

INDEPENDENT
THINKING
ON ...

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Jackie Beere



DEVELOPING INDEPENDENCE AND RESILIENCE
IN ALL TEACHERS AND LEARNERS

Independent Thinking on Teaching and Learning has the potential to be a game-changer. Grounded in reality, it shows how, through self-reflection, assessment and evaluation, educators can transform their everyday teaching and achieve better outcomes – and, more importantly, the book also recognises how pupils can help them to do just that. I shudder to think how many children might achieve more if the half a million teachers in the UK put into practice the common sense and practical advice it contains.

DAVID REESON, INDEPENDENT CONSULTANT IN SOCIAL CARE AND FORMER DIRECTOR OF KPMG

Jackie has produced a book that looks at the job of teaching from numerous angles. Written with a sense of the reality of life in classrooms, it pulls together a range of theoretical perspectives and is full of suggestions for developing the craft of teaching to improve learning for all pupils.

We all want to be better teachers, and reading *Independent Thinking on Teaching and Learning* will help us improve our practice.

**MICK WATERS, PROFESSOR OF EDUCATION,
UNIVERSITY OF WOLVERHAMPTON**

Independent Thinking on Teaching and Learning is a very reflective piece of work that has a mixture of practical solutions and research-informed ideas. It is a fantastic tool for every teacher and school leader, and an excellent resource for CPD with staff. A must-read.

**ELIZA HOLLIS, EXECUTIVE HEAD TEACHER,
THE FOREST CE FEDERATION OF SCHOOLS**

With *Independent Thinking on Teaching and Learning*, Jackie Beere offers a timeless guide which reflects on the elements of great teaching and learning through the lens of her extensive experience in the profession. Jackie

considers the latest agendas and policies alongside previous versions, offering well-informed critiques of the best approaches to teaching and learning. The book is essential reading for entrants to initial teacher training, providing an up-to-date compendium of approaches, ideas, dos and don'ts that will serve them well on their journey in teaching.

LUCY WESTLEY, SENIOR LECTURER IN INITIAL TEACHER TRAINING, UNIVERSITY OF NORTHAMPTON

Independent Thinking on Teaching and Learning is perfectly timed as we enter an era of accessible and plentiful research on metacognition, cognitive science and pedagogy.

As time-poor professionals, it's helpful to have clear navigation to bridge the gap between research and practice, while not forgetting the emotional aspect of teaching. In Jackie's own words: 'I have sifted through the jargon and pulled out what I believe to be the very best practice that works to help our children learn.' And this is exactly what you will find in this book. It is an incisive and comprehensive guide that draws on trustworthy research and presents it in a digestible form, supported by reasoning from classroom experience. It has lots of practical ideas to help busy teachers in any stage of their career, with each chapter being relevant for the challenges faced in modern-day teaching.

Overall, this book is a superb addition to any teaching and learning library – and is a resource that will surely stand the test of time.

**GAVIN BOYLE, DIRECTOR OF LEARNING,
ST CHRISTOPHER'S SCHOOL**

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This book is dedicated to my wonderful mum and my amazing grandchildren, Lyla, Josh and Taran, who all represent my fortunate past and my precious hopes for the future.

When writing this book, I was always thinking about all the inspiring teachers I have known and how much our future, as a nation, depends on them.

FOREWORD BY IAN GILBERT

Since establishing Independent Thinking in 1994, we have worked hard to share with educators around the world our belief that there is always another way. The Independent Thinking On ... series of books is an extension of that work, giving a space for great educators to use their words and share great practice across a number of critical and relevant areas of education.

Independent Thinking on Teaching and Learning takes us right back to where it all really started, when I was fresh-faced and fresh out of teacher training, and no one had heard of academies, Ofsted or, indeed, me. I had come into the world of education (as a teacher of French) to be able to work directly with young people on learning and motivation, and I knew that there were many different approaches that could be used in the classroom to make things better for all young people.

While we didn't have Twitter as a vehicle for people to tell me how stupid I was to suggest that students might learn in different ways, it meant that we could have real conversations about the nature of teaching and learning and about how, although learning is learning, we don't have to treat everyone the same in the classroom.

And who knows, maybe some of the things people talked about back then didn't do all that they claimed to do, but they did something and that something was worthwhile. According to Durham University researcher Steve Higgins, although the claims made about 'pseudo-scientific' practices were wrong, 'the practices undertaken in schools may have some education value for other reasons'. Indeed,

he suggests that those claiming such approaches can't work because the science behind them is flawed are themselves displaying a 'lack of critical (or scientific) thinking as brain-gym and NLP might be reliably effective at achieving certain outcomes, just not for the reasons the proponents expound'.¹

In other words, teachers aren't stupid and who is anyone to tell them that what works doesn't work? After all, as we have been saying for a long time now, there is always another way, especially in the world of education. Which is why long-time Independent Thinking Associate Jackie Beere is still so much in demand for sharing her insightful, compassionate and rigorous approaches to teaching and learning across the UK and further afield.

And why this book is such a perfect addition to a series for teachers which is all about thinking for yourself.

**IAN GILBERT
BIRMINGHAM**

1 S. Higgins, A Recent History on Teaching Thinking. In R. Wegerif, L. Li and J. Kaufman (eds), *The Routledge International Handbook of Research on Teaching Thinking* (Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 2015), pp. 19–28 at p. 21.

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I would like to thank Ian Gilbert for persuading me to write this book and renew my passion for the most important profession in the world. We have shared our journey through decades of change in education initiatives and in life – and if I ever want a new perspective, I know who to turn to. He has gathered around him an amazing group of educationalists at Independent Thinking, who never fail to have the energy and passion required to inspire. I want to thank the Independent Thinking family for giving me decades of opportunities to keep finding ‘another way’.

Everyone at Crown House has always been so supportive, patient and helpful throughout the long and challenging process of writing – I couldn’t imagine working with a nicer bunch of people.

Without my husband, John, to provide me with encouragement and feedback, this book would not have seen daylight, so a massive thank you to him and also to my daughters, who continue to inspire me. Since the arrival of my grandchildren, my belief in the teaching profession and the power it has to influence the next generation has multiplied. I want to thank all the teachers who work so hard to mould our children into great learners despite the challenges of the 21st century. We need to value and reward them for the vital work they do.

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FIRST THOUGHTS

Teachers are so important. According to Ron Berger, the best question you can ask any pupil or member of staff to find out what a school is like is: what does it take 'to fit in, socially and academically' around here?¹

And now, at last, Ofsted agrees: 'Inspectors must use all their evidence to evaluate what it is like to attend the school.'²

Make no mistake, it is the teachers that create the experience of school for the pupils.

The advice in this book draws on the latest educational research and many of the Ofsted descriptors of 'outstanding teaching' that have been produced over the years. Even if they are not the latest guidance, they are still useful references for what success looks like. However, this book is determined not to merely link practice to Ofsted's latest sound bites, because they change with every government or secretary of state for education. Each has a different agenda and tends to dispose of previous policy for political reasons. Remember initiatives like Every Child Matters, SEAL (social and emotional aspects of learning), PLTs (personal, learning and thinking skills), character education, personal development, curriculum intent, AfL (assessment for learning), safeguarding and citizenship? All have had their time in the sun and some, as you will see in this book, are still relevant and useful.

1 R. Berger, *An Ethic of Excellence: Building a Culture of Craftsmanship with Students* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2003), p. 35.

2 Ofsted, *School Inspection Handbook*. Ref: 190017 (2019), p. 39. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-inspection-handbook-eif>.

This book aims to be a timeless guide to great teaching and learning, aimed at new teachers and teachers who want to renew their passion. I have sifted through the jargon and pulled out what I believe to be the very best practice that works to help our children learn. You have the assurance that the advice in this book is not included simply to satisfy this administration or current inspection framework; it is included because it has been tried and tested by great teachers over decades.

The current focus on 'evidence-led' practice is helpful, but every child is an individual. We always need to remember that while research can claim that a technique works brilliantly, in practice we might find that it doesn't work for certain children. Research can also be contradictory. Is red wine healthy or dangerous, and what really is the best way to learn to read and write? This book is based on my own judgement, informed by evidence, but grounded in my experience of the huge variety of human responses to learning in different contexts. Use this book to find out what works, then find out what works for you and your individual pupils and build on that to fulfil their potential.

There has never been a more important time to be a teacher. Our young people seem more fragile and insecure than ever. This insecurity can destroy any chance of happiness and blight potential achievement. Social media dominates their lives and has the capacity to create a contagious culture of comparison and, thereby, self-judgement. Everything from their looks, the music they choose to listen to and the places they go can be measured by 'likes' and 'friends'. Teachers can offer an antidote to this pressure by modelling and nurturing the love and support for each other that is innate in all of us. Helping children to be resilient as they learn and giving them thinking strategies – metacognitive tools

FIRST THOUGHTS

– will protect them from taking social media – or themselves – too seriously.

Teacher recruitment and retention is a serious problem, especially for schools in disadvantaged areas that need great teachers the most. Our school leaders are facing massive challenges – coping with budget cuts and ever-changing political diktats – but they know that their main priority is growing wonderful teachers. Teachers are all individuals with their own unique strengths and challenges: there has never been only one way to be a great teacher. I hope that teachers and leaders can use this book to build on their strengths and challenge their weaknesses so that they make the greatest impact on each and every child's academic and personal progress.

Every child in this country will become a more resilient, productive, confident and generous citizen if they learn with teachers who care enough to show them that they have limitless potential to be happy and successful.

Everything can be taken from a man but one thing: the last of the human freedoms – to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one's own way.

VICTOR FRANKL³

3 V. Frankl, *Man's Search for Meaning* (New York: Pocket Books, 1984 [1959]), p. 86.

CHAPTER 3

HOW TO DELIVER A GREAT LESSON

The most important thing you do as a teacher is deliver great lessons as often as possible. Every teacher prepares their best lessons differently. Many schools have a tick list for 'outstanding lessons', but anyone who has ever observed a lesson knows that there is much more to it than following a to-do list. So much is dependent on the mindset and the unconscious messages delivered by the teacher – hence all the information in the first two chapters! There is no one magic formula or set structure for the 'perfect' lesson, but the ideas here will help you to develop your own version of the very best learning experiences for your class, every day.

How can you ensure that your pupils 'typically' make great progress and achieve their full potential? By establishing a culture that embeds the behaviours of great learners. I've identified seven essential steps to delivering your best lessons every day.

STEP 1: KNOW WHAT WORKS AND WHAT MAKES A GREAT TEACHER

This summary of effective habits and behaviours – as described in Ofsted's grade descriptors for 'outstanding'

over recent years (some quoted, others summarised by me) – makes a good starting point:

- They plan lessons very effectively, making maximum use of lesson time and building towards a goal.
- They manage pupils' behaviour highly effectively with clear rules that are consistently enforced.
- Teachers demonstrate deep knowledge and understanding of the subjects they teach.
- They use questioning highly effectively and demonstrate an understanding of the ways in which pupils think about subject content, identifying pupils' common misconceptions and acting to ensure that they are corrected and committed to long-term memory.
- Teachers provide adequate time for practice to embed the pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills securely. They introduce subject content progressively and constantly demand more of pupils.
- Teachers identify and support any pupil who is falling behind, checking pupils' understanding systematically and effectively in lessons, offering clearly directed and timely support.
- Teachers provide pupils with incisive feedback, in line with the school's assessment policy, showing what pupils can do to improve their knowledge, understanding and skills. The pupils use this feedback effectively to develop their understanding.
- Teachers set challenging homework, in line with the school's policy, appropriate for the age and stage of pupils, that consolidates learning, deepens understanding and prepares pupils very well for work to come.

- Teachers embed reading, writing, communication and, where appropriate, mathematics exceptionally well across the curriculum, equipping all pupils with the necessary skills to make progress. For younger children in particular, phonics teaching is highly effective in enabling them to tackle unfamiliar words.
- Teachers are determined that pupils achieve well. They encourage pupils to try hard, recognise their efforts and ensure that pupils take pride in all aspects of their work by having consistently high expectations of all pupils' attitudes to learning.
- Resources and teaching strategies reflect and value the diversity of pupils' experiences and provide pupils with a comprehensive understanding of people and communities beyond their immediate experience.
- Teachers ensure that their speaking, listening, writing and reading skills are appropriate and support pupils in developing their language and vocabulary well.
- Teachers provide parents with clear and timely information on how well their child is progressing and how well their child is doing in relation to the standards expected. Parents are given guidance about how to support their child to improve.

All these behaviours work to develop great teaching over time and nurture pupils who:

- Are eager to know how to improve their learning and who always use feedback, written or oral, to improve.
- Love the challenge of learning and are resilient to failure. They become curious, interested learners who seek out and use new information to develop, consolidate and deepen their knowledge, understanding and skills. They thrive in lessons and

regularly take up opportunities to learn through extracurricular activities.

The one-off brilliant lesson when you are being observed is satisfying, but it is impact over time that counts. When talking to pupils and looking at the work they produce, the quality of the teaching over time will soon become clear. This is why individual teachers or lessons are no longer graded by Ofsted. They are looking for 'typicality' across the whole school culture. This is a very good reason to make sure that what you are delivering each and every day is helping children to progress and remember what they have learned and how to apply it.

Simple measures of progress: knowing more, remembering more, doing more.¹

What are the magic ingredients that will make your teaching outstanding and demonstrate the high quality of provision in your school?

Some key ingredients for success, based on the descriptors listed are:

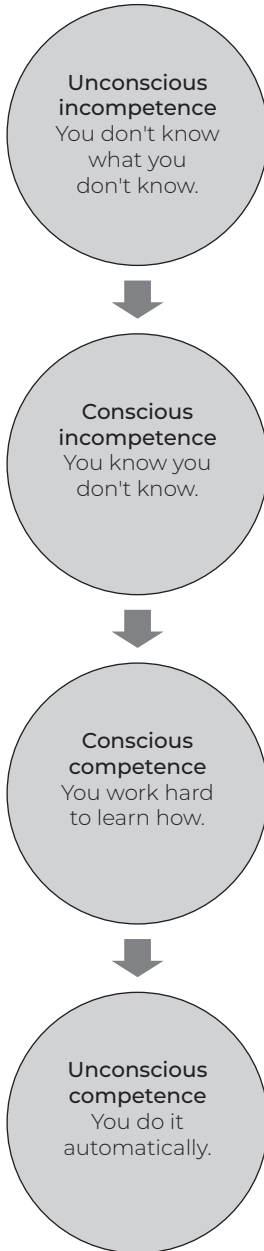
- All the pupils, particularly those who have the greatest needs, are making rapid and sustained progress in learning and applying this learning to new situations.
- Able children experience opportunities to really challenge themselves and fulfil their potential.

1 This is an adapted version of 'Progress, therefore, means knowing more (including knowing how to do more) and remembering more', taken from Ofsted, Education Inspection Framework 2019: Inspecting the Substance of Education [Consultation outcome] (29 July 2019). Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/education-inspection-framework-2019-inspecting-the-substance-of-education/education-inspection-framework-2019-inspecting-the-substance-of-education>.

- Teachers have very high expectations of all pupils and enable them to learn exceptionally well across the curriculum, and this includes modelling and promoting the core skills of literacy and numeracy in all subjects.
- Teachers are constantly checking understanding, giving powerful feedback and intervening with impact on pupils' progress and learning. Pupils are responding to the feedback given and consequently making more progress.
- Imaginative teaching strategies are used to engage and motivate pupils on a regular basis – not just for observations – evidenced by their positive attitude to learning.
- Teachers are sharing the criteria for success to enable pupils to have ownership of and commitment to their own learning.

Personal development is now a key judgement in evaluating schools, so every lesson should include a focus on:

- Developing independent and resilient learners.
- Using classroom assistants effectively so that they can help the neediest pupils make exceptional progress in the lesson.
- Assessment being used as an integral part of developing progress in learning. Children's work will demonstrate this and show how they respond to feedback and that they are willing to learn from mistakes.
- Challenging the most able learners to really work to their full potential.



- Understanding the opportunities and dangers of using technology and social media.
- Effective collaborative learning and peer critique.
- Developing behaviour and attitudes that enhance learning for all by creating a culture of allies.

How can you demonstrate all this? First, you need to be aware. Then take Willingham's advice: 'Your best bet for improving your teaching is to practice teaching'.² These skills will develop over time until they become unconscious and habitual and 'just the way you teach'. You'll become unconsciously competent (see figure on page 66).³

However, the journey towards unconscious competence is beset by periods of conscious incompetence and lots of hard work! Admit to and learn from your mistakes then adapt, improvise, adjust and improve. Be relentless in your efforts to improve your practice, grow the pupils' intelligence and improve achievement for all.

Based on decades of cognitive science research and evidence from successful classroom practice, Barak Rosenshine established his principles of instruction.⁴ The main takeaways from his common-sense guidance is to teach in small steps, review regularly, and include lots of guided practice and great questioning to give you feedback on what your pupils really know and understand. This should underpin everyday teaching.

Over time, if you establish a classroom culture in which learning is truly valued, and high expectations of yourself

2 Willingham, *Why Don't Students Like School?*, p. 191.

3 This model is thought to have its origins in Martin M. Broadwell's work on levels of learning: Teaching for Learning (XVI), *The Gospel Guardian* (20 February 1969). Available at: http://www.wordsfitlyspoken.org/gospel_guardian/v20n20n41p1-3a.html.

4 Rosenshine, Principles of Instruction.

and others are habitual, then anyone walking into your lesson will immediately know that you are a highly effective teacher. This will be clear by seeing how keen the children are to *self-test and peer test* to show how much they have learned and how determined they are to fill in any gaps in their learning. Make sure that your pupils always feel free to chat about what happens in your classroom – they are the best advocates of your teaching and will be keen to explain how you help them learn! The following chapters will give you much more detail about how to achieve this ideal classroom culture. However, first we'll consider the remaining steps.

STEP 2: BE PRESENT AND IN CONTROL, RIGHT FROM THE START

Demonstrate this every day by displaying that same thirst for knowledge and love of learning that we expect to see from the pupils. Teachers who are open to new ideas – who learn from colleagues, pupils and their mistakes – and nurture excellent attitudes to learning will always have a strong, positive impact on pupils' progress.

Also, train your pupils to coach each other (and themselves) to keep trying, even when they get stuck or make mistakes. If you can develop this habit of resilience in your lessons, it will shine through in every conversation any inspector or observer may have with your pupils. An excellent way to create this culture is to share how you yourself bounce back from mistakes.

There is nothing more inspiring than for someone in a position of power to show humility by admitting they are

wrong, or scared, or not sure – and that this is OK. Vulnerability makes us stronger, not weaker.

CLASSROOM LEADERSHIP ROLES

Choose a pupil to be your lead greeter. Their job is to welcome any visitor to the classroom and, using a copy of your lesson plan, be able to help the visitor see what progress you have made so far in the lesson – and how you have made it. Other roles for your classroom can be lead questioner, lead celebrator, literacy ambassador, growth mindset guru, etc. (see more examples in Appendix 1) – all are intended to give pupils responsibilities that challenge them out of their comfort zone and support your classroom culture of high expectations for all.

Rosenshine et al. commented on the vital role of regular review in deepening learning.⁵ So why not have another leadership role of quizmaster or knowledge checker? During a lesson they could prepare quick questions or a cloze (missing words) exercise on the content to be used to review learning at the beginning of the next lesson.

SET UP THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Be there to greet the pupils by name as they arrive. Always make a prompt start – especially for early arrivers. Get the pupils into the habit of self-starting in every lesson by setting little challenges, questions or tasks that they *know* they are expected to get on with immediately. These can

5 B. Rosenshine, C. Meister and S. Chapman, Teaching Students to Generate Questions: A Review of Intervention Studies, *Review of Educational Research* 66 (1996): 181-221.

be anagrams, puzzles, true or false statements, recaps of the previous lesson(s), unexpected questions for debate, music challenges and so on. The aim is to intrigue and engage while connecting and embedding previous learning. Reward effort for these tasks as part of your reward-and-sanction classroom policy. It neatly shows how you are completely and effortlessly in control and makes a great impression on that unexpected visitor who will see that your pupils are in the habit of starting learning as soon as they walk through your classroom door.

It can be a good idea to play music as pupils come in and get on with these tasks. (See Nina Jackson's excellent and aptly named book for some suggestions.⁶) Then, when you switch the music off, the pupils know it is time for the lesson proper to start.

While the pupils are completing the tasks, circulate, smile, greet them individually by name and make them feel welcome and valued. You could get the pupils to assess each other's work, if appropriate. You can then start the main part of the lesson when *you* are ready and useful work is already taking place.

The culture of the classroom is crucial to developing the good personal development habits expected of pupils. It will also make your life much easier if children walk into your classroom and unconsciously know the high standards of behaviour and effort that are expected. Being rigorous about boundaries for behaviour and following through with sanctions right from the start is the only way to create this culture. It also makes the pupils feel safe and more eager to learn, able to ask questions and to support each other unconditionally to make greater progress.

6 N. Jackson, *The Little Book of Music for the Classroom: Using Music to Improve Memory, Motivation, Learning and Creativity* (Carmarthen: Independent Thinking Press, 2009).

STEP 3: PLAN THE STARTER THAT PRIMES THEM FOR LEARNING – AND FINDS OUT WHAT THEY ALREADY KNOW

Your first learning activity should stimulate curiosity and open-mindedness and prepare the brain for learning. Engaging the emotional brain makes your class curious and attentive.

If there is no right or wrong answer to a starter question, it encourages a growth mindset attitude to learning and doesn't make a child feel judged or graded. This activity can sometimes be chosen at random or, better, linked to the subject to review prior learning.

Some suggestions for starters follow.

START WITH A THUNK

This is a question which has no right or wrong answer but which makes the pupils think. Thunks were created by Ian Gilbert, and a vast collection can be found in *The Little Book of Thunks*⁷ and *The Compleat Thunks Book*⁸. Thunks prepare pupils to be open-minded and consider various options. Some random and some subject-linked examples follow.

If you always got what you wished for would you always be happy?

7 I. Gilbert, *The Little Book of Thunks: 260 Questions to Make Your Brain Go Ouch!* (Carmarthen: Independent Thinking Press, 2007).

8 I. Gilbert, *The Compleat Thunks Book* (Carmarthen: Independent Thinking Press, 2017).

INDEPENDENT THINKING ON TEACHING AND LEARNING

Which has the most freedom – an ant or a schoolchild?

Is a person who has a face transplant still the same person?

Which is heavier, an inflated or deflated balloon?

Is love invisible?

Can being sad make you happy?

Can you experience fear without being scared?

Pupils can think of the next question or make up their own. Thanks as part of the starter. Linking these to your lesson topic is even better.

Here are a few more philosophical thinking questions that may suit a starter for maths or science:

How many sides does a line have?

If a plant isn't green, is it a plant?

If a machine is breathing for you, are you dead?

Is a maths answer always right or wrong?

Does a baked cake weigh more than its ingredients?

Does a circle have two sides?

Can you point to where the sky begins?

START WITH A CURIOSITY

You can make the curiosity link to your subject or the lesson:

- A box. The pupils have to guess what the contents are.

- A wig or hat. Someone can try it on and guess the character it belongs to.
- A message in a bottle. The pupils have to guess the message and who sent it.
- A tray of relevant items covered with a tea towel. The pupils have to guess what might be underneath based on the lesson topic or last week's lesson.
- A crime scene to investigate.

START WITH A CREATIVE CHALLENGE IN PAIRS

For example:

- List the three most popular babies' names today and create three names that could be popular in ten years' time.
- Guess the most common and least common food that people in the class had for breakfast.
- How could we use maths to create a better world?
- What genes would you change in humans to make us a better species?
- Think of three ways in which you can help to cure global warming/discover life on other planets/use geometry to redecorate your bedroom/teach a child how to use commas.
- Draw a logo, and write an accompanying slogan, that represents what we learned last lesson.

WORK FOR, PARTY WITH OR SEND TO THE JUNGLE

A fun task that helps pupils understand personal preferences. Give the pupils three famous names (choosing popular figures) and ask them who they would do what with and why.

For example:

- Prince William, Ed Sheeran, Nigel Farage.
- Cheryl, Caroline Flack, Fern Britton.
- Michael McIntyre, Boris Johnson, Adele.
- Donald Trump, William Shakespeare, Martin Luther King, Jr.
- Brian Cox, Charles Darwin, Marie Curie.

ROOM 101

This is the room full of your worst nightmares. For Winston in George Orwell's 1984 it was rats.

What three things would you put into Room 101 and why?

EMBED THE SKILLS FOR PERSONAL AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT AS PART OF YOUR STARTER ACTIVITY

Ensure that your pupils are developing the skills and attitudes to enable them to participate fully in and contribute positively to life in modern society by giving opportunities to reflect on and share their values and beliefs. Prime the learners in this by linking the lesson explicitly to one of the

personal, learning and thinking skills (PLTs). In their day, these were identified as the key skills employers require for the workplace. Although this model is no longer part of the educational policy agenda, I still think that it provides us with a useful framework. Some examples of starter and other tasks involving these vital skills appear in the table that follows. Success could earn points that accumulate over time and gain rewards.

Personal, learning and thinking skills	Task
Self-manager	Draw a face that depicts the different moods you have experienced today so far
Effective participator	Write down five things you will do in this lesson to help others learn
Creative thinker	Design a logo and slogan for this subject/lesson
Reflective learner	Create a mind map of what we did last lesson
Independent enquirer	Write three questions you need to ask about what we did last lesson
Teamworker	Think of three promises you will make to your team to help it work well

Be energetic and enthusiastic about setting up these tasks. Check out the impact and show your pupils how important progress in the PLTs is for success. Channel any nerves into passion if you are being observed!

STEP 4: SET CLEAR OBJECTIVES AND SUCCESS CRITERIA, ENGAGING THEM IN THE LEARNING JOURNEY

What am I trying to achieve this lesson? How will I engage the pupils? How will I, and they, know that we've achieved it? These are the only questions that matter.

CLEAR OBJECTIVES

Your objective can be a skill to develop, a question to answer or some knowledge you are trying to help them acquire. It doesn't have to be set out at the beginning of every lesson, it doesn't have to be written in books, but it should be understood by all ... 'Exactly what is it we are trying to learn?'

When you explain the objective, you should answer any questions pupils have – for example, 'What's in it for me?', 'What will I be able to do better after this?' and 'Why should I bother with this lesson?' If they can see *what* they are learning and *why*, it will help them engage. Explain the objectives in terms of the bigger picture: that is, how they relate to the last lesson's learning, the course they are following and the big overall goal. You can't simply write the objectives on the board and get the pupils to merely copy them down. This is a waste of time. Get the pupils to engage with your objectives so they are able to explain them and how their learning journey will develop.

Describing what the lesson is about is the crucial moment when you engage the pupils in the exciting task ahead and explain that it will make a difference to them personally.

To succeed, you must communicate your expectation of success and your personal excitement about the subject – what they can achieve and why it is important.

SUCCESS CRITERIA

Crucially, the success criteria for achieving the outcomes also need to be negotiated with and understood by the pupils for maximum engagement. If possible, share an example of a WAGOLL (What A Good One Looks Like) with them to enable them to be clear about what success will look, feel or sound like when they have made that progress.

Consider using differentiated objectives and differentiated success criteria. Be careful, though, that they don't cap the effort of, or outcome for, some pupils. (This can happen with the 'some/most/all students will ...' models). Everyone should aim for the highest outcome and aim to find a way to get there over time.

Aim high but be willing to adjust and adapt for individuals. Persistently communicate your high expectations and your determination to find the strategies to help them excel. Make sure specific groups of pupils are aware of what they need to do to make progress. Ensure that the most and least able, and vulnerable pupils, all have that extra bit of attention, resources or scaffolding to ensure that they know how to make progress. Doing this effectively shows that you and the other adults in the room are acutely aware of the pupils' capabilities and of their prior learning and that you plan very effectively to build on these. Minds grow when they are fed with optimism and hope for the future. Our children have to rely on their attitudes to save the world.

There's no need for lengthy typed lesson plans, but planning lessons that build upon prior learning and progress pupils' thinking is essential. (See Appendix 4 for a useful five-minute lesson plan.) Willingham suggests that you make the lesson plan into a story to help pupils remember it.⁹ Bear in mind that any plan isn't rigid and that the lesson must respond to pupil feedback. Change tack if you need to. Review and repeat if they need you to – being flexible is the hallmark of a great teacher.

TOP TIPS

- Try to connect the lesson plan to something that resonates with your pupils' interests and values and connects with their prior learning.
- Describe simply and *exactly* what you want the pupils to be able to do or know by the end of the lesson.
- Teach to the top and intervene, anticipate and scaffold for those who need extra help to achieve their potential.
- Explain the success criteria.
- Even better, ask them to suggest what the success criteria could be and how they would know they have met them.
- Create a culture in your classroom in which all pupils are willing to push themselves outside of their comfort zones so that they can 'grow' their brains.

9 Willingham, *Why Don't Students Like School?*

- If possible, show an example of what a high-quality outcome looks like so they can see what they are aiming for. Talk about the learning journey involved and how mistakes along the way are inevitable and important for learning.

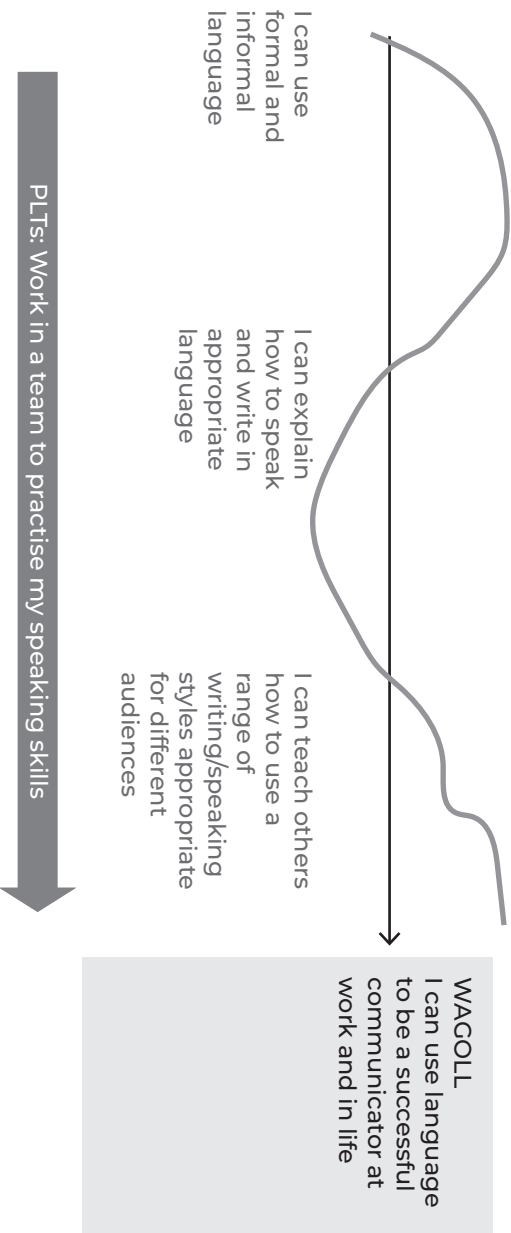
THE LEARNING JOURNEY

Return to the overall learning journey (periodically). It is important that the pupils know that this and previous lessons are part of a greater learning journey and that they have an amazing capacity to progress towards the overall aims. There are three steps to doing this:

- 1 Explaining (with passion) what success in achieving the objectives will look and feel like (i.e. the 'brilliant outcome' or WAGOLL).
- 2 Showing them that achieving the objectives is part of a learning journey towards a greater goal by using a continuum line, but explaining that the journey may involve challenges, mistakes and getting stuck – it's not just a straightforward, one-way trajectory.
- 3 By setting one or more personal skills objectives for individual (or targeted) pupils.

Draw a line that leads to the 'brilliant outcome' (WAGOLL) they are heading towards in their learning journey. During the activity pupils can decide where they are along the line. After the task they mark where they are now to demonstrate the progress they've made in the lesson(s) towards the overall outcome(s) in the objective and the PLTs (see page 80).

Objective: To recognise the power of different types of language



You can also discuss what the challenges might be along the way, when they might get stuck and what strategies they could use to get 'unstuck'. This is a great opportunity to emphasise that learning is hardly ever a simple journey. Tell them to expect hard bits or that they might get lost, which might be frustrating, but with the right attitude and strategies they can overcome anything! Children who are encouraged to think in this growth mindset way love a challenge and know that struggle equals growth and that it can grow new neural pathways. Demonstrate the way learning works by dedicating some of your walls to showing the process.

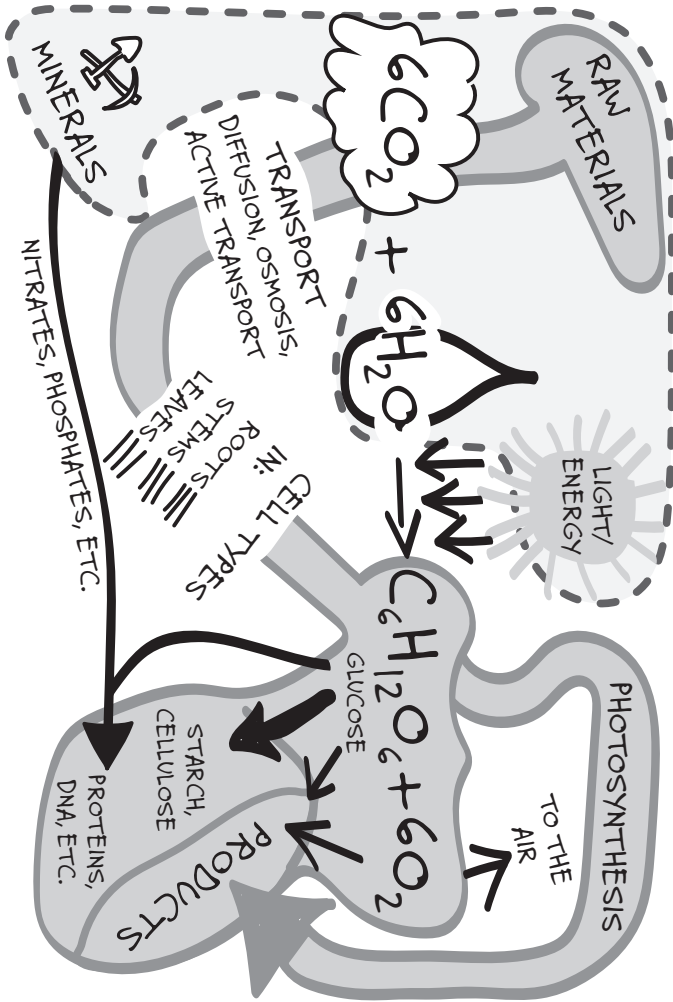
A huge arrow across your classroom wall will enable you to talk to the whole class about how they have progressed in the lesson or series of lessons. Using sticky notes, you can show their progress along their learning journey as illustrated in the example on page 82.

Learning is never just linear, but if we are moving along towards our learning goals, we can become more aware of the process of learning and the cognitive connections required. Research has found that such a focus can make a profound difference to progress.¹⁰

STEP 5: DELIVER THE MAIN ACTIVITY (OR ACTIVITIES)

This is where the teacher's expertise really counts to facilitate the learning and maximise progress. In outstanding classrooms, pupils demonstrate that they can work well together or on their own. Varying your activities will develop the flexibility that all learners need and encourage

¹⁰ Wall, Hall, Baumfield, et al., *Learning to Learn*.



good learning habits so that pupils thrive in lessons and in learning at home.

In your classroom there needs to be:

- A challenging level of subject knowledge, a passion for the subject and an ability to communicate it in ways that enthuse the pupils and connect to prior knowledge.
- Active, collaborative learning – it is crucial to show that pupils can work on task, with or without adult supervision.
- A choice of challenging activities or approaches available. A chance to talk, teach each other and problem-solve with a focus on high-quality outcomes.
- A competitive element, where appropriate. Low-stress quizzes and tests that commit what they are learning to memory are important to gauge what is being learned.
- Lots of higher order, metacognitive questions (which you don't answer for them) that test out their level of learning. Every child should have the chance to ask and answer questions every lesson, whether in whole-class discussion, groups or pairs. Make them think!

However, thought is so much more than memory. We have approximately 60,000 thoughts a day. They impact on our feelings, our beliefs and our personality, and create our experience of this life. Making pupils think consciously and curiously in your lesson will help them to remember more.

*Whatever you think about, that's what you remember.
Memory is the residue of thought.*

DANIEL WILLINGHAM¹¹

- Shared visual aids and practical activities to help apply the learning, with plenty of memory techniques and learning strategies that may suit different pupils.
- A smattering of jeopardy or a moment of shock and awe. Keep them alert and engaged. Yes, do jump on a desk and read out a scary speech from history, or come into class wearing a costume or a wig. Spin a wheel of fortune to pick out a member of the class for a challenge. Anything that will enhance their memory for an important learning point is a priceless weapon in the battle against forgetting content.

Avoid cognitive overload, which can occur when you give too much information or too many tasks to learners simultaneously, resulting in them being unable to process this information.¹² Instead, chunk it into small steps. Don't move on with more information until they have absorbed each chunk of knowledge. Rephrase, review and repeat to make sure it's sinking in! (See Chapter 6 for more detail.)

Challenge, collaboration, choice and competition must be present to deliver an outstanding lesson because:

- **Challenge** is the way to ensure that expectations are high and that learners are working to *make progress* in their learning.

¹¹ Willingham, *Why Don't Students Like School?*, p. 47.

¹² J. Sweller, Cognitive Load During Problem Solving: Effects on Learning, *Cognitive Science* (12) (1998): 257-285.

- **Collaboration** ensures that pupils work together, independently of the teacher, to achieve brilliant outcomes.
- **Choice** engages the learners and makes them feel committed to the task.
- **Competition** encourages **commitment**. We are naturally competitive animals – winning and losing is part of life. Children need to discover that it's good to win but important to experience how to lose with grace, and learn from it. So teachers need to encourage collaborative challenges that make pupils desire to be the very best learners they can be.

New learning will always be built on prior knowledge. For example, to learn iambic pentameter you need to remember rhythm and rhyme. To do this, review, remind, and investigate how the new learning connects with what has been done before through description, questioning and discussion.

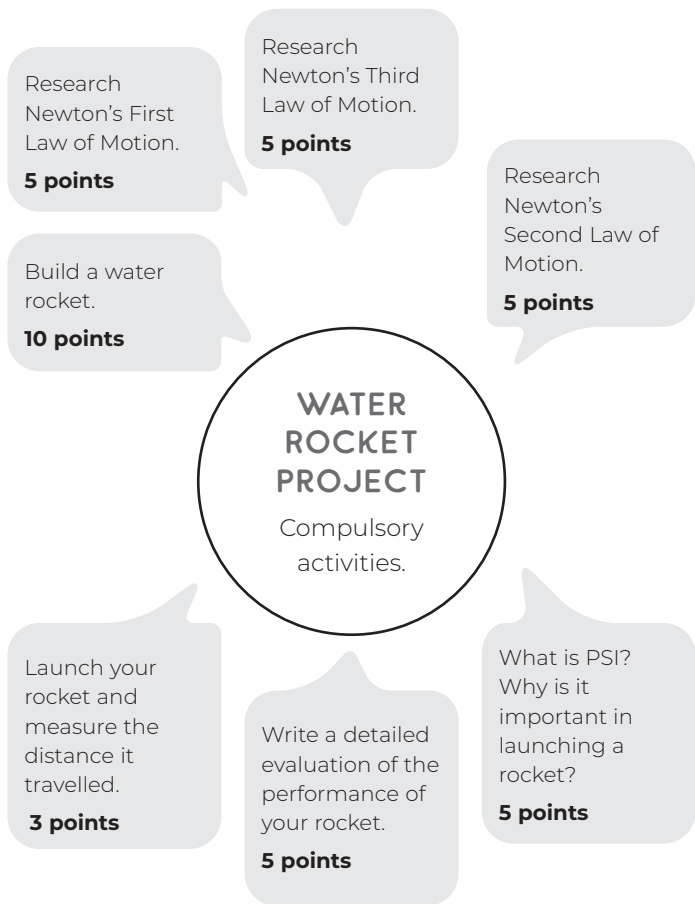
Please note, if you have an Ofsted inspection, remember that they will not:

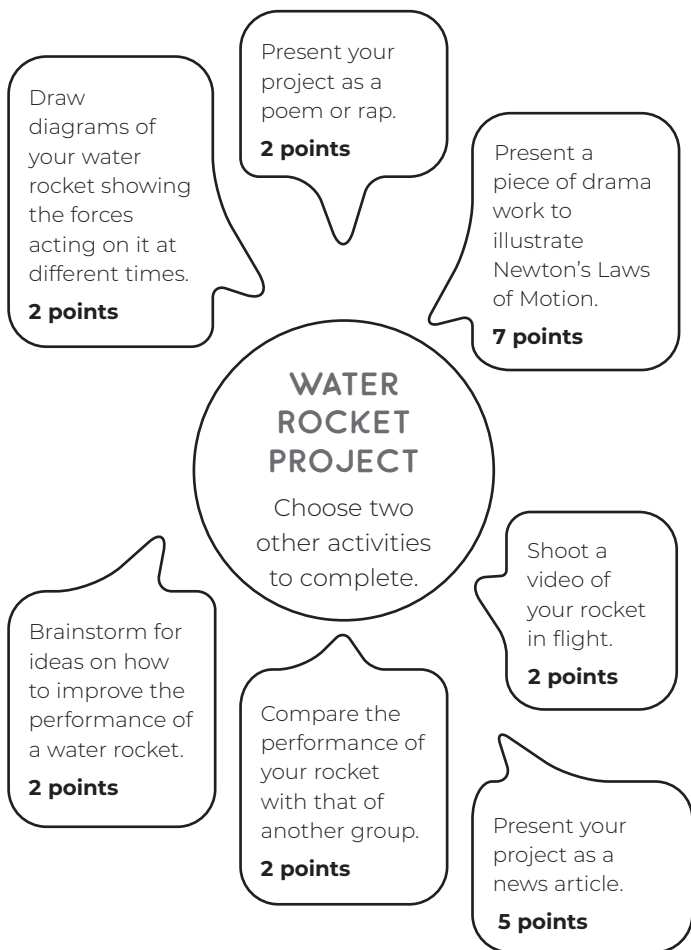
advocate a particular method of planning (including lesson planning), teaching or assessment; it is up to schools to determine their practices and it is up to leadership teams to justify these on their own merits rather than by referring to this handbook.¹³

Different approaches to teaching can be effective. What is appropriate will depend on the aims of the particular lesson or activity, and its place in the sequence of teaching the topic. Nevertheless, certain features must be present to ensure that the approach is delivering the desired outcomes effectively.¹⁴ Use whatever teaching methods suit

¹³ Ofsted, *School Inspection Handbook*, p. 13.

¹⁴ Ofsted, *School Inspection Handbook*, pp. 24-25.





the material, so long as they meet the learners' needs and help them fulfil their potential.

GROUP WORK AND TEAMWORK

Peer pressure and support is a powerful tool for learning, so it pays to create a culture of allies. Collaborative activities can help to connect the learning with the world at home and allow the teacher to be a facilitator of learning by intervening with individuals to challenge, support or scaffold tasks. This is the very best type of differentiation, and in outstanding classroom teaching it will be evident and highly effective in meeting individual needs.

In addition, collaborative activities can be highly effective in inspiring pupils and ensuring that they learn well. However, you need to be rigorous in your monitoring of individuals' learning when group work takes place. You will know which pupils may be passengers or become disengaged easily. Intervene as necessary to make sure *all* learners benefit in group work situations. When you get the class working effectively in small groups, it helps you to improve the quality of your teaching by enabling you to:

- Use your subject knowledge to question, challenge and inspire pupils.
- Check pupils' understanding in lessons and give support to those in need.
- Give well-directed feedback which, in turn, the pupils respond to and use to make progress.
- Foster effort and a resilience to failure in your pupils and promote a love of learning and pride in their work.
- Be able to report accurately on progress to parents and others.

You can also set up group work or teamwork that develops employability or personal skills (i.e. the PLTs). But before doing this, coach pupils in the four stages of group work: forming, storming, norming and performing.¹⁵ It is important for pupils to understand that group work can be challenging but that teamworking skills are valuable. Help them use roles within groups to maximise personal skills and work together for the best outcomes. You can build in teamwork feedback so that pupils can understand how to improve their contribution and their ability to negotiate.

Stand back and support pupils' abilities to resolve conflict in group work. There will be conflict and argument, but learning how to resolve these disputes is an important aspect of personal development.

PROJECT WORK

Collaborative projects are group challenges that involve choosing tasks around a cross-curricular or single-subject theme and completing them by negotiation. The end product will be demonstrated to the whole class and celebrated as part of the assessment.

Working together, sharing views, skills and ideas, learning to benefit from diverse thinking and enjoying success as a team – to me, these are crucial experiences that prepare our children for the world of work and develop their emotional intelligence.

Assessment for such projects can be subject- or skills-based, depending on the learning outcomes that have been set and monitored by both teachers and pupils (some examples follow). The philosophical question

15 See B. Tuckman, Developmental Sequence in Small Groups, *Psychological Bulletin* 63(6) (1965): 384-399.

encourages reflection and metacognitive thinking as well as higher order thinking skills. The outcomes should be presented by the group and, as far as is possible, quality control should be given to the team.

An element of competition can be added by allocating points for different tasks. The Water Rocket project on pages 86–87 is an example of this. More examples can be found at: www.jackiebeere.com.

KNOWLEDGE ORGANISERS

These are useful because they summarise all the learning for a topic on one page.¹⁶ They can be used for mini-testing and sent home so parents can see what the learning intent is. They can be reproduced by the pupil as a mind map in their own words for deepening the understanding. Examples can be downloaded from many sources.

For a cross-curricular open-ended approach to independent learning, see the ideas in the following table for projects that add creativity, independent thinking and authentic outcomes to engage pupils.

¹⁶ For a discussion and examples, see J. Kirby, Knowledge Organisers, *Pragmatic Reform* [blog] (28 March 2015). Available at: <https://pragmaticreform.wordpress.com/2015/03/28/knowledge-organisers/>.

Stimulus – involves pupil choice	PLTs focus	Philosophical question	Knowledge input	Subject links	Authentic outcome
A COMPANY Children discuss what company to form then plan their own mini enterprise/ company as a group	Enterprise skills Creative thinking Independent enquiry Effective participation	Is profit always the most important aim for a business?	Prior knowledge of any businesses Profit and loss Marketing Local products	Maths Science Literacy Oracy Art	Present your business plan to local entrepreneurs Extension Make and sell products
A TEXT (e.g. <i>Macbeth</i>)	Self-management Reflective learning Teamworking	Is ambition always a good thing?	Shakespeare's life and times Scottish history Witches and superstition	English History Geography Oracy Personal development Drama Art	A performance of part of the play to school, parents and local actors

Stimulus – involves pupil choice	PLTs focus	Philosophical question	Knowledge input	Subject links	Authentic outcome
A COUNTRY Children choose a country to study and eventually create their own	Teamworking Independent enquiry Creative thinking	What makes people feel that they belong to a country?	The physical and human geography of Britain Overview of the globe	Geography Science Sociology	Create your own country and sell it as a tourist destination at an open day
A PROBLEM Solve an important problem (e.g. global warming, traffic jams, animal extinction, overpopulation)	Creative thinking Reflective learning Independent enquiry	How do human beings solve problems?	Model a problem-solving strategy for a specific issue within: a) the school b) the local area	Geography Science Maths	Film a documentary about your problem to screen to invited relevant local dignitaries

WHAT ABOUT DIRECT INSTRUCTION?

How well does the teacher being the 'sage on the stage' work for learning?

Siegfried Engelmann studied how to improve progress for children from disadvantaged communities and his conclusion was clear.¹⁷ Direct instruction delivers the best results. Many elements of this teaching technique are familiar and fit well with techniques that we have already discussed. Here is an outline structure of the method:

- The opening of the lesson is intended to engage pupils' attention and activate prior knowledge.
- The teacher models the concept at hand as pupils listen and observe.
- The teacher asks questions to keep pupils engaged, monitors responses, and provides praise for on-task behaviour.
- The teacher and pupils practise the concept together. The teacher signals the pupils to answer questions in unison as they review the concept.
- The teacher calls on individual pupils to ensure that they are following the lesson and have learned the concept.
- Pupils independently complete an activity which reinforces the concept learned.
- The teacher uses a tool such as a checklist or a rubric to collect data during the lesson.

17 S. Engelmann, *War Against the Schools' Academic Child Abuse* (Portland, OR: Halcyon House, 1992).

- After completing the lesson and looking at the collected data, the teacher decides whether or not the lesson needs to be taught again.

When teachers are given prescriptive direct instruction scripts to deliver to targeted small groups of pupils of similar ability, this method has been shown by Engelmann to be highly effective, particularly for learners who struggle. I've seen teachers who have used a similar method achieve excellent results. However, this prescriptive style may not suit all teachers and, in my opinion, does not offer opportunities for independent thinking and creativity. This method gives quality control but limits the freedom to do it our own way, follow pupils' interests and give them more ownership of the learning experience. However, if it works for your particular learners then consider direct instruction an important method to deliver content – it can be less demanding than planning more interactive lessons.

DIRECT INSTRUCTION FOR THE 21ST-CENTURY TEACHER?

What if you and members of your department planned together, as recommended by Dominic Salles?¹⁸ Think of the time you could save if you agreed the assessment criteria and put the learning journey into one document with all the videos, PowerPoints and other resources needed. Then you all deliver from this document using similar methods, because it tells you what to teach, when and how – with homework and assessment built in. You all benefit from each other's perspective and individual skills. This could be a time- and labour-saving solution, but could feel prescriptive if it was the only game in town.

18 D. Salles, *The Slightly Awesome Teacher: Edu-Research Meets Common Sense* (Woodbridge: John Catt Educational, 2016).

For me, variety is the spice of life, so there will be lessons like this and others in which the pupils play a more powerful role in the learning process. In my experience, pupils may often like a predictable teacher-led lesson in which they can play a more passive role and be entertained. However, giving them more responsibility and ownership could nurture more creativity and independence – qualities that our employers are demanding. 21st-century teaching needs to do so much more than get children to remember stuff and pass exams on a hot day in July. In the UK system, a third of our children are destined to fail that test.¹⁹

Ask any 20-something what the most useful aspect of their schooling was in terms of preparing them for the world of work ... I don't think they'll mention exams. I loved exams and I was good at them, but I know they didn't reflect my intelligence or potential. My teachers were much better at judging that.

What was the most useful thing you learned at school besides literacy and numeracy? How have you used that in work and life?

19 See W. Jones, A Third of Kids Are Written Off as Failures. It Doesn't Have to Be This Way, *National Numeracy* [blog] (14 March 2017). Available at: <https://www.nationalnumeracy.org.uk/blog/third-kids-are-written-failures-it-doesnt-have-be-way>.

STEP 6: DISH UP THE DIRT – OFTEN

DIRT = dedicated improvement and reflection time

Making time to reflect on how well your class have learned, check understanding and really respond to feedback should be a crucial part of any school day.

As mentioned previously, learning is a journey. You can remind pupils of this by frequently asking them to check their learning processes and progress. This will impact on their personal development as learners too. Ask: 'What have you learned?', 'How have you learned it?' and 'How far have you travelled towards the learning outcome?' There should be regular checkpoints in the lesson that become part of the assessment *as* learning process (more on which in Chapter 5). A mini quiz, marked by a peer, can be a useful review activity here. Ask targeted coaching questions to check learning then give some specific feedback to individuals to act on as part of your daily routine. When pupils study written feedback and actually *do* something in response, this is metacognition in action.

Marking is often the bane of our lives – something that needs to be done as part of the whole-school assessment policy. But it is valuable in that it shows the teacher's awareness of how different groups of pupils have performed and what their next steps should be. It will also give you vital information about the effectiveness of your teaching. Then again, make marking as easy for yourself as you can. Having a list of class targets that you can refer to (such as, 'Vary the beginning of your sentences' or 'Label

your diagrams') is useful. Training the pupils in peer assessment and giving individuals helpful oral advice can cut down on the piles of books to mark. Mini written or spoken quizzes to review learning also allow you to cut down on marking but remain informed about their progress. One formal assessment session every few weeks and a general monitoring brief should tell you who is and who isn't making progress.

Pay attention to the most and least able, pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), girls, boys, pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds, disadvantaged children, looked-after children, etc. You need to know who these pupils are and how they are progressing. They need to know too!

When judging a school, school leaders have to evaluate the accuracy and impact of assessment by seeing if:

- Teachers use assessment for establishing pupils' starting points so that pupils achieve their potential by the end of a year or key stage.
- Assessment draws on a range of evidence of what pupils know, understand and can do across the curriculum.
- Teachers make consistent judgements about pupils' progress and attainment – for example, within a subject, across a year group and between year groups.

Make a habit of scrolling through your class books to see if your pupils have responded to your feedback by addressing your constructive criticism. If the comment 'label your diagrams' is made, it must be addressed by a pupil's response. One child called DIRT 'fix it time' in a class I observed. Reflecting on what can be improved and then actually doing it is a powerful learning experience that should take place every day.

With DIRT you can help ensure that you hit these descriptors of high-quality teaching, learning and assessment in which:

- Teachers check pupils' understanding systematically and effectively in lessons, offering effective support.
- Teachers provide pupils with incisive feedback – in line with the school's assessment policy – about what pupils can do to improve their knowledge, understanding and skills.
- The pupils use this feedback effectively.
- Pupils are eager to know how to improve their learning. They capitalise on opportunities to use feedback, written or oral, to improve.

Your feedback must help your learners build resilience so that they can deal effectively with constructive criticism and remain confident. DIRT sessions inoculate your learners against the fragile ego that can result from fake praise. They need to know exactly what they have done right and how to improve.

Resilience is a crucial habit to develop in our classrooms. Your DIRT session must remind learners who say 'I can't do this' that the sentence ends in 'yet'.²⁰

REVIEWING, REFLECTING AND REDRAFTING

This is the quality control moment when pupils work on their own or together to improve their work. When pupils know what the success criteria are, they are better able to

20 C. Dweck, The Power of Yet [video], *TEDxNorrköping* (12 September 2014).

Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J-swZaKN2lc>.

gauge their progress. But they need to focus on the quality of the work produced too. A checklist that relates to success criteria is helpful here. You could enable pupils to begin to self- or peer-assess the work they produce to encourage independence.

Working to redraft, redraft again, improve and amend against success criteria – and acting on constructive criticism – is a vital part of the learning journey. It also gives the pupils more control over – and responsibility for – the outcomes. Additionally, it prevents marking from being a mysterious process that only goes on in the teacher's head.

High-quality self-assessment and peer assessment gives learners the ability to discuss and develop their own progress. Ensure they have a copy of the success criteria so they can build accurate assessments. Train your pupils to be expert critics of each other's work by being 'kind, specific and helpful', as recommended by inspirational teacher Ron Berger.²¹ This is superb training in giving and receiving objective feedback, which is an attribute that remains a lifelong challenge for all of us.

²¹ Berger, *An Ethic of Excellence*, p. 93.

STEP 7: REMEMBER THE FINAL PLENARY/REVIEW

THE MOMENT OF TRUTH: HOW FAR DID WE GET TOWARDS OUR OBJECTIVES?

At the end of the lesson a memorable plenary will sum up the learning outcomes and reinforce the learning. If all pupils haven't made progress, don't be afraid to acknowledge it. Use this as feedback and decide what your next steps will be to ensure they have *all* learned what they need to.

Deep learning means reviewing and refreshing knowledge and applying it to new contexts. Test out their understanding by giving them problems to solve using what they have learned so far. For example, if you are teaching about how gases behave, get them to blow up a balloon at home and put it in the freezer – then, next lesson, explain why it shrinks.

Help pupils to develop a language that they can use to talk about their learning and the progress they have made – and, even more importantly, *how* they learned. Give them top tips on how to remember important information (see Chapter 7) whenever you are teaching them. Get your pupils to find ways to remember things that work especially well for them.

Useful plenary techniques include:

- Pupils delivering a timed one-minute pitch, recalling the key points of the lesson to their partner.

- Having a huge learning progress arrow on the wall. Pupils pin their names to it to show how far they have progressed towards the learning outcome. They need to explain exactly what they have learned to progress to this place.
- Using sticky notes to allow pupils to record three things they have learned – these can be placed on the door on the way out or shared in groups and ranked by importance.
- Using mini whiteboards and pens to write down and show key points from the lesson.
- Holding up fingers to indicate learning progress – 5 fingers means 'I really get it', 4 means 'I mostly get it', 3 means 'I get some of it' and so on.
- A pupil sitting in a hotseat and making three points in character as an expert. They hand on to another pupil who makes two points, then one.
- Pupils writing down the key learning points from the lesson on pieces of paper, which they then fold up and put in a bag or box. You, or they, open it up next lesson and share the comments.
- Summarising the key learning in a headline. It is useful to have some mocked-up newspapers with blank headlines to hand.
- Speed dating around the room sharing what you have learned with five different people in 30 seconds. Pupils form groups to discuss and agree on the most important summary points. Then choose one person from each group to share the summary in one minute.

Always finish on time so you don't miss out the final plenary, which will allow you to draw important conclusions

about the learning. It provides vital information for planning your next lesson.

KNOW YOUR IMPACT! THE FINAL PLENARY

Cut short other activities if necessary, but make sure you have this chance to assess the progress in learning because you need to know that pupils have made, and are able to demonstrate, it. This is a moment of metacognition too – what really worked for you this lesson? Where insufficient progress has been made, you need to be clear about what action you will take to address this next lesson. One of the most common criticisms of teachers made by inspectors is that they don't use assessment outcomes to inform future planning. These tips for the final plenary can help you avoid this:

LEAD LEARNER

Try briefing one of your pupils to be the lead learner, who provides a summary of 'what we have learned so far'. Check with the others to see if they have missed anything – get the rest of the class to add to their summary or fill in any gaps. (Also see the leadership roles in Appendix 1.)

TRAFFIC LIGHTS

Use a traffic light system – green for 'I got it', amber for 'nearly there' and red for 'confused'. If pupils have these cards on their desks, they can be used throughout the lesson to show how they are feeling. They then put the appropriate card in a box as they leave. This will give you an indication of how much you have to do to secure the learning next lesson.

ELEVATOR PITCH

You have one minute to sum up your learning in your own words to your partner. Imagine you get in a lift (or elevator to use this American expression) which takes one minute to reach the top floor, and you have to complete your speech before the doors open. It should take two minutes for pairs to deliver their pitches to each other. Use a bell to start and stop the lift! Then pick out one or two pupils to share theirs with the class.

MINI WHITEBOARDS

Mini whiteboards are still such a handy and popular way to check on everyone's learning. Give pupils a couple of quiz questions and get them to write down the answers and hold it up so you can see if they are getting it.

MIRROR MOMENTS

Plenaries can take place throughout the lesson. Take a moment for a mini plenary at any time in the session to gather evidence about progress and to discuss memory strategies. It's a time for pause and reflection – a mirror moment when you assess how the pupils, and you, are really doing. The message here is to take a moment for honest reflection so you know what to do next. These moments are an important part of an outstanding lesson.

PUT IT IN YOUR RUCKSACK

Occasionally, you could recap the learning by asking the pupils what they would put in their learning rucksack, treasure chest or first-aid box. Get them to write down two or three learning points which they found useful to put away for safekeeping and help them in their future learning journey. If they have any 'learning treasure' – for example, new skills which they can use again and again or

light-bulb learning moments – they would go into the treasure chest for future use. Encourage metacognition to reflect on what thinking habits and learning strategies really helped this lesson and put them in the treasure chest too. Also ask if they have anything which they might put in the first-aid box – any questions or problems that they need help solving. Some teachers actually have a rucksack, a treasure chest and a first-aid box on the front desk for pupils to put their notes into.

Finish the plenary by setting the scene for the next exciting learning experience that will build on the lesson. When they come in next time, put a picture of the rucksack up and ask them to fill it with items from last lesson.

Our learners spend much of their time learning effectively at home – setting up their mobile phones, using social media and playing computer games. Make sure you link learning at school to learning at home – and cash in on their expertise!

HOMework

Setting exciting challenges to complete at home that relate to work in the classroom is an important part of planning your lesson. Flipped learning means you could ask pupils to learn important content for them to use the following day. It would be quite motivational if they had to learn about, say, Stone-Age man or a French village in order to create a documentary programme in a group the next day.

Homework or extended learning can also be related to their own community or their own interests. For example, one primary school recently completed a project on local heroes, and they were tasked to look at the history of the shoe-making business in their hometown. Another

example is learning the script of a Shakespeare play for a group performance the next day. If homework is set, it must be perceived as meaningful and useful for consolidating or applying learning. (See Appendix 3 for more ideas about how to get learners to stretch themselves at home.)

Please note: There is no expected prescriptive structure to a lesson, but you need to be clear about what you are teaching and how you will measure your impact.

Learn what works and teach with passion.

SUMMARY

Great teachers make sure ...	Their pupils more often:	Their pupils' work shows that:	Their classroom has:
<p>Told what to do.</p> <p>Left not knowing an answer.</p> <p>Set objectives they don't understand or care about.</p> <p>Having to wait for feedback.</p> <p>Passive or coasting.</p> <p>Formally assessed by an adult, scheme or authority.</p>	<p>Help decide what to aim for and how to go about it.</p> <p>Are shown exemplars and models of best work.</p> <p>Are engaged with the objectives and set their own success criteria.</p> <p>Use the success criteria to reflect on and assess their work and progress.</p>	<p>Teacher feedback notes strengths and gives specific advice for improvement.</p> <p>The feedback is understood and acted on by the pupil.</p> <p>They are interactive with their work.</p> <p>There is improvement over time and progress can be seen.</p>	<p>Walls used for learning, with displays of key words and exemplars.</p> <p>Some interactive displays, such as a suggestions wall with ideas for future lessons.</p> <p>Quality work displayed, accurate in terms of spelling and presentation.</p>

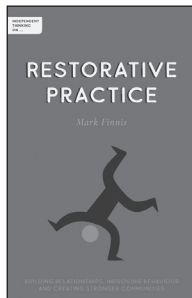
<p>Assessed at the end of their work when it is too late to improve it.</p> <p>Left little or no time to respond to feedback.</p> <p>Given levels or grades as a record of their progress and achievement.</p> <p>Peer-assessed inaccurately.</p> <p>Finding it hard to remember what they have been taught.</p>	<p>Use success criteria to sum up what they have learned and to seek feedback.</p> <p>Know how to improve learning and memory.</p> <p>Have more feedback during their work than at the end, and do something about it.</p> <p>Have time to reflect and act on the feedback given.</p> <p>Know that critical feedback will help them improve.</p> <p>Have support that helps them develop their own strategies and thinking skills.</p>	<p>Any targets are understood.</p> <p>Care is taken with presentation.</p> <p>Tasks are completed accurately.</p> <p>There is evidence of correction and practice.</p> <p>They have learned how to use knowledge in different contexts.</p>	<p>Displays which promote the good habits of great learners, such as resilience, empathy, using feedback, risk-taking, listening, collaborating and teamwork.</p> <p>Displays that encourage reflection on success criteria and the learning journey.</p> <p>A wall used once a term to collect feedback from pupils, such as a Keep, Change, Grow display.</p>
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Great teachers make sure ...			
Their pupils are less often:	Their pupils more often:	Their pupils' work shows that:	Their classroom has:
	<p>Make connections to previous learning.</p> <p>Are developing a growth mindset and the habits of great learners.</p> <p>Peer- and self-assess accurately and habitually.</p> <p>Are very ambitious and aspirational in their learning.</p>		

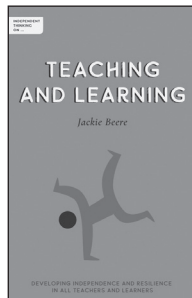
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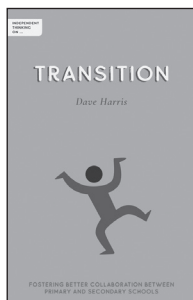
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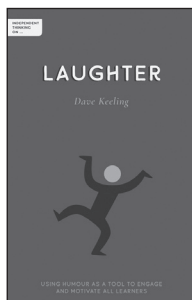
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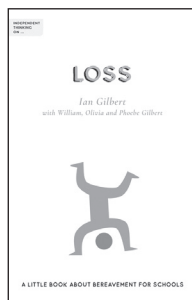
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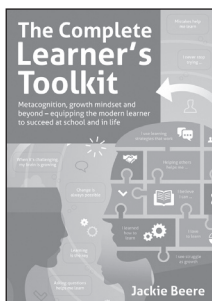


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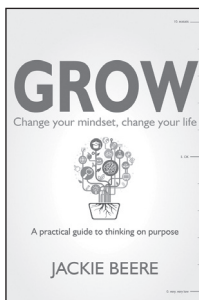


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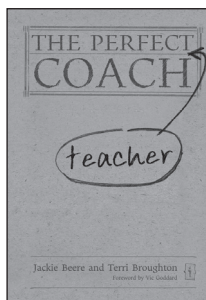
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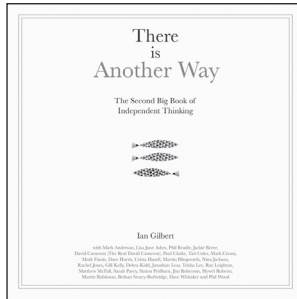


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