

Teaching and Learning Monthly Newsletter

ISSUE #1

SHARPLES
SCHOOL



September 2025



Welcome Back!

Welcome back!

I know whilst writing this, it doesn't feel like it has only been four weeks since we were first welcomed back into Hilcot House on the 1st of September! So much has happened in that time and with the success of another brilliant Open Evening behind us, it's great to see so many members of staff getting straight back into the rhythm and routine of September.

However, it's not only the staff that have got straight back into a routine, the students have moulded right back into themselves and have appreciated the routine that has been provided to them at Sharples.

The introduction of the Sharples Routines is also something I am very proud of and have loved to see around classrooms in school!

During the Library Lock in, a small group of students decided they wanted to play 'teachers' which resulted in the pupils utilising mini whiteboards with the 3,2,1, show me routine and also the use of silent starters!

It did make us all laugh, but it especially reminded us how powerful consistent routines can be in the classroom!

Please continue with the routines, it makes a massive difference when we're all sharing the same consistent message.

In this newsletter you can expect:

Article on Memory and Student Learning

Sharples Shoutouts and Celebrations!

Sharples Staff Section

CPD Book Recommendations

X / Twitter Shoutouts

Updates on the Teaching and Learning Development programme



How Do Students Learn?

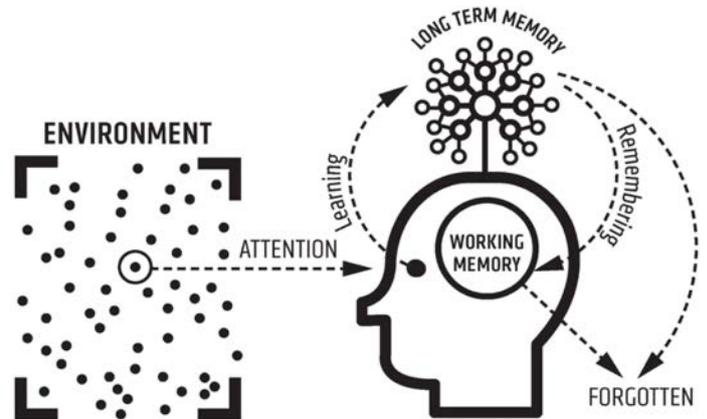
One of the most crucial parts of Teaching and Learning is having a thorough understanding of how students learn and how information is processed by them. Without this knowledge, it is difficult for a teacher to understand in which way to present information is most effective and how to check if students have grasped the information well enough.



I also find it incredibly interesting to understand how the brain, memory and retrieval works. Ultimately, students need to be able to remember more and do more with the knowledge they have gained from the classroom in exam situations and so, we should have a good understanding of what our role in the classroom is and how it can impact what students remember and prioritise.

It is a well known fact that working memory and long term memory are vastly different and if we want students to be able to move information from their short term memory into their long term, there are processes and activities that we may be able to do to support this.

How does Memory Work?



Working memory is the brain's short-term processing space—it holds only around 7 pieces of information at a time whilst pupils are engaging with other parts of the task e.g. writing notes or annotating a poem.

However, this capacity is easily overloaded, especially if students are also trying to manage distractions or unfamiliar content. For learning to be retained, information must be transferred into long-term memory, where it can be stored more permanently and retrieved later. There are three stages to moving information from working memory to long term storage: encoding, storage and retrieval.

Encoding is the process of information being placed into the mind; storage refers to keeping the information in the brain and retrieval describes the process of finding the correct information when needed.

Encoding is the part of the learning process that is most vital to the retention of more information. The information must be stored in the mind successfully and accurately before it can be retrieved. It is said that there are four cognitive processes that can support encoding: intention to learn; depth of processing; structure of information and self explanation.

I'm sure we all have encountered the pupil that has all the right intentions and is desperately trying to remember more and do more, but struggles to achieve this. While it might seem that simply *wanting* to remember something should improve memory, research shows that intention alone is not always enough to enhance encoding.



Therefore, sometimes, the pupils that show the most enthusiasm, aren't always outperforming others for this reason purely. What really matters is how learners *process* the information and the activities they complete with the information given to them.

When students engage with material in a meaningful way—such as by organising it, relating it to prior knowledge, or applying it—encoding is deeper and more effective, regardless of whether they were explicitly told to remember it.

However, intention to learn can still be valuable because it often leads students to use these deeper processing strategies. For example, a motivated student may choose to summarise, ask questions, or make links between ideas—activities that support stronger encoding and long-term retention.

In the classroom, this means that fostering motivation and a clear purpose for learning is important, but it must be paired with teaching students *how* to process information effectively to make it stick.

The above leads on nicely to understanding the depth of processing that students need to go through in order to retain more information. If students develop meaningful, semantic connections to prior knowledge it leads to the information being stored in the long term memory. Shallow processing essentially is poor revision techniques, often students feel like they are revising and engaging with revision, however, they are just re-reading information or copying notes from a book. The lack of paraphrasing and summarising from pupils is detrimental to their progress as they aren't processing knowledge to the depth required of them in the exam. This also links with the structure of information and also the self explanation.



The structure of information requires teachers and pupils to present information in a manner that isn't overwhelming or over stimulating. Knowledge should be broken down and scaffolded, the principles of direct instructions should be utilised to ensure pupils are guided and scaffolded to success, before engaging with independent practice.

Finally, self explanation is another method that can be used to ensure the encoding of information is successful for pupils. Students should be able to summarise information or process knowledge themselves in order to feel confident with the knowledge they have gained.



Overall, it's clear that as teachers we need to have a good understanding of how students learn. However, we also need students to develop their own sense of understanding on how they learn and how knowledge can be retained in the best way possible for their own success now and in the future.

Upcoming Teaching and Learning Articles

October - CATS

November - KS3 Exam Preparation

December - Assessment

January - Artificial Intelligence in the classroom

February - Engaging Parents in School Life

March - Misogyny in the Classroom

April - The Art of Annotations

May - Supporting Students through Examinations

June - Learning through Talk

July - Getting Ahead for September

If you would like to get involved with writing any of these articles, please email n.ayub@sharplesschool.co.uk



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!



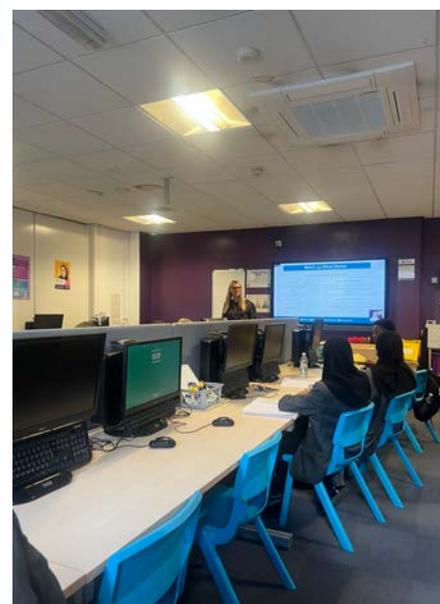
Danielle Stephenson

Danielle has been nominated for her tenacity and conscientious attitude. She has worked so hard to develop excellent relationships with her students (and colleagues), completed all of the (many) tasks set to deadline and is an outstanding ECT. Dan is a real asset to the science department and we are so lucky to have her!



Claire Finney

Claire has been nominated for her excellent work improving loyalty in Geography with a Geography club passport and in-class rewards tracker. She is an asset to the team and has been a great support to all members of the department.



Joanne Bennett

Joanne has been nominated for innovative knowledge recall silent starters in Computing and the carefully sequenced learning journey that supports them. These routines are strengthening retrieval practice and continuity across topics, while also making explicit links to cultural capital in Computer Science. As a result, students are starting to grow in confidence when connecting their prior knowledge to new learning.

Sharples Staff Section

In this part of the newsletter, we want to discover more about the staff at Sharples and the incredible work they do on a daily basis.

Each month, one member of staff will feature and we will discover more about their background and how they ended up at Sharples.

This month, Hana Dedat has kindly detailed more about her experience into teaching.



1. Why did you want to go into teaching?

My journey into teaching began when I worked as a Head of Year at a school in Atherton. During my time there, I had the opportunity to cover a few English lessons, and I absolutely loved it. The more time I spent in that role, the more I felt a deep responsibility for the quieter students—those who just got on with things but were often dealing with issues you'd never expect. I wanted to be the kind of teacher who didn't overlook them, who would advocate for them, and who would make sure they felt seen.

2. Where did you study and was there a module / topic that you were really passionate about during your time at university?

I completed my undergraduate degree at the University of Manchester, and later went on to study my PGCE at Edge Hill.

One module that stood out to me and has stayed with me ever since was Postcolonial Literature. The fragmented narratives, the unreliable narrators, and the sense of dislocation all echo the confusion and complexity felt by many writers and communities during and after colonisation. I often recommend *Wide Sargasso Sea* by Jean Rhys or *The Impressionist* by Hari Kunzru.

3. What is the best part of your job?

Without a doubt, it's the students. It's a privilege to be part of their journey, and to watch them grow not just academically, but as people.

Sharples Staff Section

In this part of the newsletter, we want to discover more about the staff at Sharples and the incredible work they do on a daily basis.

Each month, one member of staff will feature and we will discover more about their background and how they ended up at Sharples.

This month, Hana Dedat has kindly detailed more about her experience into teaching.



4. What are you most passionate about in terms of teaching and learning?

I'm passionate about helping students become confident, independent thinkers who can apply their learning beyond the classroom. My goal is to scaffold and support them until they're ready to take ownership of their ideas and learning. I want them to see the skills we develop—especially in English—as transferable: the ability to analyse a poem can translate into questioning the reliability of a news article, just as understanding a character's perspective can build empathy in real life. Ultimately, I want students to leave my classroom not just with knowledge, but with the critical tools to navigate and make sense of the world around them.

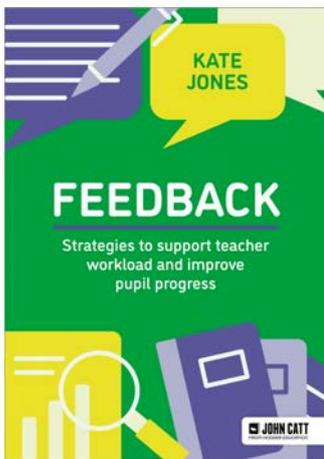
5. What are the non-negotiables in your classroom?

One of the key non-negotiables I've introduced this year is the phrase "read the room." I encourage students to be observant and proactive from the moment they enter the classroom—whether that means noticing what others are doing or figuring out which booklet or pen to use.

6. If you could share one element of best practice with the rest of the staff, what would it be?

Build relationships from day one. It might sound simple, but the impact is immeasurable. Greet students in the corridors, ask how their day is going, remember the small details they share. Those moments make students feel seen, and that connection can be the difference between a disengaged learner and an engaged one. Sometimes, all it takes is one conversation to start turning things around.

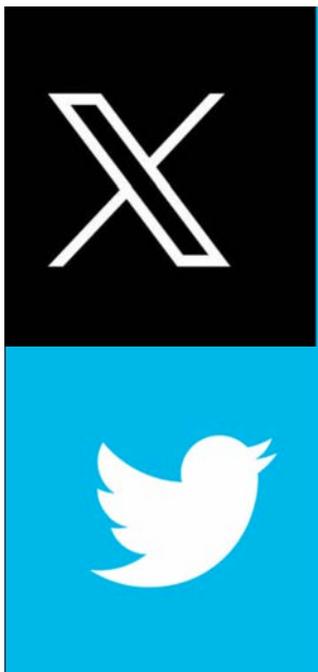
Book and Twitter (X) Recommendations



Feedback

Just a reminder that a copy of this is in the CPD library! The book has a range of useful strategies in order to make sure feedback is meaningful and useful.

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



Revision and Repetition

A thread on why spaced retrieval is necessary and how it can be done most effectively in the classroom.

[Click here to view the thread](#)

**Happy
Reading!**



Teaching and Learning Development Programme Updates



The Teaching and Learning programme has always been regarded as quite innovative in comparison with other schools. This year, we have endeavoured to ensure that each session is supported by an external speaker as well as having an in house expert for one session.

Our 5 areas of focus are the following:

Teaching and Learning - The Fundamentals - Friday 3rd October

Adaptive Teaching - Teaching to the Top and also adaptive for SEND needs- Tuesday 7th October

Formative Feedback and Assessment - Wednesday 8th October

Literacy - INA / EAL / Phonics - Friday 10th October

Oracy and Classroom Talk - Friday 7th November

Please note that the first session is Friday 3rd October in Meeting Room 2 from 9.30-11 for session 1 and 11.20-12.50 for session 2.

Refreshments will be provided during the break for both groups.

Please ensure your purple notebooks is with you to make notes.

Thank you for reading!