

Teaching and Learning Monthly Newsletter

SHARPLES
SCHOOL



June 2025



3 Weeks to Go!

The countdown is officially on... rewards trips are taking place, students are being celebrated for their achievements this year and Y10 have started to step up in preparation for Y11.

Seeing Y10 step up into the shoes of Y11 has been brilliant. I have genuinely been impressed with the rigour and preparation that some have put into their PPEs.

Although we may feel like the year is drawing to a close, for the Y10s, it's only the beginning and so we need to ensure our passion and enthusiasm doesn't come to a halt as Y11 have left.

Not only do we need to step up with Y10, but we also need to make the most of the time we have remaining before September inevitably comes around.

In order to make September as successful as possible, it's the perfect time to ensure resources are prepared, curriculums are mapped, classes are appropriately set and we all feel as prepared as we can for the year ahead.

With only one Teaching and Learning newsletter left, I hope you have enjoyed reading, discovering and celebrating all things T&L this year.

Thank you!

In this newsletter you can expect:

Article on Cultural Capital

Sharples Shoutouts and Celebrations!

National College Recommendations

CPD Book Recommendations

X / Twitter Shoutouts

ECT Corner



Cultural Capital

In 1973, the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu first described the concept of a person possessing “capital”, and in ‘Cultural Literacy’, ED Hirsch suggested that “to be culturally literate is to possess the basic information needed to thrive in the modern world”. The modern world is something that no one could have anticipated a few years ago, with the change in technology including AI, and the social media, it’s no surprise that cultural capital is something that students need to be equipped with to go on to live successful lives.

It’s often overlooked the impact that cultural capital can have on an individual. Studies have shown that pupils that have a higher level of cultural capital, can easily make links to the knowledge of the classroom and ‘knowledge tends to ‘stick around’ which strengthens their neural pathways. It is also noted that pupils from a higher socioeconomic background often have more cultural knowledge, therefore, putting them at an immediate disadvantage to their peers. It’s our responsibility as educators to ensure that the opportunities we are seeking for our pupils not only develop their academic achievements but also social awareness.



At Sharples especially, we recognise the diverse and multicultural makeup of our school, by providing additional opportunities for all students we can improve their experiences, their outcomes and their own self belief and desire to succeed.

We are also living in a time where social media and the influence of the internet is often the biggest tool to shape and shift the mindset of our pupils. With ‘influencers’ like Andrew Tate, that many young boys look up to and praise, it’s dangerous to leave the social development of our young people to the bloodhounds of the world. I believe we have a moral responsibility as teachers to not only educate pupils and provide high quality teaching, but also to provide opportunities to develop their cultural capital so as to not disadvantage them about the world’s knowledge when they leave us.



I understand that at this point of the year, it often feels like trips and events are tenfold, the ‘What’s On Guide’ inevitably grows, but this is just a testament to the hard work and dedication that all staff members showcase, right to the very end of the year. These opportunities to build a ‘Sharples Culture’ support the experiences of pupils and the associations they have with school, it encourages a buy in from pupils which then supports the hard work that we do with Y11 once they reach that point of their lives.

It’s important to acknowledge, however, that building cultural capital isn’t just through the lens of trips and events; it should be an embedded part of our curriculum. For example, in English, we ensure our booklets showcase high quality speeches, include a range of different fiction and non-fiction texts and also ensure the texts that we study are from a range of backgrounds and diverse writers.

Although something small, it's a step that the English department have taken to celebrate the multicultural and diverse nature of our students and to hopefully ensure that all students not only see themselves reflected in the curriculum, but also learn about the world around them.

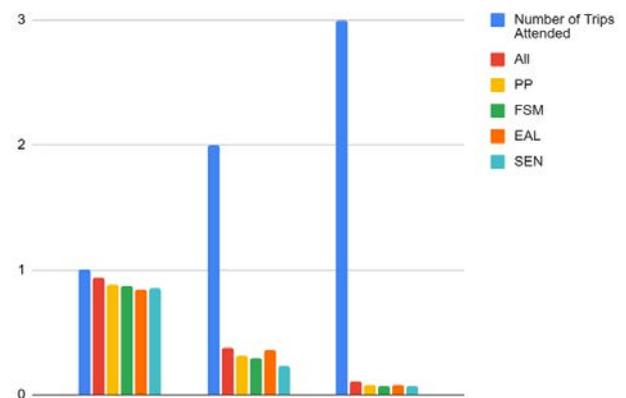
In Maths, I have seen the great work that the department has been doing on ensuring that classroom talk is a key component of excellent lesson planning. Angela talked wonderfully about Oracy in the PDC twilight presentations and also to the UKLA judges when they visited. She showcased fantastic opportunities that Maths have built into lessons and I think they do a great job at combining both oracy and real life situations.

I know that Sophie Curzon also works fantastically at tracking the enrichment and engagement that our students have the chance to participate in. It's always wonderful to see the theatre filled to the brim during Fresher's Fair with clubs like: Football, Jewellery making, Pokemon club, Robotics, 3D printing, Sharples Voices and more! It's once again a testament to the brilliant work of Sharples. Sophie has outlined some of the key data below to showcase all the great work that is ongoing.

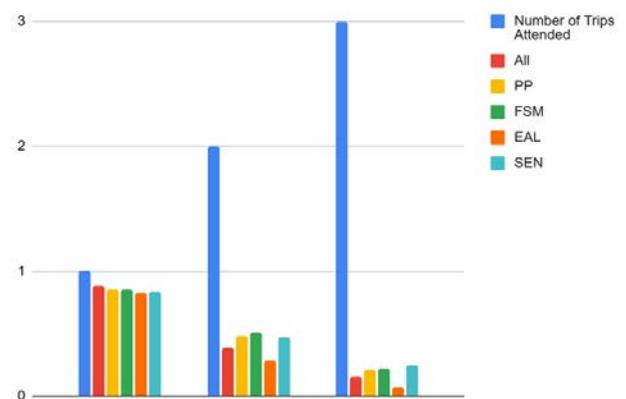


AE Data

Y7 Data



Y8 Data



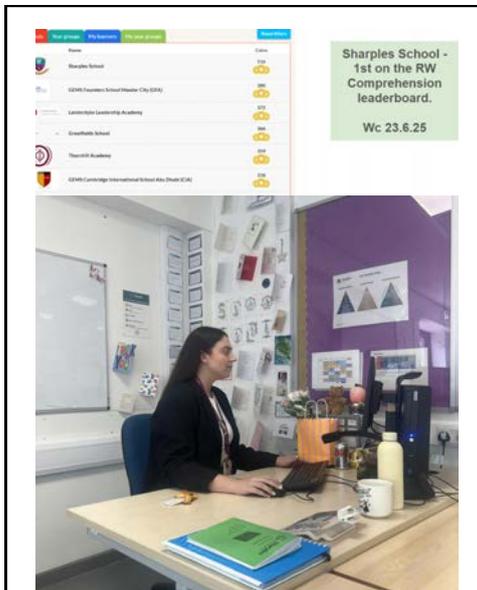
Y9 Data



SHARPLES CELEBRATES!



Each month we want to shout out teachers who want to share excellent practice! The first 3 teachers to email n.ayub@sharplesschool.co.uk with an example of brilliant practice will receive a box of celebrations delivered to their classroom!



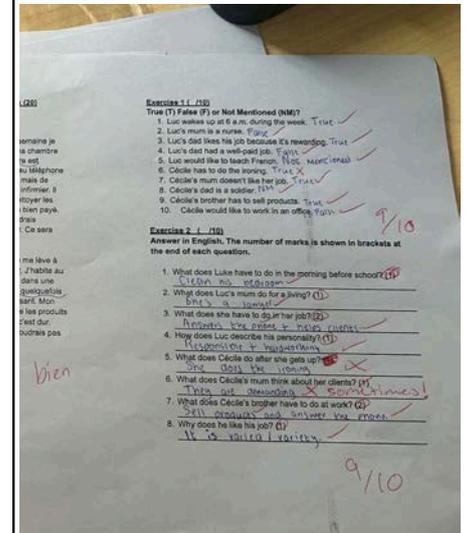
Georgia Kirk

Georgia has excelled phenomenally in her role as Literacy Coordinator for the past 6 months and has taken the new challenge in her stride. The progress shown on Reading Wise is phenomenal and the progress the students are making is fantastic. This week, Sharples was number 1 on the leader board in the entire country.



Matt Fowlds

Matt's consistent routines have been key to building confidence in his Year 7 Science class, particularly for pupils with low prior attainment. The significant progress these students have achieved in their first year of secondary Science is unmistakably clear to both themselves and any observer.



Sabrina Bhaloda / Yusuf Ibrahim (Y11)

I would like to nominate my "Student Assistant" for the next nomination for putting his hard work into practice and doing the marking with the French Set one module checks with passion! Also Yusuf will be pursuing French at College which is brilliant news for us!

National College Recommendations



Cultural Capital in a Balanced Curriculum (Secondary)

Get insight into cultural capital and how secondary schools can draw upon this concept in the provision of a broad and balanced curriculum.

 nationalcollege.com

CLICK HERE 

This webinar will provide headteachers, senior leaders, governors, teachers and practitioners with an insight into cultural capital and how schools can draw upon this concept in the provision of a broad and balanced curriculum.

About the Speaker

Matt Bromley is an education journalist, author, and advisor with twenty-five years' experience in teaching and leadership including as a secondary school headteacher and academy principal, further education college vice principal, and multi-academy trust director. Matt is a public speaker, trainer, initial teacher training lecturer, and school improvement advisor.

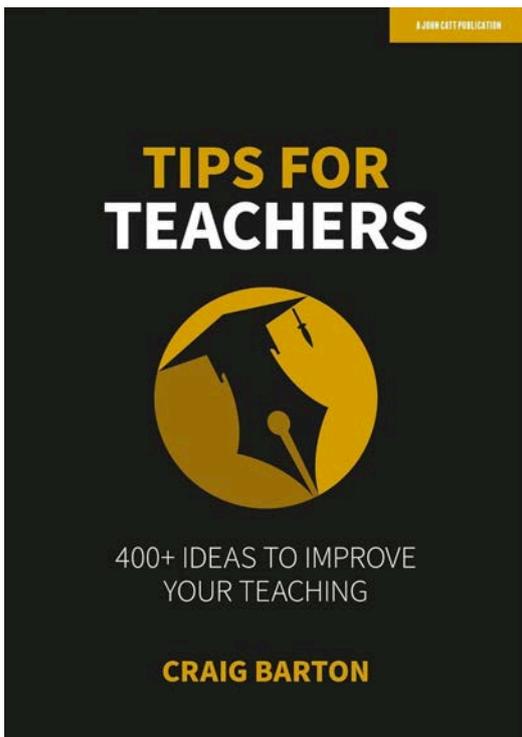


Extracurricular Activities for Disadvantaged Children (Secondary)

This webinar provides secondary schools with advice on providing opportunities for extracurricular activities to build knowledge, skills and cultural capital.

CLICK HERE 

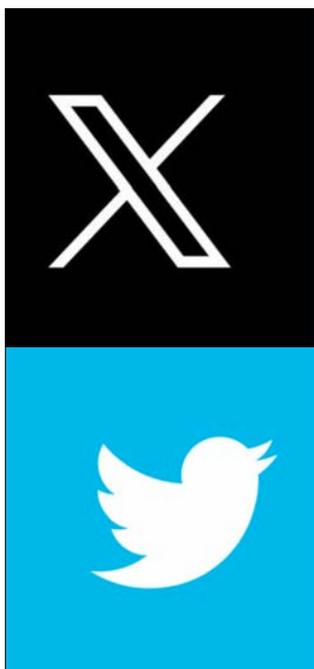
Book and Twitter (X) Recommendations



Tips for Teachers

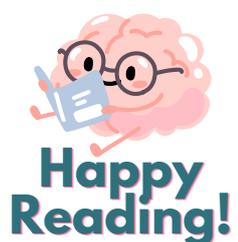
The ideas come from two sources. First, from the wonderful guests on my *Tips for Teachers* podcast - education heavyweights such as Dylan Wiliam, Daisy Christodoulou and Tom Sherrington, as well as talented teachers who are not household names but have so much wisdom to share. Then there's what I have learned from working with amazing teachers and students in hundreds of schools around the world.

Inside you will find 22 ideas to enhance mini-whiteboard use, 15 ideas to improve the start of your lesson, 14 ideas to help make Silent Teacher effective, seven ways to respond if a student says they don't know, and lots, lots more.



<https://x.com/sciinthemaking/status/1935352800877437375?s=46&t=FKJE4qMjKGpckKbVUqG1Pg>

This link outlines the science between learning and cognition. Not only this, but it also aims to showcase how students can use this knowledge and be taught it in a more explicit manner.



TEACHING BRAIN CONNECTIONS BOOSTS MEMORY

What if students remembered more by learning how the brain connects?

“Emphasising neural connections and their functional outcomes helps simplify neuroanatomy and improve understanding and retention.”

After a one-month delay, they remembered more!

This research, Described neural connections enhance classroom learning of neuroanatomy ([Hindy et al., 2025](#)) suggests that teaching students how brain regions are connected – rather than in isolation – leads to stronger long-term memory and better application in real-world scenarios.

For decades, neuroanatomy teaching has focused on identifying and labelling individual brain structures.

But this new study challenges that norm. In two classroom experiments using a 3D brain model tool, university students (n = 25 and n = 104) were taught 48 brain structures either with or without described neural connections.

Why connections beat categories

The “described connections” gave simple functional context (e.g. “Connects with X to help you move your eyes”), while other students only saw names and shapes. The results? After a one-month delay, students who were taught using connection-based narratives **remembered significantly more** and could apply their knowledge to clinical examples.

Retrieval practice also helped, but categorising structures by systems like “motor” or “visual” showed no benefit – and sometimes confused students more.

When students are taught in isolation, they often forget

This matters to every teacher trying to get students to remember and apply complex information. Lists and labels aren’t enough. When students are taught in isolation, they often forget. But when taught *how things work together*, understanding deepens and memory improves.

The study draws on constructivist theory – the idea that learning happens best when students **build mental models** using connected knowledge. For example, linking the red nucleus to the cerebellum to explain coordinated movement makes the content memorable, not just testable.



TEACHING BRAIN CONNECTIONS BOOSTS MEMORY

Apply this in your classroom

In practical terms, teachers can improve outcomes simply by switching from “what is this?” to “what does this do and how does it link to other things?”

Teachers can apply this in any classroom, without any need for specialist tech. The magic is in **narrative and context**. Whether teaching brain parts, a historical timeline or a science process, always explain how components link together and what function they serve.

Use retrieval practice – but enhance it. After a quiz question, offer a short sentence that connects it to another idea. Example: “Chlorophyll absorbs sunlight and passes the energy to carbon dioxide and water to make glucose.” What connects to what? Why does it matter?

In diagrams and group tasks, encourage students to build “connection parts” rather than lists. Help them shift from remembering to understanding. These small tweaks = big metacognitive wins.

CPD questions for teachers:

1. In English, do students understand how themes, characters and context link across a text?
2. In science, are students taught how systems interact (e.g. photosynthesis and respiration)?
3. In maths, are formulas presented as rules to memorise, or as patterns that connect to real-life problems?
4. Do retrieval tasks in lessons help students link today’s topic with yesterday’s – or just recall facts?
5. Are students encouraged to use sentence stems like “This connects to...” or “This affects...” in their writing?
6. In your subject, do displays and models highlight relationships between concepts or separate categories?
7. Do students get opportunities to build concept maps or timelines to see how ideas evolve or interact?
8. In exam preparation, are students guided to transfer knowledge between texts, topics or question types?
9. Are misconceptions addressed by showing functional links (e.g. why a maths rule works, not just how)?
10. How could schemes of work be tweaked to build interleaved, connected learning rather than topic blocks?

Knowledge and application matters

Teachers can improve long-term retention by making small changes: link content, build context and focus on function. When students see how parts work together, understanding sticks.

