ISSUE #9

# Teaching and Learning Monthly Newsletter

SHARPLES SCHOOL

May 2025


## Exams! Stress! Worry!

I'm not sure about the rest of the staff body, but as the month of May began, the stress of exams started to build and the nerves started to appear.

With each exam that goes by, and as you see Y11 coming out overjoyed with the paper, I know it fills all members of staff with a feeling of accomplishment.

The task of exams is monumental, the pressure, stress and anxiety that comes with it can feel like quite a burden. But, I know the future is bright for our students.

The morning ALS sessions are filled to the brim with students almost excited for the exam ahead. The afternoon ALS sessions are just as filled and despite the tiredness after an afternoon exam, students are still positive in these sessions.

It's been reassuring to see students anticipating the exam with the view that it's an opportunity to showcase all that they know.

I hope that the exams continue to be positive for students and the effort from both the pupils and staff pays off in summer.

In this newsletter you can expect:

# Rosenshine's Principles

As part of the Sharples Staples, lessons across the school are formulated around the use of Rosenshine's Principles. I wanted to write about this at this time of the year as a nice reminder of our classroom basics and what makes the learning at Sharples so successful.

They can be broken down into the following categories:

1. **Beginning the lesson with a review of prior learning.**

This is evidenced across the school within silent starters, these are a great tool to not only settle students and ensure focus, but also an opportunity to address misconceptions and scaffold learning to support all learners. Over the years, I have seen countless examples of brilliant retrieval practice in the form of using mini whiteboards, quick quizzes and general retrieval activities. It's important to note that the more students learn, contemplate, understand and feel challenged, the more likely they are to remember and have a deeper understanding of the content that is being taught.

2. **Present new material in small steps, avoiding overloading the students with information.**

As discussed earlier in the year, our working memory can only hold a finite amount of information. It is important that we are presenting information in small, manageable chunks to ensure learning is approachable and adaptive to the needs of our students. Another important aspect of teaching and learning is ensuring students are guided through the process of learning, they are provided with models and guided practice before independent learning takes place.

**3. Questioning!**

The importance of questioning is vital within our classroom and it is definitely a key component of learning across the school. Questions allow for students to practise new information and connect new knowledge to prior learning. Within Rosenshine's article, he points out the differing ways that teachers can ask questions. Some are listed below:

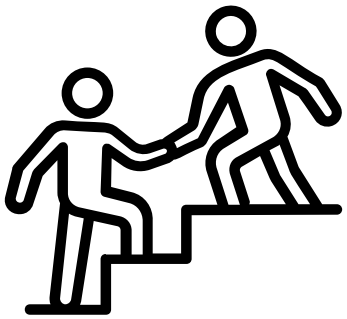
- Tell the answer to a neighbor.
- Summarize the main idea in one or two sentences, writing the summary on a piece of paper and sharing this with a neighbor, or repeating the procedures to a neighbor.
- Write the answer on a card and then hold it up.
- Raise their hands if they know the answer (thereby allowing the teacher to check the entire class).
- Raise their hands if they agree with the answer that someone else has given.

Essentially, asking the right questions at the right time is crucial for a teacher to understand what their students know and understand and what needs to be retaught in order to support students with the breadth of knowledge that the ambitious curriculum at Sharples demands.

**4. Provide models**

Modelling is a key part of every classroom. At Sharples, we have made it a priority to have visualisers in all classrooms and students have outlined how useful they find the use of visualisers to be in all lessons. They allow for real time modelling, they allow pupils to see the thought process of the experts in the room and they ensure that all students have a focus and have the same material in front of them. Personally, when asking students to write extended answers, the use of a visualiser is essential when providing feedback. It allows me to take my own written example and annotate this for the success criteria, or to showcase a positive example from another student. Students then mirror my own marking patterns to evaluate their own work and come to a conclusion about their strengths and weaknesses. This is an essential part of feedback as it allows students to become more methodical in their learning and more critical of what they need to work on.

**5. Guided Practice**
When using guided practice, it's important to check for misconceptions and understanding as students are working. Using a combination of modelling and formative assessment simultaneously allows for staff to be aware of the strengths and weaknesses of their students and allows for improvements to be made constantly. If not enough time is given to guided practice and the repetition of this, then students will inevitably struggle when working on their own. This sometimes leads to behaviour challenges and also students losing confidence in their own abilities.



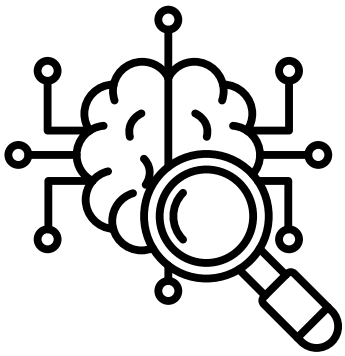
6. **Checking for Understanding**
We want to avoid the 'are there any questions?', 'do we all understand?' types of questions as these are vague and unreliable for data. Students are sometimes unwilling to voice their concerns about their learning and it's only when teachers go to give verbal feedback that they see that students may be struggling and the misconceptions haven't been addressed. It's important to check regularly for misconceptions so that students move from being novices to experts more quickly.

7. **Success Rates**
It's important to obtain high success rates with all pupils by using guided practice and modelling before leading students on to independent work. A great example of ensuring high success rates is to give live feedback to students during lessons so that misconceptions are addressed quickly and effectively.

8. **Scaffolding**
Scaffolding and chunking is vitally important for students' understanding. Speaking aloud your own thoughts often also supports students to understand the process of breaking down more complex ideas. It also supports lower ability students by giving them a process and formula for understanding information.

9. **Independent Practice**
In order for skills to become automatic, students need to practise often using the knowledge they have been taught. Independent practice almost acts like a review of the knowledge and is a vital part of students securing their knowledge. Independent practice may come as part of the home learning process and students need to apply their knowledge to a specific topic, this is why home learning should be a priority within the classroom and not an 'add on' to tick a box.

**10. Repetitive Retrieval Practise**
Essentially, retrieval should be regular, challenging and should also provide feedback whilst addressing misconceptions. Our silent starter tasks should be used to showcase learning, but also revisit and recap learning. Over time, students will develop schemas and as they acquire more knowledge, it will become attached to the schema, making it stronger and giving more independence to the students' knowledge. The more students practise and revisit knowledge, the more likely it will be embedded into long term memory which is the outcome that every teacher desires.



# 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!

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Mags Heaton | Collette Grimshaw | Laurence Keighley |
|  |  |  |
| Mags uses the chromebooks for targeting listening practice. Miss Heaton has been working hard doing extra work with y11 and spending her lunchtimes to prepare them for their French listening GCSEs next week. | Colette has been nominated for her hard work and dedication to geography. She has been developing new strategies for assessment feedback based on her ECT1 and departmental training, which has seen an impact in lessons as students can reflect on their assessments and make progress going forward. | Laurence always creates a calm and positive learning environment for all his classes, he has a patient approach with high expectations for all. He has worked particularly hard with his Y11 students this half term. |
| Sarah Bamber | Daniel Burke | Lucie Melmoth |
|  |  |  |
| During drop in week, Sarah demonstrated excellent practice with modelling and questioning, she had high expectations for her class and successfully created a collaborative environment where students supported one another and engaged well in the talk tasks. | Mr Burke brought a year 8 physics lesson to life through engaging practical demonstrations; culminating in an exciting exploration with the Van de Graaff Generator. Such hands-on science lessons have the power to inspire and enthuse pupils, significantly enhancing their learning. | Lucie did a wonderful demonstration using the van der Graaf for a year 8 class. She is enthusiastic and passionate about physics more than anyone else! She is a great asset to the team and shows her love of Science in everything that she does. |

# National College Recommendations

**Applying Rosenshine's Principles of Instruction**

This webinar explores exactly what the Rosenshine Principles are and how schools can effectively implement them to improve overall learning outcomes.

nationalcollege.com

CLICK HERE

***Review***

*This webinar expertly unpacked Rosenshine's ten principles and demonstrated how to adapt them for catch-up lessons. The step-by-step guidance on "I do, We do, You do," cumulative review and checking for understanding was particularly impactful. I appreciated the exemplar lesson sequences and the emphasis on gradual release of responsibility. The interactive polls and downloadable lesson plan templates made the content highly practical.*

**Rosenshine's Principles | Secondary**

This webinar will provide expert guidance on applying Rosenshine's principles of instruction to support disadvantaged pupils. With a focus on two tenets of the theory – 'provide models' and 'check for...

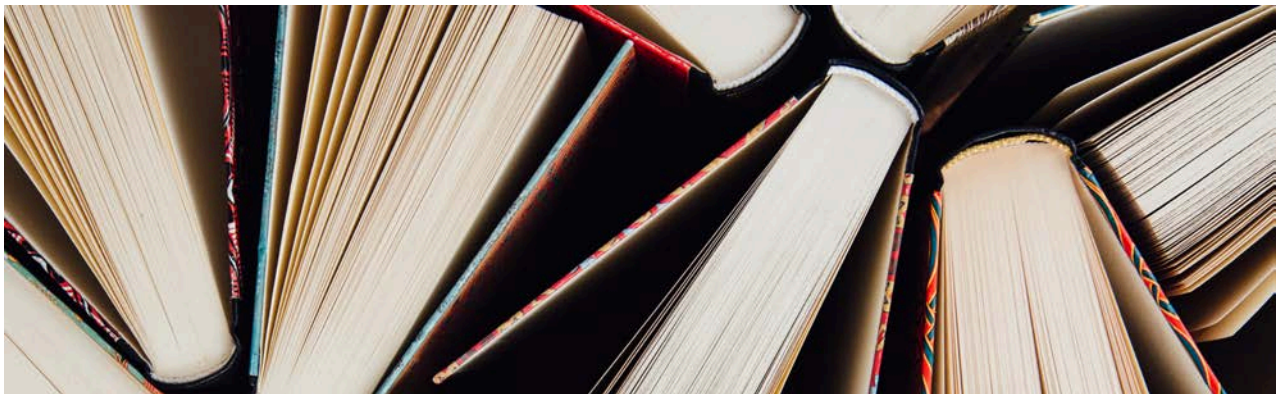
nationalcollege.com

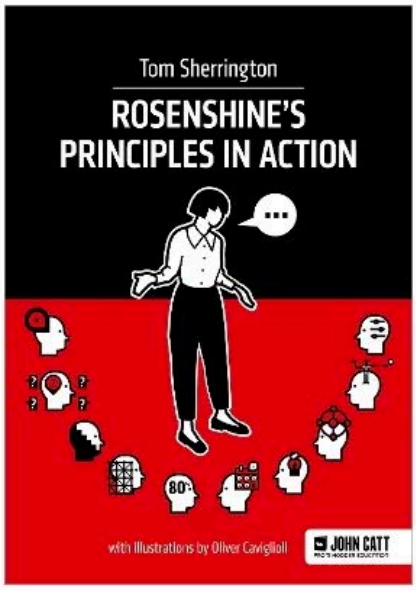
CLICK HERE

*Review*

*This course was a great reminder of implementing the principles. It was also humbling to reflect and see that I do implement them in lessons.*

# Book and Twitter (X) Recommendations






Rosenshein's Principles in Action

Barak Rosenshine's Principles of Instruction are widely recognised for their clarity and simplicity and their potential to support teachers seeking to engage with cognitive science and the wider world of education research.
In this concise new booklet, Rosenshine fan Tom Sherrington amplifies and augments the principles and further demonstrates how they can be put into practice in everyday classrooms.

To borrow a copy, email n.ayub@sharplesschool.co.uk

https://x.com/dylanwiliam/status/1922970550386807117?s=46&t=FKJE4qMjKGpckKbVUqG1Pg

This very helpful thread comments on the use of formative assessment in the classroom linking to the science of learning. Dylan William recently have a talk and the thread / article details the 10 key points of his speech.

It's an interesting read if you're a fan of his work and even if you're not - it offers insightful points about the way learning happens in the classroom.

# The Origins of Rosenshine's Principles

How have Barak Rosenshine's principles of effective instruction evolved?

**As more secondary schools start to reshape their teaching and learning policies, influenced by Rosenshine's principles, I've revisited his research papers and references to learn a little more.**

One thing some teachers may be aware of is how Rosenshine's 17 Principles of Effective Instruction have evolved since 1982.

In 2012...

Prior to his death in 2017, Rosenshine wrote a paper in the American Educator; a journal published in 2012. This is the paper which has become most widespread with teachers.
I first published my thoughts on Rosenshine in my book, Mark Plan Teach (2017) having been influenced by his work around 2014/15 when I started to read widely about developing a teaching and learning policy in a deputy headteacher role I had at the time.
There is also a rare and interesting video of Rosenshine speaking at an event in 2002. In this video you will hear him *struggle* to provide a word for those teachers who are regularly effective.

Today, we may choose to use the word 'outstanding', but I'd argue that good teaching happens over time, beyond the lens of a research, and is defined more than by academic outcomes.
The 2012 paper provides 17 recommendations which I have summarised into this blog post which example resources and strategies. The above paper proving to be more popular. I suspect the simple graphics, plus the sub-heading were key factors, plus the journal and its audience too.

In 2010...
Prior to 2012, Rosenshine published Principles of Instruction in the International Academy of Education journal in 2010. This is common for all academics as they seek to publish their work across multiple channels. I wonder how proud Rosenshine would be to see what an impact his research paper has had...

It's important to note how Rosenshine developed these ideas. His sources derive from research on how we learn and use information; instructional procedures teachers use; and procedures invented by researchers to support learning. For example, 'think aloud'.
Both these papers are largely the same in content, although the most obvious difference is how the 10 principles are broken down into 17.
For the benefit of this blog post, I've just listed below those key differences.

# The Origins of Rosenshine's Principles

| 2010 | 2017 |
|---|---|
| 1. Daily review | 1. Begin a lesson with a short review of previous learning. |
| 2. Present new material using small steps | 2. Present new material in small steps with student practice after each step. |
| 3. Ask questions | 3. Limit the amount of material students receive at one time. |
| 4. Provide models | 4. Give clear and detailed instructions and explanations. |
| 5. Guide student practice | 5. Ask a large number of questions and check for understanding. |
| 6. Check for student understanding | 6. Provide a high level of active practice for all students. |
| 7. Obtain a high success rate | 7. Guide students as they begin to practice |
| 8. Provide scaffolds for difficult tasks | 8. Think aloud and model steps |
| 9. Independent practice | 9. Provide models of worked-out problems |
| 10. Weekly and monthly review | 10. Ask students to explain what they have learned. |
| | 11. Check the responses of all students. |
| | 12. Provide systematic feedback and corrections. |
| | 13. Use more time to provide explanations. |
| | 14. Provide many examples |
| | 15. Reteach material when necessary. |
| | 16. Prepare students for independent practice |
| | 17. Monitor students when they begin independent practice. |

What are the differences?

As I reflect on the differences between the principles of 2010 and 2017, do we need more detail? Are they obvious, helpful or making things a little too complicated? Of course, we need the details, but when I think of all those teaching and learning policies I am supporting schools to design, the depth is important, but what teachers need are some pragmatic steps to help change their teaching behaviours.

The 17 principles do offer a useful road map, but where they become problematic, is in schools where they have evolved into a one-off observation checklist. We could do such much better by equipping our school leaders to observe more reliably...

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# The Origins of Rosenshine's Principles

In 1982...

Stripping back Rosenshine's work, I've taken another look at his paper published for the National Institute of Education (Washington D.C.) called, Teaching Functions in Instructional Programs.
The paper itself will elicit memories for those educators in once wrote assignments on a typewriter!
Published in February 1982, Rosenshine references 45 other academic sources with most dating from the 1960s to 1980s. One name which will be familiar to all teachers Benjamin Bloom's work: Human Characteristics and School Learning (1976).
Using Connected Papers, I experimented with a static network analysis to see how Rosenshine's 1982 paper has influenced other research. This graphic below illustrates how widely his research has influenced other academics.

The 6 Teaching Functions

On pages 8-10 of the 1982 paper, Rosenshine offers the original principles. Reading this paper alone will provide teachers will the context behind the emerging principles and I think it would be great for professional learning, or for part of a qualification project. Here are the 6 functions:

1. Daily review, check in previous day's work and reteaching (if necessary)
2. Presenting new content
3. Initial student practice
4. Feedback and correctives
5. Independent practice so that students are firm an automatic
6. Weekly and monthly reviews

Of course, there is subtext under each, and with deeper exploration, one can see how the 17 principles have emerged. It's also worth noting the 'check for understanding' features 17 times. I have always believed the most powerful tool any teacher possesses is the ability to ask a range of question types, and deliver them using a range of strategies.

It would be worth researching what other key terms feature so heavily.
I've been trying to simplify the principles into 4 stages which I think all schools could use to influence their methods. As ever, what I'm keen to learn is the nuance to support teachers working in a variety of contexts. For example, what does effective instruction look like in an early years setting or a pupil referral unit? Perhaps effective instruction in a virtual classroom or in a bottom-set year 9 maths class on a Thursday afternoon?