



THE STAFFROOM

TEACHING AND LEARNING @STCYRESCHOOL

SUBJECT SPOTLIGHT

Over the last term, the English Faculty have been focusing on the concept of increasing ratio through turn and talk. The goal behind this is to elicit maximum cognitive thinking and engagement from every member of the class. They share some of their findings below:

WHAT IS RATIO?

Ratio is a guiding concept that describes how much thought is taking place in your classroom.

Participation ratio: how many students are participating and how often?

Think ratio: when they are participating, how hard are they thinking?

WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?

Using TLAC as our main source, we have been using a combination of the following techniques this year:

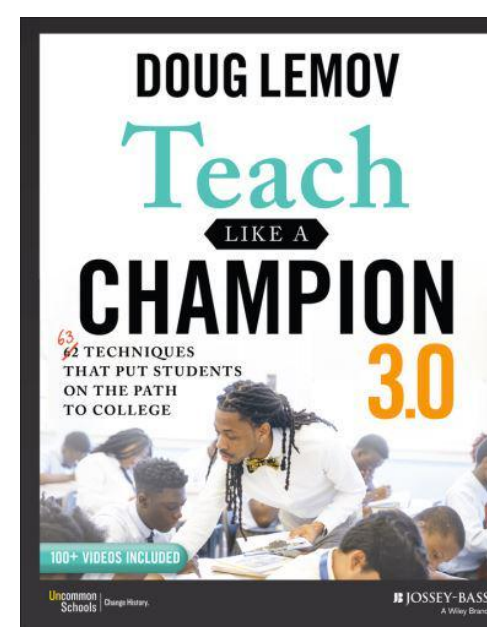
- Cold call
- Wait time
- Say it back to me
- HDQ and no opt out
- Turn and talk
- Build and stretch
- Asking for evidence
- Stop and jot
- Everybody write

IMPACT

As a faculty, we have been building these strategies into our teaching over the last year, taking time to hone each one before adding more to the repertoire. The current strategy we have been focusing on is 'turn and talk'. By refining this to ensure that we 'crest the wave' (cut students off when they all have more to say and are therefore more eager to share with the class) and set up clear routines and build up so the talk time is efficient and focused (no more than 30-60 seconds), we have managed to elicit sophisticated and thoughtful discussion from a range of class abilities. This includes Y9s discussing the intention behind the use of different facets of rhetoric in a range of famous speeches, and Y8s comparing the themes and sentiments in war poetry. More students talking means that more are thinking and participating, and it makes cold calling more productive because students have effectively prepared a response with their partners. After an initial transition period, where some students didn't use their time effectively and struggled when called upon, engagement has increased drastically and the quality of responses when using cold calling for more profound questioning has improved.

WHERE NEXT?

Turn and talk relies on a positive classroom culture where cold calling is an opportunity for students, rather than being perceived as a way to pick on those not engaging. We intend to further develop our classroom culture and use turn and talk in combination with other strategies to maximise learner accountability. We have discovered that turn and talk works best when planned carefully into a lesson, so the build up and precise question working can be honed. We therefore intend to embed the strategy into our existing lessons, adapting content to ensure that it helps to enhance existing student outcomes.



This is the technique we have been focusing on most recently. As part of our faculty CPD, we completed a staff modelling exercise for this strategy. You can watch it here:



FURTHER READING

<https://achemicalorthodoxy.wordpress.com/2020/02/09/ratio/>

Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

<https://www.simplypsychology.org/vygotsky.html>

WELCOME

Welcome to our inaugural St Cyres Teaching and Learning newsletter. The hope for this newsletter is that it allows us to talk about teaching and learning, celebrate successes and learn from each other. Each edition of the newsletter will have a subject spotlight, learner view, staffroom podcast, Ed Tech tips and useful links. This edition is very much a pilot version and we welcome feedback from staff about content, layout and suggestions for future issues. Enjoy!

“When we think about learning, we typically focus on getting information into students’ heads. What if, instead, we focus on getting information out of students’ heads?”

— **Pooja K. Agarwal, Powerful Teaching: Unleash the Science of Learning**

LEARNER VIEW

Lucy Ganderton 8SH describes how her learning experiences in school have impacted on her. She discusses how playing the piano has given her opportunities to role model in the classroom and develop her leadership skills. Lucy also details her role in the school production and how this has increased her confidence. This real life experience also gave her an insight into what a career in this area could look like. Lucy also explains the skills she has developed in a range of subject areas across the school. She is able to pinpoint what subjects like Languages, Engineering and Geography give her in terms of knowledge of the wider world and authentic contexts. Lucy talks about her genuine love of learning and the support she has received from teachers in her time in school.



Click the camera icon to watch the video





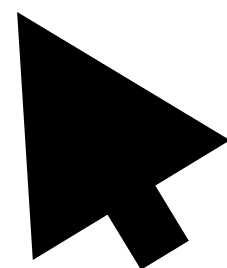
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TRIPLE TAKEAWAY: RETRIEVAL



Kate Jones, *Retrieval Practice: Research & Resources for every classroom*, John Catt Publication



<https://lovetoteach87.com/2020/09/09/a-collection-of-retrieval-practice-research-and-resources/>



David Evans, Teacher of Languages discusses a range of retrieval practice strategies which can be adapted for use in any classroom. Click the headphones to listen!

NEXT ISSUE

ED TECH TIP

We use Google Classroom everyday for distributing resources, setting assignments and for marking students' work. How about using it as a teaching tool when in the classroom?

During lockdown when teaching remotely, we noticed a lot more engagement from our quieter pupils who never seemed to contribute when face-to-face. This was due to the chat function in Google Meet giving these students the opportunity to answer the questions without speaking out loud.

So how can we engage these students in the classroom?

Next time you ask a question to your class, post it in your Google Classroom's Stream. Then give your students time to respond in the comments below. To take it to the next level, AirPlay your stream to the TV screen and discuss the individual responses as they come in. This also gives you plenty of content to deepen the thinking!



THE STAFFROOM PODCAST

In this episode Harry Withers, Lead Learning Coach & Teacher of Drama, talks about his classroom experiences and what motivated him to become a teacher. He chats about his memorable moments and favourite teaching techniques and when things have not completely gone to plan! Whether driving home in the car or going for a walk you can dip into this taste of life at St Cyres. Click the microphone to listen!



We have a staffroom podcast from Jane Morgan, Teacher in Charge of the Hearing Resource base.

What do you want to see in our next issue? Let us know!