

Teaching and Learning – 5 minutes, 5 tips!

EPCS's best ideas, sourced from staff all over the school...

...over a cup of tea!



Issue 2: **Monday, 14th December 2015**

Issued: Half termly

"Respect and Pride"



1 - Resource of the week:

'Don't be Afraid!' Students often freeze with fear when asked to be creative or think of an idea from scratch. Find attached on page 3 some top tips to help break down the fear factor of first getting started with a creative project!

With thanks to Dean Tomkins.

2 – Whole school Literacy and numeracy tips:

Literacy:

Help students to remember key spellings they are repeatedly getting wrong by attaching a numerical value to vowels and consonants. For example, if consonants are worth 10 point and vowels worth 5 points, the spelling of 'sausage' = 50 points. If a student can remember that 'sausage' = 50, they are some way towards self-checking whether their spelling of the word is correct!

With thanks to Mark Wedge.

Numeracy:

Use the rhyme below to help students remember mean, median, mode and range:

Hey diddle diddle the median is the middle
You add then divide for the mean
The mode is the one you see the most

And the range is the difference between!

Could you use rhymes to help students remember the definitions of key terminology in your subject area? **With thanks to Tony Jones.**

3 – Top tip for creating CHALLENGE:

Student voice as a tool to drive differentiation.

One of my favourite things to incorporate at least once a term in all my classes is a 'Stop Start and Continue' activity. Hand out 'Post It' notes to students (preferably three different coloured 'Post-It' notes per student) and have students write what they would like you, the teacher, to stop doing, start doing and continue doing in lessons.

3 – Top tip for creating CHALLENGE: continued

Each thought goes on a different coloured 'Post It' and then students stick the 'Post Its' on sugar paper. This is completely anonymous and can refer to literally any aspect of lessons. This activity not only allows students to be completely honest and have their say but it is incredibly powerful and beneficial to the teacher as well.

It is a 'check in' that allows you to adapt your teaching to the group specifically and ensure that, in the students' eyes, you are meeting their needs.

With thanks to Courtney Pettipas .

4. Current focus in the classroom is:

1. DIRT Time – Are you regularly giving your students the opportunity to respond to verbal and written feedback and to improve/redraft parts of their work?

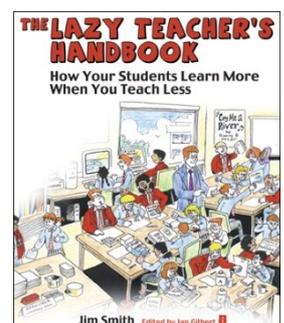
2. Simple differentiation – Using a worksheet/a set of questions which get progressively harder? Why do all students need to start at question 1? Take simple steps to ensure that the students who 'get it' quickly remain stretched and those who don't are appropriately supported.

5 - Recommended reading:

Blog of the month is **Ross McGill's Teacher Toolkit**. McGill blogs about a range of current educational issues. His posts also offer readers some top teaching and learning tips. Check it out at www.teachertoolkit.me

New to the EPCS CPD Library is Jim Smith's '**The Lazy Teacher's Handbook.**'

This accessible book is full of ideas and strategies for ensuring that your students do more work in lessons, and you do less! See Matt Hall if you would like to borrow a copy.



Upcoming CPD events:

1. 19.1.15 3.20-4.10 = Action Research - Increasing challenge in the classroom; Managing difficult conversations.
2. 619.1.15 4.10-5.00 = Running trips; Managing and promoting independent learning.
3. 4.2.15 3.20-4.10 = Action Research – Outstanding classroom practice; Conducting lesson observations and giving feedback.
4. 4.2.15 4.10-5.00 = Inset time dedicated to appraisal reviews.
5. 9.2.15 3.20-4.10 = Primary approaches @ Wooden Hill Primary.
6. *See 'Phase 2' IT training booklet for additional staff IT training over the next half term.

What are Ofsted saying?

In outstanding schools, "staff consistently reflect on and debate the way they teach. They feel deeply involved in their own professional development. Teachers are encouraged to take risks and innovate in ways that are right for their pupils." (OFSTED, Sept 2015).
Talk to your colleagues about teaching and learning! What's really



Have a T+L idea to share? Email it to Matt Hall, so it can appear in the next bulletin!

What is outstanding differentiation ?

....According to teachers...



"Classroom practice that demonstrates inspirational teaching strategies, together with sharply focused and timely support and intervention, matched accurately to individual needs to ensure everyone is supported in their learning." **(Sarah Buchanan)**



"Differentiation involves effective questioning in the classroom, selecting the correct level of difficulty for student and then bouncing questions on to other students to further the answer or to evaluate the answer. It also includes effective feedback in books, making sure that students get personalised comments to help them move forward to the next step or grade." **(Ian Mullenger)**



"Outstanding differentiation is the planning of personalised tasks/activities which makes learning accessible and challenging for all students in the classroom. It takes into account students differing learning styles and starting points." **(Kerry Lees)**



"Outstanding differentiation enables all students in a lesson to access information and make appropriate progress according to their ability. A three tiered level of attainment based on 'Must' 'Should' and 'Could', combined with a considered seating plan and appropriate groups should develop independence and confidence." **(Jonathan Proctor)**



"Outstanding differentiation involves ensuring variety in teaching, learning and assessment techniques. This might involve mixing teacher and student led classroom approaches, ensuring variety in lesson activities and ensuring extension tasks are available to stretch the most able." **(Andrew Mackay)**

What is outstanding differentiation ?

....According to students...



"I think effective differentiation is about students working together in different groups to support one another. I think teachers need to think carefully through when students should be in mixed ability groups, grouped by ability, or left to choose their own groups." (Skyla Atayan Wells, Y7)



"I like working in mixed [ability] groups as this means we can support one another and tackle challenges together." (Josh Dalwood, Y7)



"I like it when teachers set different levelled homework for higher or lower ability students so its always challenging." (Sophie Martin Dye, Y8)



"I like it when we have a choice over the tasks we complete either in lessons or for homework. That way, you can make sure you pick something that challenges you." (Holly Burness, Y9)



"Effective differentiation involves teachers using a variety of teaching strategies to appeal to different learning styles." (Sasha Tatum, Y10)



"I like it when lessons are varied, and teachers employ a range of different tasks and teaching methods - mind maps, bullet point notes, exam questions, drama, presentations etc. This is important as different students like different types of tasks, so tasks have to be varied if everyone is to learn well." (Cassie Capuozzo, Y13)



"Teachers need to be flexible and adapt the speed at which they cover certain topics if individual students require more time. If one student gets something, let them move forwards to more challenging work, but if another student doesn't, don't force them to progress if their understanding is not yet secure." (Dan Stuart, Y13)

What an excellent idea!

Don't be Afraid! Ideas and strategies for helping students overcome the fear of facing creative tasks, courtesy of Dean Tomkins

DON'T BE AFRAID...

The teacher stands before a class of students eagerly awaiting instructions.

Teacher: Think of an idea for a short film.

Silence fills the class. The teacher looks at their blank expressions - this isn't going to be easy.

Student 1: I can't do that!

Student 2: I can't think of anything. I'm no good at this!

Student 3: I haven't got a clue.

Teacher smiles... (really thinks – ****! Come on! What are you all so afraid of? It's not that hard!)

When faced with a class of panicking students what do we do? Panic ourselves?

Here are a few approaches to help break down the fear barrier and help students to get inspired when completing creative tasks:

- **Use a sensory stimulus:** Use music as a source of visualisation or inspiration. Or how about a scene from a book or a quote from a character? Maybe a painting or photograph to provide a starting point for a story? A portrait? A word? A number?
- **Make it real and relevant:** Ask students to base their creative work around something personal, something that's happened to themselves or someone they know, something they'd like to happen to them. Start with the familiar and then use this as a starting point for imaginative development.
- **Collaborative planning:** Mind map an idea (theme) with the class or share an idea to the class and get them to develop the idea in their own way and to feedback. That way one idea becomes many and the problem isn't only solved but it opens up a range of possibilities to develop further.
- **Starting with the end:** Encourage students to think backwards! What is the ending going to be and how can we get there?
- **Fail: The First Attempt in Learning.** Students often freeze at the thought of coming up with an idea for a media or film production. Overcoming fear is the biggest challenge there is. Students are often afraid of making mistakes and therefore fear takes over. Try to create a classroom culture where they are not afraid try things out that might go wrong! It's the only way to learn!