for exams, but now we are really paying the price. For example, there have been too many times where teachers tend to say "ah well you learnt that at Junior Cycle" while we stare at them blankly! As well as that, we now have no experience of that state exam environment for our Leaving Cert, which just adds more doubt to an already nerve wracking time. Due to this, however, we did three tests in every subject over three months and that made us more used to studying for long periods of time, instead of cramming two weeks before the exams.

ADVICE FOR TYS AND THIRD-YEARS

Now, to the valuable part to any TYs or 3rd years reading; our advice for 5th year.

Many people will tell you to study for 4 hours a night, 8 hours at the weekend and then try compete on how much each of you are studying. Do not listen to them! As important as the Leaving Cert is, there is no point wasting the "best years of your life" with your head stuck in a book, especially not in 5th year. As important as the academic aspect of school life is, it is not the be all and end all. Make sure to make time for the things you enjoy too, which brings us on to our next point: extra curricular activities! Whether it's a sports team, the library or something artier, they are all so important. I (Catherine) am in choir and it's one of my favourite things about school. No word of a lie, during the summer, I found myself wishing for school to start again, just so I could just get back in that Music room! As well as getting to perform in places like the National Opera House, I find it's a great way to relax, make friends and get the most random songs stuck in my head for days on end.

Also, make sure to make time for friends and family as well, they will keep you sane while you're learning 20 sraith and memorising Shakespeare quotes!

OUR HOPES FOR THE FUTURE

We will finish this on a lighter note, on our hopes for the future. We are both just hoping for a “chill” year, without too many needless anxieties, before what is bound to be a year of nerves and stress. But once we get over the hurdle of the Leaving Cert, I (Catherine) would like to study Psychology in Dublin, before doing a bit of travelling. I’d love to go to Denmark and Iceland, thanks to ‘Hamlet’ and the Geography nerd in me!

But if you don’t have that level of clarity it’s okay. There’s no need to stress yourself trying to make decisions like that yet, just try to figure out what interests you.

For me (Felix), my interests are television and media production, maybe in Carlow, maybe not, but I do want to study History further too. Don’t tie yourself to an idea too quickly.

We hope you have enjoyed our little breakdown of life in 5th year and that we didn’t drone on for too long.

Just take care of yourself and 5th year will be fine, don’t stress!

Happy New Year!

Catherine Brennan and Felix Somers, Rang Eithne





Survey findings on student experiences of learning and teaching

Back at the end of May 2022, the Learning Leaders conducted a survey of the entire student body on their experiences of learning and teaching in our school.

In total, **439 students** took the survey, with a good balance across all six year groups. Below are some of the findings.

Up to **90%** of students believe the standard of teaching in our school is very good to excellent

Close to **90%** of students believe there are many opportunities created for them to actively engage in the classroom

Close to **90%** of students believe the school promotes good learning experiences both in and out of the classroom

91% of students surveyed believe that Covid-19 had a big impact on their learning.

The survey also asked students about the ways in which the Learning Hub and the school could further support student learning, in terms of developing learning, study and revision techniques.

The Learning Hub Senior Prefects presented the survey findings to the Senior Leadership Team in September.





Survey findings on student experiences of learning and teaching

The Learning Leaders compiled a list of what they thought were the main things to value most in a teacher, generally. Students could only vote on one value from the values listed.



Subject knowledge, consistency/being reliable and passion/enthusiasm were ranked as the areas students valued the most in teachers.

Very positive feedback was received about the Learning Hub itself with **96%** of students believing the Hub promoted itself well in its first year and that it was a positive development within the school, in promoting student voice and student leadership.

TEACHER PROFILES



Our school in one word:

Inclusive

My name is John Gormley.
I teach Maths, Irish and CSPE.
I have been teaching for 4 years
and 3 months.

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

**Leaving Cert reform, especially in the
area of assessment. Have
assessments more spread out so that
they are not all done at the end of 6th
year.**

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

**Getting to work with the
subjects I myself loved in
school. Our student body as a
whole are marvellous and
their work ethic, good
behaviour and humour makes
teaching so much easier.**

My definition of
EFFECTIVE TEACHING AND LEARNING

**Being able to cater to all the different abilities and learning
styles in a class. Teaching students to apply what they have
learned to real life scenarios, rather than regurgitate
something that was rote-learned.**



Where I
STUDIED
MAYNOOTH
UNIVERSITY

**What do you believe
is the most important
characteristic a
teacher should have?
Empathy. Students come
from all sorts of
backgrounds and
circumstances and it's
important to understand
that.**

STUDY TIPS

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

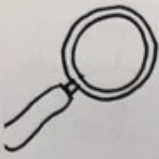
ACTIVE REVISION CYCLE - IDEA FROM @SPBEALE ON TWITTER

the Active Revision Cycle

Audit

→ Check knowledge to see how secure it is.


- Reflect on wrong answers in tests
- Check exam specification to see what is required in the exam.
- Review revision notes to check they are effective.
- Check progress grades to see how your teachers think you are performing.
- RAG rate your PLC to highlight areas for development



Understand



→ Check your understanding of topics.

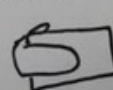
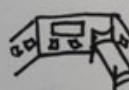
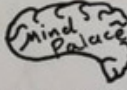
- Can you read & understand the work?
- Can you explain it to a partner?
- Can you participate in discussions & debates?
- Can you simplify & shorten the work but keep the key detail?
- Have you asked someone for clarification?



Memorise

→ Store your knowledge using these techniques.

Mnemonics  chunking  Notes


Card cover  Association  Loci 

DO NOT SIT & READ THE TEXTBOOK. IT HAS HARDLY ANY IMPACT

Organise

→ Link information together & show how it is related.

- Mind Maps
- Posters
- Diagrams
- Folding Franny.



Apply

→ show you can accurately apply your knowledge

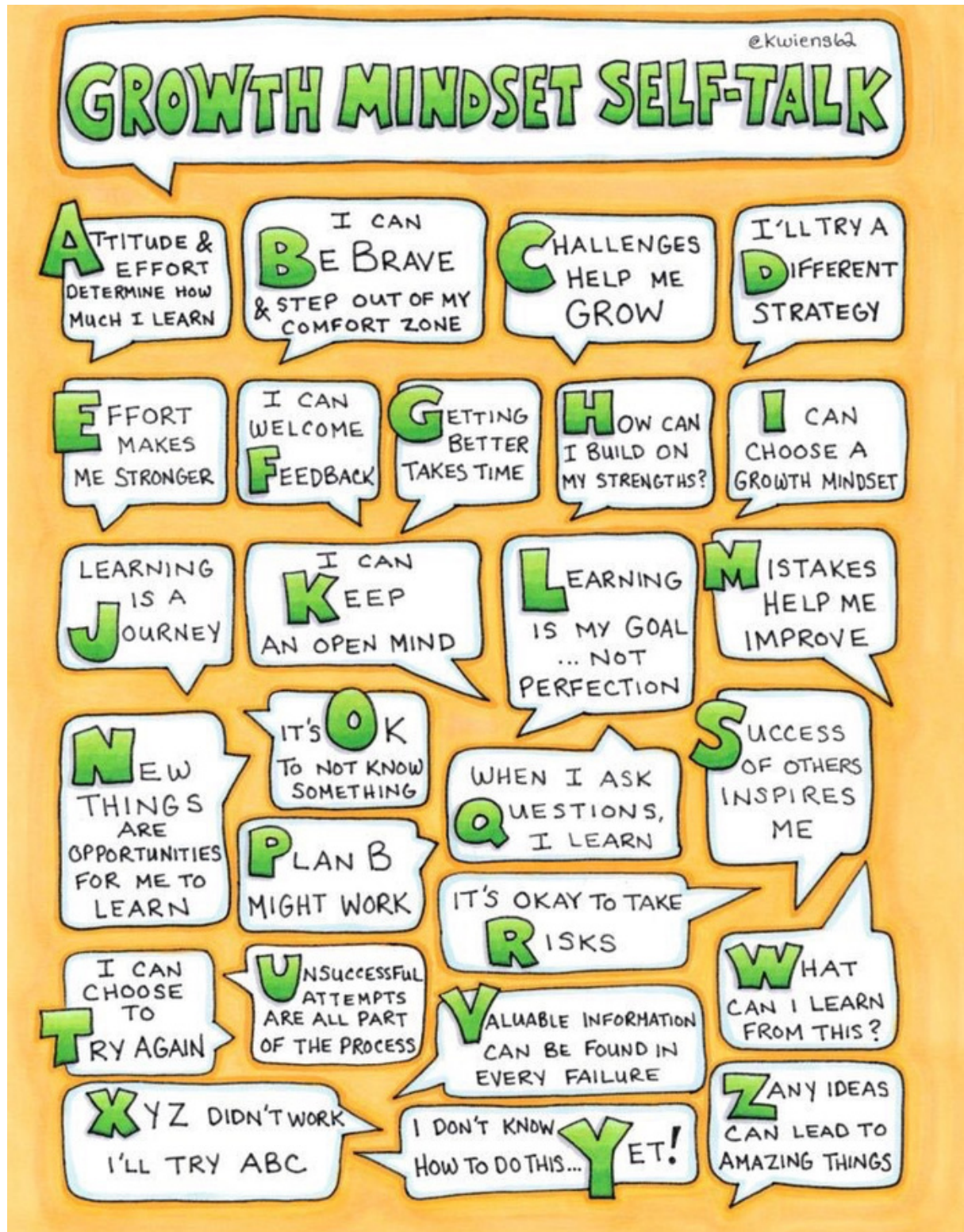
- Get someone to quiz you
- Plan how you would answer the question
- Complete Past Papers
- Put 100% effort into mock exams & in class tests.
- Make games that require exam knowledge.

A ☐
B ☒
C ☐

STUDY TIPS

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

GROWTH MINDSET - FOCUS ON THE PROCESS OF LEARNING!



The CPD corner



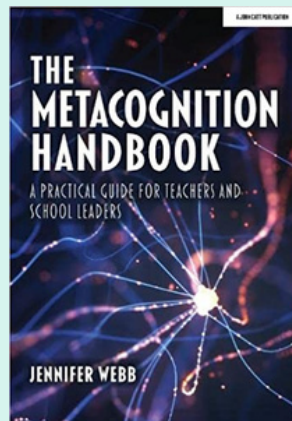
News and updates for teachers

JCT subject cluster workshops

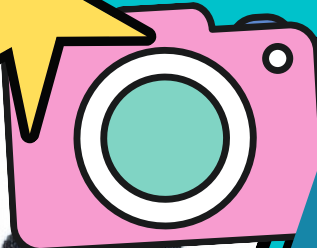
The teaching staff are scheduled to have our respective subject cluster workshop for 2022-23 on **Monday 30 January**. Similar to the last couple of years, this will be an online event.

This is the last of the subject workshops being offered by the JCT Support Service.

The Recommended Read



'The Metacognition Handbook: A Practical Guide for Teachers and School Leaders' by Jennifer Webb is a hugely engaging way for educators to introduce themselves to and learn more about the concept of metacognition and its key place within education. Webb writes with great accessibility and clarity in providing teachers and school leaders with practical ways to embed more metacognitive practices in to the classroom setting, through helpful case studies and classroom examples, focusing on areas like classroom pedagogy and teacher CPD to argue for more evidence-informed ways to boost student outcomes, in terms of developing their independence, motivation and self-regulation. Webb does a brilliant job at breaking down the complexities of what can be quite a complex area.



Oide

New DES support service
DES support services for post-primary teachers will change at the beginning of the 2023-24 academic year. Existing services like the PDST, JCT, NIPT and the Centre for School Leadership will now all merge into one integrated support service going forward, called Oide.

The CPD corner

News and updates for teachers



researchED Dublin 2022

DUBLIN

On 24 September, researchED returned to Ireland, in the beautiful campus of St Columba's College in Dublin. ResearchED began in London in 2013 and since then has become an international phenomenon with events taking place in every corner of the world. The first Irish researchED event took place in 2019 but, due to Covid-19, this event was the first time it was held in Ireland since the pandemic.

ResearchED aims to bridge the gap between educational research and educational practice in schools. Guest speakers, from both the Irish and international educational research community, converged on the beautiful school campus in south Dublin for a day of sharing research-informed evidence on all matters pertaining to learning and teaching.

I attended the talks by the following speakers:

Dr Barbara Oakley - 'Effective Teaching and Learning: Practical Insights from Neuroscience'

Oliver Caviglioli - 'Organise Ideas'

James McCoy - 'Lessons for Leadership for Successful Professional Development in Schools'

Kate Jones - 'Retrieval Practice: Inside and Outside of the Classroom'

Sonia Thompson - 'Berger's "An Ethic of Excellence" in Action'

Clare Madden - 'Knowledge, Skills and the Junior Cycle curriculum: a classroom teacher's perspective'

Paul A. Kirschner - 'How Teaching Happens'

It was a superbly organised event from start to finish and great to meet so many other teachers and school leaders who are interested in integrating more evidence-informed practice into their schools.

Many thanks to Julian Girdham and Humphrey Jones, of St Columba's College, who organise the researchED Dublin event.





"Develop a passion for learning. If you do, you will never cease to grow."

**THE NEXT EDITION OF
'INSPIRE' WILL BE ISSUED IN
MAY 2023.**
