

Teaching and Learning Monthly Newsletter

SHARPLES
SCHOOL



October 2024



How is it the End of Term Already?

For myself and many others, this term has been one of firsts.

I have truly enjoyed seeing many aspects of Teaching and Learning flourish in this first term.

We've had the first round of Teaching and Learning sessions take place and the feedback has been overwhelmingly positive.

Many members of staff have led, for the first time, on training and different elements of CPD.

The newly established Sharples Aspiring programme also took place for the first time this term. Students were invited to a session after school and we had around 60 students turn up out of an invited 80.

The Teaching and Learning newsletter was relaunched this term and the newly established 'Sharples Celebrates' has taken shape!

As a school, we have embraced the start of the year and our pupils.

Our Y7 pupils have adapted well to the ways of secondary school, including the one way system!

The Sharples Spotlight was launched this term and students feel they have a voice and an outlet to showcase their thoughts and feelings.

ITTs and ECTs have fully established themselves into classrooms and into schools.

All in all, the celebrations of many 'firsts' need to be shouted about!

I hope you enjoy this month's newsletter and have enjoyed this first term!

In this newsletter you can expect:

Article on approaching revision in the upcoming weeks.

Sharples Shoutouts and Celebrations!

National College Recommendations

CPD Book Recommendations

X / Twitter Shoutouts

Updates on the Teaching and Learning Development programme



The R Word: Revision

The first set of Y11 PPEs are around the corner and as expected the students are as nonchalant as ever. Their motivation and apathy at times can be dwindling, but as subject leaders and teachers it's important that we foster their resilience and motivation when it comes to revision and recall.

The countdown to exams seems like a distant, imaginary fear, but it'll come round quicker than ever and **we need to get prepared.**

When I say we...

it needs to be the staff and students working together to improve outcomes



As well as Y11 PPEs beginning soon, KS3 assessments are starting in lessons and keen students want to do well. No student attends school with the hope to fail, they want to achieve and succeed. Where they begin to crumble is not having the knowledge of how to approach revision.

We've all heard the phrase 'But I can't revise for that subject' or 'Yes, my revision is done for that...look at all these flashcards I've made...'

Often students aren't aware of what 'good revision' habits or routines are; sometimes it's a lack of parental engagement or motivation on the students' part, but part of our role as teachers is to encourage and motivate and develop a growth mindset.

According to the EEF, to support our students to manage effective study habits and routines, it is important to weave the teaching of effective revision strategies into our classroom practice as early as possible.

One way to improve revision is by being more metacognitive - but what does this mean?

The word 'Metacognition' is often bandied around with multiple misconceptions surrounding the idea.

Metacognition is the idea of self regulation, asking students to evaluate their own practice and utilise the most effective strategies to enhance their knowledge.

Recommendation 2 of the EEF guidance report '[Metacognition and Self-regulated Learning](#)' refers to the need to, "explicitly teach pupils metacognitive strategies, including how to plan, monitor and evaluate their learning".

As teachers, we need to be thinking about whether pupils know 'when' and 'how' to use flashcards, or how to engage in 'retrieval practice'.

Students are metacognitive if they are managing their revision repertoire and selecting and monitoring their specific strategies. If we want students to be more self-aware, and independent, we have to show them how to get there with explicit intent.



It's part of human nature to push away things that are difficult. Students often want to prioritise areas they enjoy or succeed in, the idea of a 'challenge' is never usually welcome.

As part of this, students sometimes believe relatively ineffective strategies are actually the most effective" (Dunlosky). Perhaps this is because we have not always focused enough 'on training students how to go about learning the content and what skills will promote efficient studying'.

So, we want to model the steps of revision - but how?

The Seven-step modelling of revision in practice

The model offers a way to hone evidence-informed revision strategies. Take the commonly used strategies – self-testing flashcards:

1.Activating prior knowledge.

Ask pupils when they have used flashcards in the past. When have they found them most useful? Do they remember how much information they should write on them? Will they look different in your subject to other subjects?

2. Explicit strategy instruction.

Provide step-by-step instructions about how to complete flashcards in your subject – explaining why this is the most effective way to create them and use them (subtle subject specific differences may be easily missed).

3.Modelling of learned strategy.

Show an example of a completed flashcard, as well as possibly one that isn't as effective (examples and non-examples) and explain why this is the case.

Share your thought processes with the pupils if you complete one live for them, verbalising how you are demonstrating perseverance, resilience and learning from mistakes you have made in the past. For instance, it may be when you have written too much onto a card or dropped a card from the set too early, as you were overconfident.

4.Memorisation of strategy.

Check to see if pupils have understood the instructions. You could ask them to explain to their partner why one modelled flashcard is better than another and walk round the room to listen and check for accuracy.

5.Guided practice.

Start with some partially completed cards where pupils just need to fill in some missing words, then move on to providing a list of key words for a topic (you could ask the pupils to work in pairs to write the relevant descriptor for them). Some pupils may need the key words for the subsequent topic, whereas others may be able to do this themselves without support.

6.Independent practice.

All pupils then complete flashcards for the next topic independently and then try self-testing using the cards.

7.Structured reflection.

Individually, or in small groups, support pupils to think about what went well and what they would do differently next time. They could look at each other's cards to think about different techniques (e.g. colour coding) and the possible benefits of this. You may also encourage pupils to reflect on how motivated they were during their self-testing.



It is often said that revision is a metacognitive skill that is more impactful when the process of revision has been explicitly taught. We explicitly teach our students subject knowledge so that they can effectively practise and become more skilful in the subject that they study (Needham, 2023). The same applies for teaching students how to revise: the revision process has its own powerful knowledge. Revision needs to be thought of as a mini curriculum (Howell, 2022).

Student motivation is built up through the acquisition of knowledge, similar to how motivation and active engagement had been building in lessons as students became more expert in their subject knowledge.

Not only is it important to instil a sense of independence when it comes to revision, but also motivation. Perhaps unsurprisingly, research suggests that motivation can have a significant effect on outcomes. A study by Jerrim et al. (2020) found that academically ambitious and driven teenagers achieve grades around 0.37 standard deviations above their peers (controlling for prior academic attainment and school attended).

Overall, we can all acknowledge that PPEs, mocks, exams and revision are part and parcel of the daily life of a student. What we need to ensure is that revision for this is done in the most effective and efficient way possible.

We need to ensure all students are prepared well enough to improve outcomes and a good place to start is modelling good revision techniques!

If you have any particular revision techniques that you would like to share with other members of staff, please let me know as I will be putting together a 'Revision Toolkit' to be used from next half term.

TOP 5 REVISION TECHNIQUES

- **Self-testing, for example 'read, cover, write, check', flashcards**
- **Past paper questions – students become familiar with the questioning style of the exam board**
- **Concept mapping, if it is created from memory.**
- **Mnemonics, it is far easier to remember mnemonics than a whole tract of text.**
- **Condensing notes into students' own words.**



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!



Catherine Liddy

Catherine makes use of technology to share specific feedback to individual students. She will record herself marking a piece of work and then students listen back, reflect and improve.

All students engage positively with this and see the meaningful feedback they are being given.

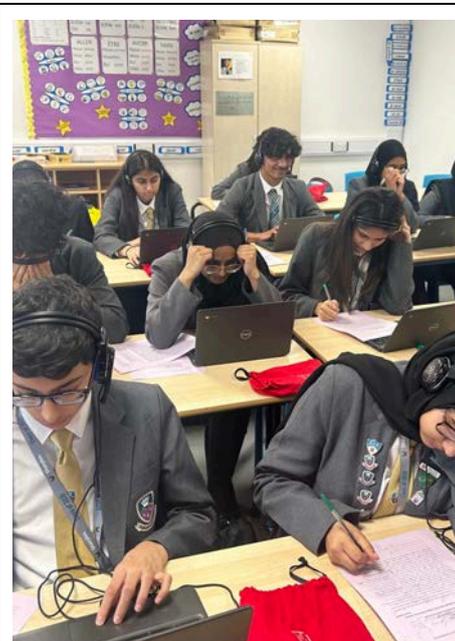


James Burrows

James made excellent use of the outdoor learning space this half term and took his form out to read *The Tyger* outside!

Students found this engaging and a change from their normal routine!

Sadly he didn't snap a picture outside!



Claire Wood

Claire asks for full attention from everyone in the classroom to ensure they are all participating at all times, especially during ALS!

Claire uses the chromebooks to give personal feedback for each student which they can use to then uncover their strengths and weaknesses.

Reviews



Effective Revision Skills | Secondary

This webinar will uncover a variety of practical strategies to support students' development into more independent learners – including suggestions on teaching revision techniques which are tailored to be...

 nationalcollege.com

[CLICK HERE](#) 

'While some of the reasoning behind the need for effective revision strategies was already known to me, many of the proposed techniques I had never considered and I have already begun thinking about how some could be implemented in my subject.'

Reviews



Memory to Boost Learning and Retention

This webinar will provide you with a detailed understanding of how working memory – the ability to hold a limited amount of information in our minds .

 nationalcollege.com

[CLICK HERE](#) 

'The practical solutions in maximising students retention skills is highly motivating for teacher and students.'

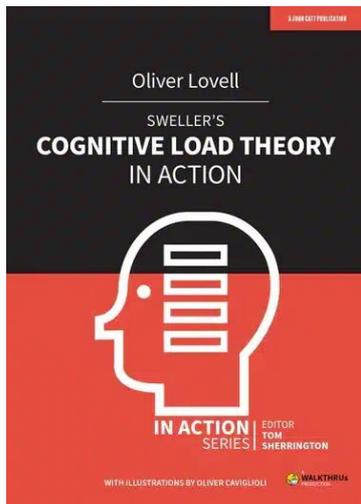
Book and Twitter (X) Recommendations



Cognitive Load Theory in Action

Although we can't see directly into students' minds, we do have Cognitive Load Theory, and this is the next best thing. Built on the foundation of all learning, the human memory system, Cognitive Load Theory details the exact actions that teachers can take to maximise student outcomes.

Written under the guidance of, and thoroughly reviewed by, the originator of CLT, John Sweller, this practical guide summarises over 30 years of research in this field into clear and easily understandable terms. This book features both a thorough discussion of the core principles of CLT and a wide array of classroom-ready strategies to apply it to art, music, history, chemistry, PE, mathematics, computer science, economics, biology, and more.

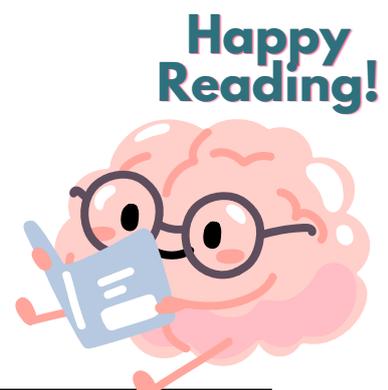
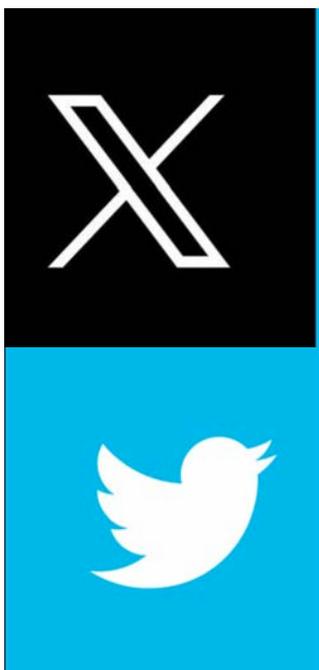


Please email n.ayub@sharplesschool.co.uk if you would like to borrow!

Revision and Repetition

A thread on revision techniques and tools that can be used throughout a variety of subjects.

[Click here to view the thread](#)



Teaching and Learning Development Programme Updates



Once again, a big thank you to every member of staff within school as everyone has supported the running of these sessions. From the canteen staff catering for the sessions, admin staff for booking out meeting rooms and making sure the rooms are neat and tidy for use, to Lee managing cover and of course, the speakers themselves!

Absolutely everyone helped to ensure the sessions took place promptly and successfully over the two week window.

In the next half term, we will begin the coaching conversations within our coaching pairs to reflect on the work we have done during our CPD sessions.

Please proactively organise to go and observe your coaching partner and use the instructional coaching questions during your feedback meeting. Please meet with your partners at a time that is convenient for yourselves either before, during or after the school day.

We will be meeting as communities in January and we will be feeding back on what we saw during the observations and how we coached our partners, so please be ready to give some ideas that you may have used!

Once again, coaching is a really great tool, when used properly, in order to propel our own understanding of teaching and pedagogy forward. Please engage fully with the programme and showcase all the great elements of your teaching!

If anyone is happy for me to pop in at any point to observe for 5-10 minutes, please let me know!

Thank you for reading!