

# Teaching and Learning Link

Spring 2 2024



## Standards: Jason Coe, AP

Maintaining high expectations and standards as a college ensures that the learning experience is positive but, more importantly, that students feel safe and secure at school. Often we talk about the 'broken window effect', where a small amount of damage can lead to an increase in further vandalism. Similarly, wider standards are only kept high if we all play our part in maintaining expectations and don't allow these to break: we must be persistent and consistent in our approach. That said, standards are not simply maintained through punitive approaches or staff presence around college. The experience of students in the classroom also has a key role to play in their engagement and belief in high standards. This Teaching and Learning Link includes some really good examples of how we can optimise our consistency with activities such as exit tickets and retrieval practice, and how we can role-model high standards through excellence in teaching. Further guidance around standards and routines can also be found in the signposted WALKTHRU.

## How can we optimize key routines at the starts and ends of lessons?

### Retrieval practice: Sam Craven, Science, AP

I routinely start my lessons with mini-white board retrieval practice using questions I've written to ensure students have the prerequisite knowledge to access new content. This prerequisite knowledge is often, but not always, based on the learning from recent lessons.

This routine always presented a problem for students who had been absent from previous lessons – they often switched off because they had a reason to opt out. Recently I have changed my approach to my retrieval routine to turn this potential barrier into a mechanism for students to catch up on missed learning.

Now if a student cannot access the retrieval questions due to absence, instead of getting them to sit with a blank mini-white board, I ask them to write down the questions and answers into their exercise books. This simple tweak ensures that students have access to the basic prerequisite knowledge in their exercise books to help them access the new information and has also forced me to ensure my questions and answers allow that to happen.

### Exit Tickets: Kate Arnold, Music

I have been using exit tickets in KS3 lessons since September and have found them a really beneficial addition to classroom routines.

Students have the questions printed in their workbook for each topic, and they write down the answer at the end of the lesson. It is always a simple closed question based on the content of the lesson. Students then show me their answer as they leave and I tick the book, asking them to make corrections if there are any errors. An additional advantage of this approach has been the opportunity to check in with students as they leave, often ending the lesson on a personal interaction e.g. 'have a lovely day'.

One disadvantage is the extra time that has to be built into the lesson for students to fill this in and for them to be ticked as they leave. Now that this routine is rehearsed though, I think the addition of the exit tickets has had a really positive impact overall, particularly from the perspective of embedding routines and managing behaviour, but also checking understanding and learning where there may be gaps in students' knowledge.

## How do lesson booklets in Science support learning?

### Isobel Wilson, Science

The booklets contain all of the content the students need, including a glossary and all the key questions. This means that most of the lesson are delivered using a visualiser, which allows very clear modelling and means students can look back during practice. Theoretically, classes can be taught from the paper resources alone, but I did find that the lessons were much more effective when I integrated Powerpoint slides too.

We have had mixed responses to the booklets from students: some find them very useful and it gives them more confidence in their answers. However, some students told me they find the lessons repetitive and the amount of information they are given overwhelming.

From my own perspective, I think the booklets have elements which can really help the students and they are also very useful for supporting reading in the classroom and for the work which our TAs do. We could argue though that the booklets also reduce stretch opportunities for some students, since everyone has access to the same scaffolding opportunities.

### Zoe Scarrow, TA

We have been using the booklets in Science for about two months and find that they are very useful for TAs to refer to and to help support students, especially if the TA has not been in the previous lesson.

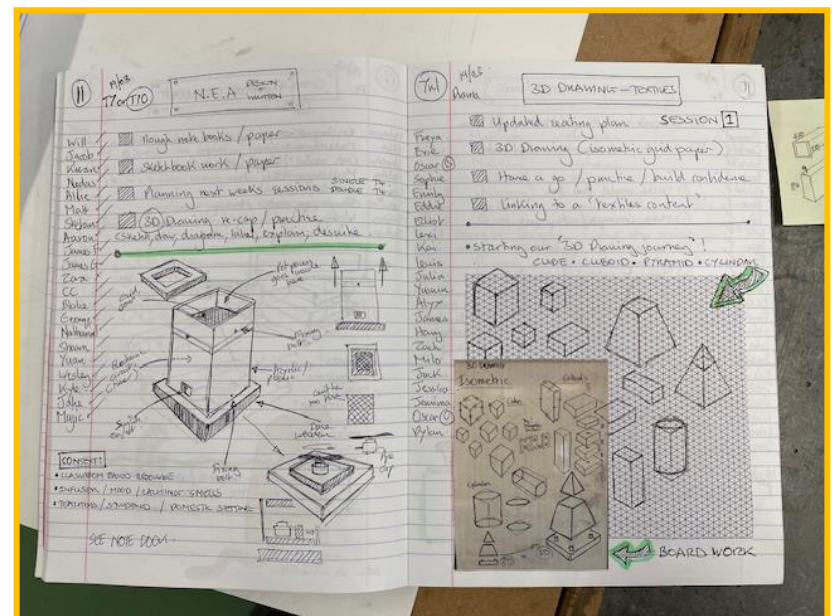
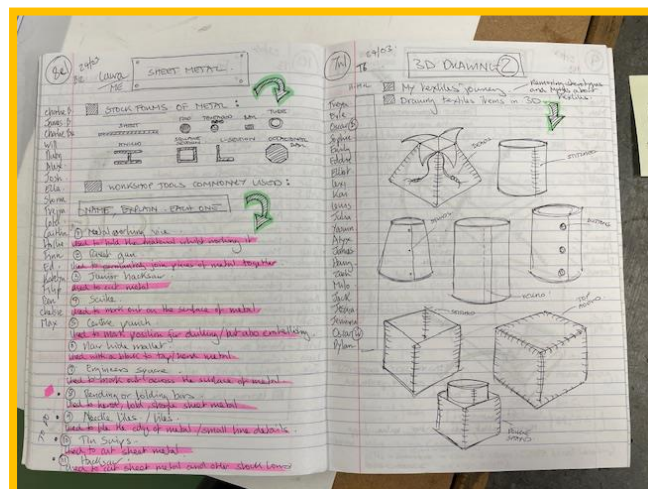
They're great for students to refer to and learn how to highlight key words, which helps with revision skills. They also help if students miss a lesson as the notes are all complete. Legible and complete notes really support our students as it means they don't have to have to write huge streams of writing in their books.

## Can 'messy markbooks' really support our classroom practice?

### Dave Bausor, D&T, says 'yes'!

Dave has used the 'messy markbook' method to track his teaching practice, note new ideas, sketch adjustments, note participation – and so much more...

Check out these examples kindly shared by Dave, and read this David Didau's blogpost more info and ideas about how to implement: <https://learningspy.co.uk/featured/messy-markbooks-how-to-monitor-participation-in-lessons/>



## Refresh classroom standards with the WALKTHRU – The 'Rehearse Routines' technique

We tend to expect students to stick with learned routines, but actually it's **very normal** to experience enforcement fatigue at times. Use this technique when students are **showing collective drift**.

**1** Stop everything else and explain the issue. State your expectations.

**2** Run through key routines again and get students to practise them.

Offering a 're-set' gives everyone in the room the chance to **move on and try again**.





**Which tips or quick hacks work for you?**

I've been trying out the 'Pomodoro' technique. I find that I can be overwhelmed with a long list of things, so it's better for me to break it into sections. Focus on one task for 25 minutes (timing yourself) and then have a 5-minute break doing something completely unrelated and away from a screen. It sounds silly and simple, but you'd be surprised at how much you get done in 25 minutes with no distractions and how refreshing that 5 minutes of break can be.

Charlotte Russell, English

**Gender resources - Tiphaine Langard, MFL**

I've created a Teams channel for the gender resources. Here is a link to the staff SEMS survey report: <https://cmat.sharepoint.com/:p:/r/sites/Staff-ElyCollege/Shared%20Documents/Misogyny%20and%20masculinities/SEMS%20survey%20report%202024%20-%20staff.pptx?d=wd32e33ef9f924c6e9c753f5b6554febb&csf=1&web=1&e=vNekSq>

**Which personal attributes do you aim to exemplify to your students?**

Thank you to everyone who replied to this survey question.

Kindness is at the heart of our practice at Ely, exemplified beautifully here by the word cloud, which foregrounds the most commonly occurring survey response.



**Question 2 from the latest Link survey was "How do you make your high expectations visible?" We really appreciate all the answers - here are some of your strategies:**

**Explicitly modelling** the behaviours that we expect in our students, including respect, kindness, politeness, hard work and attention to detail.

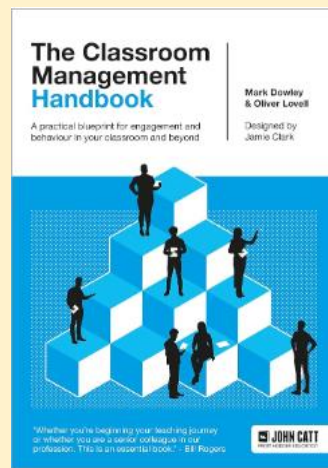
**Meeting the students** at the door helps resolve any issues (uniform, chewing, heightened emotions, etc) before the lesson begins.

**Being explicit** with our expectations with frequent planned reminders.

**Articulating** why we have the expectations we do.

Making use of **exemplar materials** to show students what great work looks like.

**Book Review**



Here is a nice compromise between the slick simplicity of the WALKTHRU's and the granular intensity of TLAC. The authors set out to 'distil the most practical and high impact teaching strategies', with a strong emphasis on the idea that behaviour skills should be taught as an explicit curriculum.

The first half of the book sets out ten basic foundational points and the second offers a range of implementation strategies. This principles-to-practice model is familiar from many other recent pedagogy manuals: what feels fresher here is the detailed modelling of language framing, which offers interesting suggestions of scripts most likely to foster success and mutual respect. **CNO**

**Classroom routines – Rhiannon Upham, Catering**

My classes are expected to line up outside so I can greet them as they come in: they collect their own books from the box. I wait standing up until there is silence and they if they take longer than 1 minute that is added on to the end of the lesson. I explain to the class at the start of each year that I would prefer to give achievement points rather than behaviour points. If they go above their normal working standard and impress me, then they can earn a personalised spatula (it's my equivalent of a Paul Hollywood handshake). These are not given out lightly - they must be earned.

I treat all practicals as small assessments, student watch a demonstration of the dish and write their own recipe. The next lesson they make the dish. The level of ability from the student gauges the level of intervention I give during the practical session. The notes and verbal feedback I give are recorded on Teams via the feedback box for that assignment. I often given students the choice of activity that we will complete in lessons as I like the students to have a choice in the way they learn, something which I will be developing further next year.

**Making high expectations visible through showcasing – Lisa Edwards, CL Art**

Students really like to see visual examples of what they should be doing. I feel that by having high quality work on display students aspire to this and will admire it even if they do not feel they have the skills necessary to get there. It is also great for the students whose work is on display to feel proud and know that their hard work is paying off. Being such a visual subject, we want to immerse our students in exemplary and inspiring visuals which we hope they will aspire to. Students will often ask questions about the work on display which can often lead to very interesting discussions. We have visual exemplars which we regularly show to the students. We also have our "In the Spotlight" display which regularly changes and displays a piece of work by a student that is worthy of high praise.

**NEXT TIME...**

**Join in too!** Showcase **your amazing practice** and contribute to the vibrant T and L culture around college!

The next edition will be on **Knowledge**. We need **YOUR EXPERT ANSWERS** to these questions:

**What is your favourite topic to teach and why?**

**What drives you to improve your subject knowledge?**

**How do you extend your professional network beyond the Trust?**

**How do you engage with other subject specialists in the Trust?**

**How do you prepare when teaching beyond your specialism?**

**Keen to contribute? Good!** Contact **Sam Craven** or **Charity Novick** with ideas, articles, tips, book reviews, questions etc.