

Rugby Free Secondary School

Teaching and Learning Policy 2026.27

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**Triumph
Learning Trust**

Aspiration · Collaboration · Innovation

Vision

We intend to provide a broad, inclusive and ambitious curriculum that empowers our students to make both academic and personal progress. As a school with a diverse demographic, our aim is to ensure that all students achieve an excellent standard of education that not only prepares them for GCSE and A-Level examinations, but also ensures they are 'set for life' beyond the gates of Rugby Free Secondary School. As a consequence, all of our work is underpinned by our core values of Kindness, Respect, Curiosity, Resilience, Collaboration and Endeavour.

Rationale

This policy is a statement of the aims, principles and strategies for Teaching and Learning within Rugby Free Secondary School. It outlines how T&L supports the broad and balanced curriculum, through both intent and implementation, that we offer to enable students to know more, remember more and do more.

We believe that the curriculum and its implementation are the responsibility of all members of the school community. The aim of this document is to support teachers in becoming the most effective pedagogical practitioners they can be.

Our approach is informed by principles established through research, cognitive science and professional experience. The direct impact of high-quality Teaching and Learning is the progress students make and the outcomes they achieve from their relative starting points.

Overview of Curriculum Aims

- **Fully support** our students to be happy, healthy and safe in the modern world.
- **Empower** our students to know more, remember more and do more.
- **Inspire** our students to strive for excellence throughout their lives.
- **Promote inclusion** for all students, regardless of their background, prior attainment or barriers to learning, ensuring access to the same ambitious curriculum content.
- **Provide** the widest possible range of options at GCSE and A-Level to meet the needs of our students and local and national requirements.
- **Ensure** consistent planning and logical sequencing of content that leads to long-term knowledge retention and learning.
- **Deliver** a quality-first-wave approach to Teaching and Learning that promotes high expectations and inclusive classroom practice.
- **Support** the personal and character development of our students, enabling them to be 'set for life' and have a positive impact on the community and the world around them.
- **Enable** opportunities for students to develop socially and creatively.
- **Ensure** that all students are numerate and literate, while developing confidence and competence in reading.
- **Develop** students' deep understanding by helping them connect new knowledge with existing knowledge, so that they become fluent and competent in applying what they know.
- **Ensure** that students embed learning into long-term memory.
- **Equip** students with the cultural capital they require to become global citizens.
- **Enable** students to confidently articulate what they have learned, ask questions and respond to the ideas of others.
- **Enable** our students to become confident and interested learners who are actively engaged in their own learning and in the learning of others.
- **Develop** the core values of our students.

Teaching and Learning Detail

- All lessons at RFSS begin with a review of previous work: the SET (Silence Equipment Task) for learning. This “SET” recall task draws on research from Ebbinghaus’s Forgetting Curve and Sweller’s Cognitive Load Theory. The process of teaching new material follows the guidance of Rosenshine’s *Principles of Instruction*, the *Great Teacher Toolkit* and Lemov’s *Teach Like a Champion*.
 - New material is taught in small steps** using clear models and examples (“I do”).
 - Guided practise occurs** (“We do”).
 - Time is allowed for meaningful, scaffolded independent practise** (“You do”).
- Albert Bandura’s Social Cognitive Learning Theory and the EEF’s *Metacognition and Self-Regulated Learning* guide provide a research foundation for RFSS’s belief that lessons should nurture relationships for learning, create supportive learning environments, develop self-regulating learners, develop literacy, achieve a high success rate, pause lessons where appropriate to re-teach, use AfL to check for understanding, and provide appropriate feedback.

Planning

- The “**Before the Lesson... Plan**” framework provides a clear and practical structure for teachers to consider the key components of effective lesson planning. It prompts teachers to establish a clear link to prior learning, consider the purpose and context of the lesson, identify precise learning objectives and success criteria, and plan the teaching approach around the needs of the students. Importantly, it brings together curriculum content, anticipated misconceptions, questioning, scaffolding, assessment and behaviour for learning within a single planning framework.
- The framework also encourages teachers to think beyond simply “**what will I teach?**” by explicitly considering **why** the learning matters, **how** it will be taught and **who** the learners are. This supports consistent, purposeful planning while allowing teachers to adapt lessons to the specific needs of different classes and individuals.

The Starts of Lessons

- Beginning lessons with a short review of previous learning (the SET task) provides an opportunity for retrieval and recall activities based on previous learning. Effective teaching recalls knowledge from previous lessons to establish a baseline starting point. SET tasks are bespoke and relevant to a particular class at a particular point in their learning. The 8 things that must happen during the first 10 minutes of a lesson are:
 - Greet students positively at the door. Check uniform, equipment and support readiness to learn.**
 - Close the door after 4 minutes and record any students who arrive after this time (‘4 and door’)**
 - Display the SET task before students enter so they can begin working silently (include a SPAG task)**
 - Take the register and check equipment during the first few minutes of the SET**
 - Actively circulate during the remainder of the SET and observe proactively (hunt, not fish) for misconceptions, strengths, and students who may need support**
 - Check in with learners that have missed previous lessons**
 - Check for Understanding of the SET material before moving on**
 - Share learning objectives, success criteria, and how this lesson fits into the wider curriculum**



Teach New Material in Small Steps & Provide Models and Examples (“I do”)

- Providing students with models and worked examples helps them learn to solve problems more effectively. To ensure that students understand what success looks like, teachers provide worked examples and ensure that students understand *why* the example is effective.
- Teachers then use a range of modelling and metacognitive strategies (such as narrating their thinking) to demonstrate the steps needed to achieve the intended learning. This may take the form of demonstrating how to solve a problem, construct a sentence or paragraph, or unpick key ideas from a text.
- Best practice involves teachers considering the following to chunk new information effectively:
 - 1) **Prepare explanations before the lesson.**
 - 2) **Consider using AI to help create or refine concise explanations.**
 - 3) **Explain the same concept differently to different classes.**
 - 4) **Never talk for more than 5 minutes before pausing to check where students are at.**
 - 5) **If pupils don’t understand my explanation, explain it again in a different way.**
 - 6) **Check that pupils have understood explanations before moving on.**
 - 7) **Use diagrams or visuals alongside explanations whenever possible (Dual Code).**
 - 8) **Don’t assume that, if pupils are listening quietly, the explanation is working.**
 - 9) **Explicitly tell pupils what they need to remember from my explanation.**
 - 10) **Don’t stop explaining simply because most pupils appear to understand.**



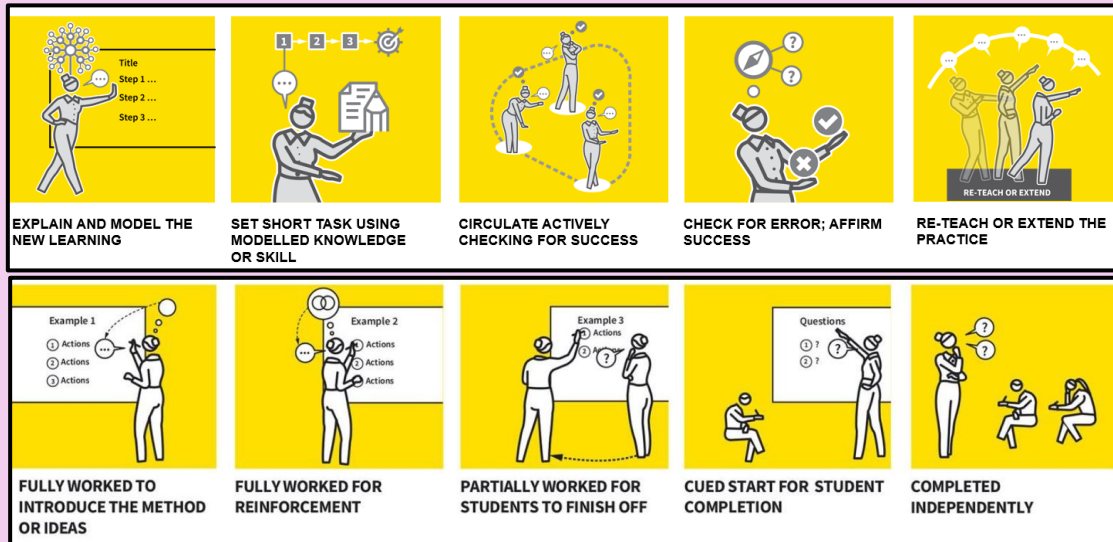
Guided Practise (“We do”)

- For students to build confidence with new learning, guidance and models provide clear steps towards success. Teachers support this process by verbally modelling their thinking, asking questions to clarify students’ thinking, and using opportunities that arise to address misconceptions.
- Guided practise can take the form of worked examples, partner work or additional teacher guidance, with the aim of preparing students for independent learning. Teachers’ assessment for learning determines whether students subsequently require additional scaffolding or further teacher support.



Independent Practise with Scaffolding (“You do”)

- Practise is needed in order to become fluent and automatic in the recall of knowledge and skills. Independent practise involves the same material as the guided practise, enabling students to secure and embed their learning.
- To ensure students are successful, teachers use a range of scaffolds to support individual learners and provide clear criteria for time and expectations. Regular practise helps to develop schemas in long-term memory. When knowledge within a particular topic is well connected, it becomes easier to learn new information, as prior knowledge is more readily available for use.



Checking for Understanding: The Principle

- The **Checking for Understanding** framework highlights that effective checking is essential to ensuring that learning is actually taking place, rather than simply assuming that it is. However, there is a risk of focusing on the **strategy rather than the spirit of checking for understanding**: teachers can become proficient at checking recall, retention or process without establishing whether students genuinely understand the underlying concept.
- True checking for understanding requires teachers to probe beyond the correct answer by asking **“why?”**, asking students to explain their thinking, predict outcomes, make connections and justify their responses. It also requires teachers to anticipate likely misconceptions and deliberately design questions or tasks that expose them. The purpose is not simply to **check whether students can give the right answer, but to understand how they are thinking and use that information to shape what happens next.**



❌ “Everyone okay?”

❌ “Does that make sense?”

❌ “Any questions?”

✅ “What is the first thing that happens?”

✅ “Why does X happen?”

✅ “Which of these would happen next?”

✅ “Turn to your partner and explain that in one sentence.”

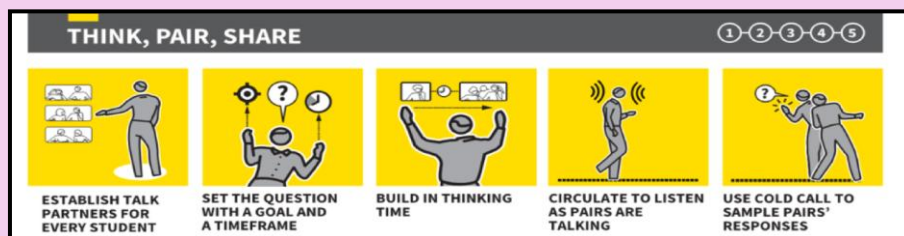
✅ “Show me which step we’ve just completed.”

Checking for Understanding Methods

- **Active Observation** involves teachers circulating around the classroom, looking at students as they work, rather than waiting by workstations or boards at the front of the classroom for long periods. Teachers may also adopt a **Pastore's Perch** position once students have started working on a task, i.e. a position from which all students are within their field of view.
- **Questioning** allows teachers to determine whether learning has been secured and whether students are ready to move on. Questions also uncover misconceptions, allowing teachers to re-teach material or provide further examples.
- **Cold Calling** helps address the two main purposes of questioning: making all students think and providing feedback to the teacher about how learning is progressing. Cold Calling allows teachers to choose who answers, keeping the whole class involved and giving teachers better information to inform their next steps.



- **Think-Pair-Share:** There are many times when it is beneficial for students to engage in a structured discussion. Pairs are a powerful way to involve all students in rehearsing and sharing ideas.



- **Mini-Whiteboards (Show Me Boards):** Sampling responses from a whole class using mini-whiteboards is powerful. Students write responses to questions on their boards and simultaneously show their responses. This gives teachers immediate feedback about the range of student responses. Mini-whiteboards also help students generate ideas or practise sentences and calculation methods.



- **Say It Again, Better** supports students in producing high-quality verbal responses. If teachers accept shallow responses without further development, students may come to see half-formed answers as the norm. With Say It Again, Better, teachers accept initial responses but develop and improve them each time.



Adaptive Teaching and Learning

- With everything we teach at RFSS, we aim to support our students in developing a deeper understanding of learning, helping them to move from novice to expert. However, in every class there will be students at different stages of their learning journey, with varying starting points, contextual knowledge, vocabulary and levels of expertise.
- Adaptive teaching supports and challenges all students to build expertise and become more proficient, particularly those students with Special Educational Needs (SEND). Adaptive teaching may involve:
 - a) **Temporary supports or scaffolds**, including word banks, writing frames, sentence stems, concrete or pictorial resources, checklists and worked examples.
 - b) **Additional modelling** of smaller steps.
 - c) **Additional adult support**.
 - d) **Pre-teaching** of vocabulary or methods.
 - e) **Smaller-group teaching**.
 - f) **Targeted support**.
 - g) **Targeted questioning**.
 - h) **Additional time**.
 - i) **Personalised feedback**.
- In addition to this, there are a number of SEND Teaching and Learning principles used in classrooms, such as dual coding, pastel-based backgrounds and overlays.
- To support learning further, Learning Support Assistants are informed of the specific needs of students so that they understand the role they are expected to carry out. They are given clear and explicit instructions regarding the concepts, facts and information being taught, as well as the intended learning outcomes. They adopt a '**Velcro**' or '**helicopter**' approach, where necessary.

Assessment

- Effective assessment and evaluation improve the quality of teaching and learning and, as such, are integral to the T&L process. In conjunction with this policy, staff should also refer to the **Feedback and Marking Policy** and the **Assessment Policy**.
- The school particularly values assessment as an ongoing process. Staff are encouraged to enable students to self-assess and peer-assess their work against the success criteria, particularly when completing home learning.

The Learning Environment

- In classrooms, the learning environment should be conducive to effective teaching and learning. Displays should reflect content that is currently being taught, with key vocabulary and school values clearly displayed.
- Teachers should use displays and resources to have a positive impact on learning through the consolidation and reinforcement of previous learning, as well as the introduction of new information and knowledge.
- Pupils should know how to access classroom resources easily to support their learning, where applicable. All displays should reflect the school's high expectations and ambition for all students.

Before the lesson...plan

The Link	* How the lesson builds on previous learning * A bespoke retrieval 'SET' for the lesson that interleaves material from the last Lesson, preceding topics, and earlier topics
The Why?	* The reason for and purpose of the lesson * A Hook * To share context and 'Why?'
The How and What?	* Learning Objectives and Success Criteria * Curriculum & subject content * Clear explanations of key concepts * Resources and worked examples * Anticipated misconceptions * Questions to promote thinking * Checking for Understanding (CfU) episodes * Scaffolds to support and challenge * What to do if pupils finish? * Assessment * Home-learning opportunities
The Who?	* How to embed rules and routines * Student groupings and seating arrangements * By reading SCPs and EHCPs * For sub-groups * Teaching approach * Individual behaviour for learning needs

Lesson start routine (SET and Checks)

- 1) Greet students positively at the door. Check uniform, equipment and support readiness to learn.
- 2) Close the door after 4 minutes and record any students who arrive after this time ('4 and door')
- 3) Display the SET task before students enter so they can begin working silently (include a SPAG task)
- 4) Take the register and check equipment during the first few minutes of the SET
- 5) Actively circulate during the remainder of the SET and observe proactively (hunt, not fish) for misconceptions, strengths, and students who may need support
- 6) Check in with learners that have missed previous lessons
- 7) Check for Understanding of the SET material before moving on
- 8) Share learning objectives, success criteria, and how this lesson fits into the wider curriculum

New material

What?	I Do: Teach/model new material through small manageable steps	We Do: Guided learning with scaffolded examples	You Do: Provide appropriate tasks for independent practise
How?	- Typically, 5-minute chunks followed by an AfL/CfU check - Avoid lengthy expositions (Be clear and concise) - Narrate thinking through metacognitive commentary - Dual-code information - Explicitly teach key vocabulary	- Worked examples that students can revisit - WAGOLLS / WADOLLS - Provide writing frames - Provide sentence starters - Re-visit vocabulary during guided practise - Hinge questions to probe	- Tasks connect to I Do & We Do - Use visible timers - Typically, 5 to 8-minute chunks followed by an AfL/CfU check - Use in-flight adaptations as needed to support and extend learning - Open/Closed Qs as appropriate
Why?	- Minimise Cognitive Load - Explaining key concepts and their associated vocabulary supports deeper learning	- Supportive guides promotes self-regulation - Revisable notes support long-term retention	- Independent practise consolidates learning - Desirable difficulty promotes long-term learning

Repeatedly: Check for Understanding // Student Talk // Feedback // Re-Teach

End of lesson routine

- 1) Complete final CfU or exit ticket before getting students to put books into boxes / bags
- 2) Ensure all paper is cleared from desks and all rubbish is picked up from floor and placed in a bin
- 3) Clear the teacher desk and remove unused handouts (if you are leaving the room)
- 4) Check that the HDMI cable is at the board, the visualiser is accessible, glues, MWBs, MWB pens are findable by next teacher (if you are leaving the room)
- 5) Ensure students stand quietly behind chairs, with chairs tucked neatly under straightened tables
- 6) Check shirts are tucked in, blazers on, coats are off, no inappropriate jewellery is being worn
- 7) Dismiss calming and with order

Throughout every lesson...

- Build relationships with a warm-strict approach
- Actively circulate, observe and listen to students
- Maintain high expectations for behaviour and learning
- Adapt teaching in response to pupils' needs (re-teach when necessary)
- Ensure every student participates (provide multiple means of participation)
- Give feedback that moves learning forward

Successful Behaviours for Learning

What	Teacher habits...	Student behaviours...
Be ready	• Prepare the learning environment and resources • Greet, check in, and set high expectations	• Arrive on time • Come equipped and ready to learn
Engage	• Have clear and purposeful routines • Gain attention by commentated countdowns • Explain concepts simply and narrate your thinking • Use Closed, Open, Hinge, Probing Questions	• Follow routines and expectations • Listen actively to explanations • Begin tasks promptly when asked
Aim high	• Set challenging goals that incorporate desirable difficulty • Encourage higher-order thinking', not 'more of the same' when students finish	• Strive to be the best you can be and take pride in your work • Act on feedback
Think and understand	• Ask high-quality questions • Check for Understanding regularly and adapt teaching accordingly	• Think hard and ask questions • Clarify when unsure (ask for help at the right time)
Take responsibility	• Facilitate independence and self-regulation • Support students to make choices • Ensure students understand consequences	• Stay on task and persevere (show resilience) • Ignore distractions
Collaborate	• Praise effort, progress and improvement • Build respectful relationships • Work collaboratively and talk with students	• Listen to others • Contribute respectfully • Support and encourage peers

Develop self-regulation and independence by helping students...

Plan	* Activate prior knowledge * Clarify success criteria * Choose an appropriate strategy * Set short-term goals that feed into longer-term aims * Remember books and equipment * Present written work neatly (make it a revision tool)
Monitor	* Monitor understanding * Identify and address barriers * Recognise productive struggle as positive * Know when to persist and when to seek support
Reflect	* Evaluate success * Learning from mistakes * Identify appropriate next steps * Talk to others about leaning

SET up the lesson

- Silence for a period, Equipment Checked, Task for retrieval provided
- Actively Circulate
- Time for Talk follows SET
- CFU after the SET
- SPAG task included

Adapting and Scaffolding

- Adapt the lesson based on checks for understanding
- Adapt the resources for key students
- Provide scaffolds (e.g., sentence starters) when required

Time for Talk & Literacy

- Plan structured talk opportunities (e.g. Think Pair Share) with A/B talk partners
- Check SPAG basics (e.g., capital letters and full stops)
- Follow the Reading strategy (e.g., we read to students)
- Explicitly pre-teach vocabulary and use vocab sheets regularly

Feedback

- Give verbal feedback linked to the task
- Give written feedback in books and folders that allows students to progress
- Use peer and self-assessment where appropriate
- Feed forward for progress

Live Modelling

- Be concise
- Narrate your thinking aloud to allow students to understand the 'how' and 'why' of the material
- Show 'What a Good/Doable One Looks Like'
- Dual-code information
- Link key vocabulary

Relationships & Praise

- Greet at the door
- Warm-Strict approach
- Clear routines
- Give specific task-focused praise
- Develop Self-Regulation

Check for Understanding

- Check for *Understanding*, not just recall / retention
- Check in with key students on the 'Bus Route' regularly
- Active Circulation of the classroom regularly (Hunting not Fishing)
- Use key strategies such as: Mini Whiteboards, Targeted Questioning, Show Me Fingers, Q-ing (Open, Closed, Probing, Hinge)

Independent Tasks

- Appropriately timed
- Desirable difficulties

Supporting Subgroups (SEND, Pupil Premium Students, Boys, HPAs)

- Know your students
- Have clear routines and norms
- Pastel backgrounds / Font size 20 and dual-code
- Clear Means of Participation
- Ensure LSAs are aware of what is being learned in the lesson
- Support challenge with Higher Order Thinking (HOTS) not More of the Same (MOTS)
- Use appropriate praise

Knowledge of Students and Barriers

- Read SCP / EHCP
- Ensure appropriate seating-plan is in place
- Annotate seating-plan for Sub-Groups (SEND, PP, EAL, CiC etc.)
- Create and use a 'Bus Route' of movement

Time

- Appropriate time for SET, I Do and You Do
- Use 'wait time' to allow students to formulate their thoughts before writing or responding
- Provide clear visual timings on tasks

Within the first five minutes, the following should be evident through books, student discussion or observation:

- Evidence of bespoke retrieval SET which can be revised from (written or from talking to students)
- Evidence of student Talk (witnessed or from talking to students)
- Checking for *Understanding* episodes occurring which check if students understand
- Adaptations and interventions occurring (e.g., Re-teach) based on Checking for Understanding
- Seating plan + Bus Route created and followed
- Students with recent absence have been supported so they can access the lesson
- Foundational knowledge embedded to support learning of new material
- Sequencing of lessons evident to be in line with curriculum (written or from talking to students)
- Progression for all supported by varying pitch (i.e., scaffold and stretch)
- Vulnerable & SEND students being helped appropriately

Know all your students :

Talk to students // Go to spotlight // Read EHCPs & SCPs // Look at books

General Classroom Strategies for Disadvantaged Students

All aware of **high expectations** of classwork and homework.
All students to be offered **differentiated** tasks wherever appropriate.
The books of **PP students to be marked first** (or early on) to ensure that good quality feedback is provided.
High expectations of homework for all students.
Phone calls to be made home for those students who fail to complete work to the required standard (PP students first).
Praise used as often as possible to encourage these students to actively participate in lessons.
Small group allows lots of individual support opportunities for all students.
Ensure **explanations are clear** and precise for all.
Targeted questioning.
Grouped with non-PP students.
Positive phone calls home.

Classroom Strategies for SEND Students

PowerPoints should have a **pastel-coloured** background.
Minimum font size of 20 on PowerPoint slides.
Dual-coding employed where possible / appropriate.
Ensure there is clear and obvious **challenge and support**.
Allow students to submit work in a variety of formats where appropriate.
Every **classroom has a set of overlays**, fidget toys and a set of differentiation mats.
Use 'First, Next, Then' to support memory and build independence.
Model what a good response looks like.
Use **whiteboards** so that students can share ideas.
Chunk the task into smaller parts.
Provide **scaffolding** such as writing frames.

Classroom Strategies for HPA Students

Give a **choice of work** from differentiated tasks.
Push **problem solving** activities where students apply knowledge from a range of topics, challenging their thinking.
Offer depth tasks.
Challenge with questions.
Use **peer leaders** to give explanations to other students.
Share Grade 7, 8 and 9 responses and ask students to compare these against criteria.
Give students the opportunity to 'teach' a section of the lesson or to verbalise their ideas.
Provide **regular targeted questions to HPA** students. This may be in front of the rest of the class or when you are circulating while the rest of the class is working.
Use **"Springboard" questions around the room**. Start with less able students and allow more able students to add to, amend or make further connections to the initial responses.

To consider before the lesson **Proactive adaptation**

What do I know about the needs of learners?
What 'quality evidence' do I have based on prior learning?
Am I confident that my judgements are based on sound evidence, rather than assumptions, stereotypes or generalisations?
Are there any predictable difficulties (challenging concepts, misunderstandings, misconceptions)?
How will I plan and sequence learning to account for predictable difficulties?
Where in the lesson might there be opportunities to reteach aspects of learning from previous lessons?
What learning and content do I consider essential or desirable? Why?

To consider during the lesson **Interactive adaptation**

How will I elicit 'quality evidence' to inform teaching, and limit the risk of assuming that pupils know something when they don't?
How will I make better decisions based on the evidence collected?
Have all learners understood the essential learning? Who has/has not?
Where in the lesson might there be opportunities to reteach aspects of learning from the lesson, should this be necessary?
What 'in flight' actions and adaptations might be needed as new, or better, evidence of learning emerges?
How can I make the most of learning resources available (adults, learners, peers)?

To consider after the lesson **Retroactive adaptation**

What new evidence have I gathered to better inform my understanding of learner needs?
What assumptions have been challenged?
Do any pupils have gaps in essential learning? How can I address that?
How will I ensure that learning is consolidated and retrieval is possible?
Can learning be applied successfully and transferred to new contexts?
What adaptations might be necessary to future planned activities?



Appendix of Infographics



PLANNING

Careful planning ensures lessons build on prior learning, are purposeful, inclusive and lead to strong outcomes for all students.



THE LINK

- How the lesson builds on previous learning
- A bespoke retrieval 'SET' for the lesson that interleaves material from the last lesson, preceding topics, and earlier topics



THE WHY?

- The reason for and purpose of the lesson
- A Hook to engage students and share context
- To share context and 'Why?'



THE HOW AND WHAT?

- Learning Objectives and Success Criteria
- Curriculum & subject content
- Clear explanations of key concepts
- Resources and worked examples
- Anticipated misconceptions
- Questions to promote thinking
- Checking for Understanding (CfU) episodes
- Scaffolds to support and challenge
- What to do if pupils finish?
- Assessment
- Home-learning opportunities



THE WHO?

- How to embed rules and routines
- Student groupings and seating arrangements
- By reading SCPs and EHCPs
- For sub-groups
- Teaching approach
- Individual behaviour for learning needs



REMEMBER:

Great lessons are intentional, coherent and planned with the learner in mind.

Plan with purpose.
Teach for impact.



Kindness



Collaboration



Curiosity

Our Values



Respect



Resilience



Endeavour



SET (Silence, Equipment, Task)

1



Greet students at the door.

Politely check shirts, blazers, coats, footwear, earphones.

2



Close the door after 4 minutes

and record any students who arrive after this time ('4 and door')

3



Display the SET task before students enter

so they can begin working silently (include a SPAG task)

4



Take the register and check equipment

during the first few minutes of the SET

Checks

5



Actively circulate during the remainder of the SET

and observe proactively (hunt, not fish) for misconceptions, strengths, and students who may need support

6



Check in with learners

that have missed previous lessons

7



Check for understanding

of the SET material before moving on

8



Share learning objectives, success criteria, and how this lesson fits into the wider curriculum

Our Values



Kindness



Collaboration



Curiosity



Respect



Resilience



Endeavour



**Rugby Free
Secondary School**



**Triumph
Learning Trust**

Aspiration • Collaboration • Innovation

BEHAVIOURS FOR LEARNING

OUR EXPECTATIONS IN EVERY LESSON

READY



We are ready

We arrive on time, prepared with the correct equipment and a positive attitude to learn.

SET



We are SET

We have a period of silence to start lesson, use our equipment, and complete the SET task.

GO



We are engaged

We focus on the learning, ask questions, and contribute positively to lessons.



We collaborate

We are kind, we treat others how we want to be treated and support a positive learning environment.



We are ambitious

We challenge ourselves, embrace mistakes as part of learning, and always aim to improve.

Our Values



Kindness



Collaboration



Curiosity



Respect



Resilience



Endeavour



Rugby Free
Secondary School



Triumph
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Aspiration • Collaboration • Innovation

— EXPLANATIONS USING — SMALL MANAGEABLE STEPS

Help pupils learn more by doing less, better.



COGNITIVE LOAD

Our working memory is limited. When we give pupils too much information at once, it overloads their thinking and makes learning harder. Giving information in small, meaningful steps reduces cognitive load, helping pupils process information, build understanding and remember more over time.
Don't confuse teacher talking time with learning time.



HOW TO CHUNK EXPLANATIONS EFFECTIVELY

- 1 Prepare explanations before the lesson.
- 2 Use AI to help me create or refine concise explanations.
- 3 Explain the same concept differently to different classes.
- 4 Never talk for more than 5 mins before pausing to check where students are at.
- 5 If pupils don't understand my explanation, explain it again in a different way.
- 6 Check that pupils have understood my explanation before moving on.
- 7 Use diagrams or visuals alongside explanations whenever possible.
- 8 Don't assume that if pupils are listening quietly the explanation is working.
- 9 Explicitly tell pupils what they need to remember from my explanation.
- 10 Don't stop explaining as soon as most pupils appear to understand.

WHY IT MATTERS



**REDUCES
COGNITIVE LOAD**
so working memory
isn't overloaded.



**IMPROVES
UNDERSTANDING**
by building learning
step by step.



**BOOSTS
RETENTION**
by helping knowledge
move into long-term
memory.

DUAL CODING



Use words and
visuals together
to strengthen
understanding
and recall.
(See separate
poster for more.)

THINGS THAT CAN HELP CONCISE EXPLANATIONS



Prepare your
explanations
beforehand
(from your own
past-experience
or using AI to help
clarify your thoughts).



Use Dual Coding
(words and visuals).



Slow down your
speech and build in
pauses for students
to digest.



Limit any explanation
phase to 5 minutes
before you check for
understanding.



TO TAKE AWAY:

Rather than think...
"How can I give better
explanations?"



Think...
"How much can I reasonably
expect my pupils to process
at once?"



Kindness



Collaboration



Curiosity

Our Values



Respect



Resilience



Endeavour



DUAL CODING

Making thinking visible

Dual coding combines carefully chosen words with carefully chosen visuals to improve understanding and memory.

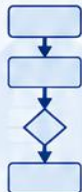


DUAL CODING IS...

Labelled
diagrams



Flow charts &
processes



Timelines &
sequences



Graphic
organisers &
annotated
images



DUAL CODING IS NOT...

- Decorative clipart
- Random pictures
- Busy, overloaded slides
- Colour without purpose

WHY IT WORKS



Reduces
cognitive load



Makes thinking
visible



Supports
long-term memory

STUDENTS LEARN MORE WHEN THEY...



Complete
partially
finished
diagrams



Annotate
diagrams



Redraw
diagrams
from memory



Explain
diagrams
aloud



Turn text
into visuals



Turn visuals
back into
words

ASK YOURSELF...



Can I draw this?

If yes...



Should students
see the drawing...



...or create it
themselves?



REMEMBER...

Dual coding is not about
making prettier resources.

It is about
making thinking visible.



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Doug Lemov Technique 27: Change The Pace

Direct Instruction/Knowledge Assimilation

When students are presented with new information while they listen, read, or take notes, they are engaged in **Direct Instruction/Knowledge Assimilation (KA)**. This could involve a class reading a text (silently or aloud, by teacher or students) or a teacher lecturing, modelling a problem, or sharing a presentation (with or without occasional questioning of students).

The idea of Direct Instruction might at first feel antithetical to pacing, but that is only if you imagine it in caricature—like the teacher in *Ferris Bueller's Day Off* droning on to a room of half-asleep students. When Direct Instruction is implemented well, it not only has important effects on student understanding, but can be energetic and contribute positively to pacing. And the key to implementing it well? As Barak Rosenshine points out, Direct Instruction, like all methods, must respond to the limitations on working memory. “Presenting too much material at once may confuse students because their working memory may be unable to process it. . . . More effective teachers do not overwhelm their students by presenting too much material at once. Rather these teachers present only small amounts of new material at any time, and then assist the students as they practise this material.”⁷⁶ This may sound at first like it contradicts Rosenshine's observation about the importance of investing heavily in background knowledge first, before engaging students in more interactive forms of processing, but that's not the case. You could imagine how Sadie McCleary might accomplish both. She might spend a few minutes explaining a new concept with students taking notes. Then they might pause: “Discuss how this might apply to X with your partner. Go.” Then perhaps a bit of *Cold Call* to make sure students understood. Then she might spend a few minutes explaining a bit more about the concept. Then a different activity to engage and give working memory time to process. “Take a minute to summarize what we've done so far in writing. Go.” Then she might ask a few students who've written insightful things to share. They might then discuss briefly. Then to the board again. Slides on. Taking notes as she explains a bit more about the concept. Switching from explicit teaching or other forms of knowledge assimilation to short reflective activities and back is the key to both engaging the strengths of working memory and overcoming its limitations. Doing that requires strong pacing skills in terms of activity design and in terms of your ability to make shifts efficient and energizing and your instructional choices strike the balance between novelty and focus.

The first portion of Christine Torres's lesson where she is introducing new vocabulary words is a perfect example of this, especially because teaching new vocabulary words is, for many teachers, such a notoriously low-energy activity: “Here are our new words, please copy down the definitions.” Many teachers respond to this challenge by making the activity independent: “Go look up these words.” This can result in poorer understanding of the words and can take more time. But look at Christine's approach (you can watch this segment of her lesson a little over two minutes into the video in *Christine Torres: Keystone*). Her steps are:

- Identify the word and ask students to repeat it.
- Provide a definition.
- Ask students to read a situation involving the word (in this case “caustic.” “What might a judge in *American Idol* have said if they made a caustic remark?”)
- Ask students to **Turn and Talk** about the example.
- Briefly **Cold Call** to hear a few answers.
- Show a picture: “How does this image demonstrate the word ‘caustic’?” **Turn and Talk** again.
- **Cold Call** to hear answers.

The knowledge is disseminated via Direct Instruction and is followed by a different activity type (usually discussion in pairs) but the cycles are very short so the energy is impressively high and Christine's students learn new knowledge in a joyful flow-like setting.

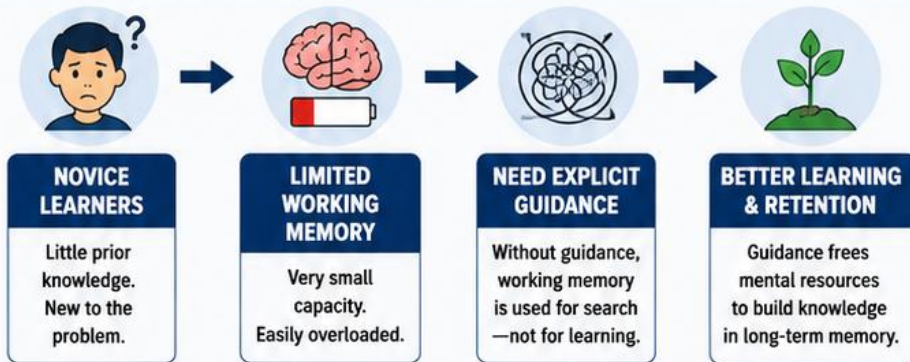
WHY MINIMALLY GUIDED INSTRUCTION DOESN'T WORK

A summary of Kirschner, Sweller & Clark (2006)

THE CORE ARGUMENT

Kirschner, Sweller and Clark argue that novice learners learn more effectively through explicit, well-structured instruction than through discovery, inquiry or minimally guided approaches.

Asking beginners to "figure it out" places too much demand on working memory, leaving fewer mental resources available for actually learning new knowledge.



1 THE SCIENCE: COGNITIVE LOAD THEORY

Learning happens by building knowledge in long-term memory, not by overloading working memory.

WORKING MEMORY (VERY LIMITED)



- ✗ Too much search
- ✗ Too many choices
- ✗ Little guidance
- ✗ Little space left for learning



LONG-TERM MEMORY (VERY LARGE)



- Stores knowledge
- Schemas
- Automatic skills



When novices are left to discover solutions themselves, much of their mental effort is spent searching rather than learning.

2 WHAT EFFECTIVE TEACHING LOOKS LIKE

INSTEAD OF...



"Explore this problem and see what you discover."



USE...



Explain → Model → Check → Practise → Apply



GRADUAL RELEASE OF RESPONSIBILITY



Guidance should be **HIGHEST** when learners know the **LEAST**, then gradually reduced as expertise develops.

3 PRACTICAL CLASSROOM IMPLICATIONS

A CLEAR, CONCISE INSTRUCTION MATTERS

- ✓ Small chunks of information
- ✓ Clear explanations
- ✓ Carefully chosen examples
- ✓ Frequent opportunities to think
- ✓ Immediate feedback



B CHECKING FOR UNDERSTANDING IS ESSENTIAL

Learning isn't complete because something has been explained.

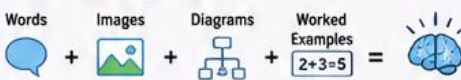


Ways to check:

- Cold Call
- Mini whiteboards
- Retrieval questions
- Turn and Talk
- Hinge questions
- Exit tickets

C DUAL CODING STRENGTHENS LEARNING

Combine words with visuals to improve understanding and memory.



Use visuals that support learning—not just decorate slides.

- ✓ Labelled diagrams
- ✓ Process maps
- ✓ Worked examples
- ✓ Graphic organisers

Better Memory



KEY TAKEAWAY

Novices learn best when teachers reduce unnecessary cognitive load through explicit instruction, modelling, carefully sequenced practice, regular checking for understanding, and purposeful use of visuals.



Good teaching is not less active because it is teacher-led—it is highly interactive, with students constantly thinking, responding, practising and receiving feedback.



REFERENCE:

Kirschner, P. A., Sweller, J., & Clark, R. E. (2006). Why Minimal Guidance During Instruction Does Not Work: An Analysis of the Failure of Constructivist, Discovery, Problem-Based, Experiential, and Inquiry-Based Teaching. *Educational Psychologist*, 41(2), 75–86.



CHECKING FOR UNDERSTANDING

Checking
for



Recall / Retrieval

Retention

Process / Skill Repetition

Understanding

What does this mean?
What will you do now you have this information?

WHY IT MATTERS



- Ensures learning is happening, not just taking place.
- Helps identify and address misconceptions early.
- Informs your next steps and adapts teaching.

GOOD CFU IS...



- Planned and purposeful
- Frequent, not one-off
- Varied in method
- Acted upon
- Accessible to all students

KEY STRATEGIES



Key Strategy 1: Circulating and Active Observation

Move around the room, scan, and listen to check understanding.



Key Strategy 2: Targeted Questioning / Cold Calling

Ask specific questions to individuals or groups to probe understanding.



Key Strategies 3: Whole Class Snapshot

- ☐ Hands up; Five fingers; ABCD cards; How many correct out of how many attempted; Stand-up/ Sit-down



Key Strategies 4: Deeper Understanding

- ☐ Visualisers; Taking photos in class and projecting; Mini-White-Boards; Repeat back to me; Extension questioning.

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SELF-REGULATED LEARNING

Successful learners plan ahead, monitor their progress,
and reflect on their learning to keep improving.

Teachers can empower students to become independent, resilient and successful learners.

1. PLAN



Set direction



Activate prior knowledge
and clarify success criteria



Choose strategies
and resources



Set short-term goals
that lead to longer-
term aims



Organise books and
equipment; present
work neatly

2. MONITOR



Stay on track



Check understanding
and track progress



Identify and overcome
barriers



Persist with productive
struggle



Use feedback and
adjust strategies



Know when to ask for
help and seek support

3. REFLECT



Review and improve



Evaluate what went well
and what didn't



Learn from mistakes
and take next steps



Set new goals and refine
strategies



Talk to others about
learning



Celebrate effort
and progress

HOW TEACHERS CAN SUPPORT SELF-REGULATED LEARNING



MODEL IT

Show students how
you plan, monitor
and reflect.



SCAFFOLD IT

Provide tools, checklists
and sentence stems to
build routines.



QUESTION IT

Use purposeful
questions to promote
metacognition and
reflection.



REINFORCE IT

Recognise effort,
strategies and
improvement.



EMBED IT

Make SRL a normal
part of every
lesson.



NARRATE YOUR THINKING

Teachers thinking aloud helps students see how
experts plan, monitor and reflect.

“

I'm checking the success criteria to
see where I am. I need to improve
this part, so I'll try this strategy next. ”

Verbalising your thinking makes good learning visible.

THE BENEFITS



Builds independence
and lifelong skills



Improves resilience
and confidence



Leads to deeper
understanding



Supports higher
achievement and
better outcomes



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Rugby Free
Secondary School



Triumph
Learning Trust

Aspiration • Collaboration • Innovation

CONSISTENTLY THROUGHOUT EVERY LESSON



Build relationships
with a warm-strict approach.



Maintain high expectations
for behaviour and learning.



Narrate thinking,
explain purpose and give clear explanations.



Check for understanding frequently
and use purposeful questioning.



Adapt teaching in response
to pupils' needs (re-teach when necessary).



Ensure every student participates
(provide multiple means of participation).



Give feedback
that moves learning forward.

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END OF LESSON



Complete a final CfU or exit ticket

with the class before getting students to put books into boxes / bags



Ensure all paper is cleared from desks

and all rubbish is picked up from floor and placed in a bin



Clear the desks and remove unused handouts

(if you are leaving the room)



Check that the HDMI cable is at the board, the visualiser is accessible, glues, MWBs, MWB pens are findable by next teacher

(if you are leaving)



Ensure students stand quietly behind chairs,

with chairs tucked neatly under straightened tables



Check shirts are tucked in, blazers on,

coats are off, no inappropriate jewellery is being worn

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Behaviour For Learning

- Behaviour management (Bill Rogers)
<https://teacherhead.com/2013/01/06/behaviour-management-a-bill-rogers-top-10/>
- Low-level disruption (Tom Bennett)
[Tackling Low Level Disruption - Tom Bennett](#)
- Relationships for learning (Tom Bennett)
[Tom Bennett - Research Ed Meeting - Maths and Science](#)

Formative Assessment

- Revisiting Dylan Wiliam: Five Brilliant Formative Assessment Strategies (Tom Sherrington)
<https://teacherhead.com/2019/01/10/revisiting-dylan-wiliams-five-brilliant-formative-assessment-strategies/>

Essential Teaching and Learning Reflection

- Dylan Wiliam's 9 Things
<https://www.tes.com/magazine/archive/9-things-every-teacher-should-know>
- Amazing Teaching and Learning podcasts (Craig Barton)
<https://www.mrbartonmaths.com/blog/podcast-collections/>