FOREWORD

Welcome to our fourth edition.

This magazine is designed to help you keep up to date with the latest thinking and debates in education, in order that we can do our job of changing lives through learning ever better term by term.

This term’s edition focuses on what we know about how assessment can be used to create learning as well as to measure it. There’s also tonnes of useful information on wide-ranging subjects from differentiation to GDPR!

I hope you find this magazine informative, inspiring and a useful vehicle for sharing best practice across our academy. Remember that we always welcome contributions so if you have something you’d like to share in next term’s edition, please send it through to me.

Abby
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WHAT WE KNOW
USING ASSESSMENT FOR LEARNING

Learning = relatively permanent changes in behaviour or knowledge.

In the classroom, we are often guilty of assessing performance rather than learning; ie. how well a student can performing on a task immediately following instruction rather than whether they have retained that knowledge/skill and are able to deploy it a while after the lesson (in other words, whether they have really learnt it).

For example, if I deliver a lesson on war poetry and ask my students some plenary questions at the end of that lesson, they may perform well in these questions (and I’ll feel ace) but really I’ll only be measuring how well they can perform. I am not measuring their learning because I can’t—no time has elapsed so how can I test whether they’ve retained the information over time? I can’t possibly test whether the permanence of the change in their knowledge.

If I test my students a week later, I can assess their learning in a more meaningful way as time has elapsed. If I test them a month later, I get an even better assessment of how well they have learnt the information.

Annoyingly and perhaps counter-intuitively, the conditions that produce the most learning are often ones which are detrimental to immediate performance. Basically, if it feels too easy, there’s probably not a lot of learning.

Forgetting is important.

This graph represents how almost forgetting and then retrieving information serves to strengthen our ability to recall that information over the long-term.

As you can see from the red line, a memory made on day one and not revisited has almost been forgotten by day six. However, the green lines show that if that same memory is accessed repeatedly, it becomes easier to recall.

“The importance of continuing practice beyond the point in time where some...criterion is reached cannot be overemphasised.” (Fitts 1965) In other words, you have to keep going, even after you think you’ve got there. Forget and re-learn and you’ll remember things better and for longer.
Give students the opportunity to almost forget what you’ve taught them and then ask them to recall this information and their learning will be stronger over time.

This chart summaries a study by Roediger & Pyc (2012). They took three groups of students. One group (SSSS) had four separate study sessions on one topic. The second group (SSST) had three study sessions and then a practice test. The third group (STTT) had one study session and then three practice tests.

Roediger and Pyc found that group who had the most study time performed best in the assessment taken after five minutes, but it was the group who had repeatedly been tested who performed best in the long-run. This, Roediger and Pyc concluded, was because the repeated tests forced the STTT group students to recall the knowledge they had almost forgotten and as such these tests were important in strengthening their memories (learning) of the topic studied. It was because of these strengthened memories, that the students from this group performed better than all of the others after a week: there had been a more permanent change in these students’ knowledge.

The students in Roediger and Pyc’s study took all of their practice tests in quick succession, however, studies have found that the spaces between these retrieval practice tests are not significant—what matters is that they happen. You could adapt the spacing between retrieval tests in your classroom in response to how well the students perform: if students are struggling to remember much at all, shorten the gap. Build the space between tests up as students become better at retrieving information.

So, how can you make all this theory work for you in the classroom? Turn the page for some ideas...
Practical strategies for the classroom:

1. Interleave the topics you teach

This allows students to partly forget what you’ve taught them as they switch between topics, but forces them to frequently recall learning from previous topics as they are revisited—helping to strengthen students’ memories (learning).

2. Design cumulative assessments

Test students on work they covered in previous units rather than just the one studied most recently. This means students must continually retrieve information they have almost forgotten, strengthening their memories (learning).

3. Don’t allow students access to their exercise books, revision guides, iPads, etc. when revisiting prior learning

Doing this forces students to recall what they can from their own memories (and thus strengthens their learning). Every time we given students information to consume again, that they could have retrieved themselves, we are denying them a learning opportunity.
4. Ask students to summarise previous learning

Ask students to summarise last lesson’s learning at the start of each lesson rather than doing this yourself. This helps them practice retrieving information and hence strengthens their memory. It also gives you an indication of how well this information has been learnt.

5. Create knowledge organisers

These are simply documents that tell students all the facts they need to know about a topic. Direct students to use them for independent homework and revision tasks and then use them to test their learning of these facts. Save yourself time by using the same document you give the students with parts deleted as starter activity quizzes—the students need to fill in the gaps. Again, this retrieval practice strengthens students’ memories of these key facts but also lets you see what has not yet been learned. Revisit questions that students are unable to answer in future starter quizzes.

6. Encourage students to use flashcards to revise

Flashcards have a question on one side and the answer of the other. Looking at the question without being able to see the answer immediately promotes retrieval. It’s much more effective than students simply reading back over their notes.

7. Use low-stakes starter quizzes on prior learning

Do this every lesson—it’ll get students used to having to recall information—they’ll have to do it in the real exams!
SEND STUDENTS
A TECHNIQUE TO HELP

Nic Robinson

DSA (Down Syndrome Association) says:
“The inclusion of students can promote high self-esteem, independence in daily living skills, greater academic achievement, and positive social interaction. Other students also benefit in knowing how to work with students with SEND”

The Benefits of Inclusive Education

Differentiation is an important and effective part of teaching which helps the students work at their own level and pace for them to make progress and achieve. This also helps to build up their confidence.

If the work is suitably differentiated, then students can complete it with less support. This helps to free the LSA to support other students in the classroom which in turn helps with the opportunity for the SEN students to work more independently.

When children attend inclusive classes with and without disabilities they learn from each other and learn to appreciate diversity. Respect and understanding grows when children of different abilities and cultures learn together. It can help with developing friendships and learning the social skills that they need in later life which means withdrawal from mainstream activities, either physical or by using totally different subject matter should be avoided as this restricts opportunities.

Instructions and useful tips:
Use visual clues/aids
- Demonstrate a class model to show how to set out and complete the work.
- Use a lesson menu to write down instructions and tick off each one as they complete it (this will also help them see their own progress).
- Break down work into smaller chunks.
- Keep instructions simple.
- Read instructions together as a class.
- Write homework on milk or in planners (give a full week to complete).

Aids
- White boards
- Print out A3 sheets.
- Colour code books/equipment for dyslexia.
- Use BLACK pen on whiteboards for students/colour blind.
- Have instructions printed out on sheets/enlarging font when needed.
- Sit students together or near each other/what works best for their learning.
- Use a word bank and the starting letter for cues.

BE FLEXIBLE- Goals must be made achievable and meaningful.
Our student leaders are a very proud, very visible face of our student body to visitors and stakeholders; be they a senior prefect, subject prefect, ambassador or librarian. These leadership skills that come very naturally to some students but less so to others are not developed solely outside of the classroom and almost every activity we do in the classroom can support – or indeed transform – the perception of leadership among our students as well as support their learning.

Student leadership revolves around three core principles of which each has a number of strands:

**Developing myself** – commitment, organisation & planning, communication, being accountable.

**Contributing to my community** – being a role model, using my skills to help others, understanding my community.

**Working with others** – team working, presenting, reflection.

In turn, each strand has a number of shoots that are easily recognisable as skills we all nurture, encourage, and expect in our classrooms.

We are helping our students develop their leadership skills every day. Punctuality and regular attendance is an example of ‘commitment’; behaving well is ‘being a role model’; and while team working, presenting and reflection are all self-explanatory it is important to recognise that these are leadership skills. You can help students to develop these skills in the classroom (as well as out of it) by commending a particular action as an act of leadership and acknowledging this success.

How student leadership is co-ordinated here in the academy is fairly fluid: so much depends on changes in cohorts of our students and their circumstances, but every department now affords all students of all year groups a leadership position. Our students are very proud to earn their status and to wear an emblem of leadership in a subject they enjoy and excel in. Many students are happy to apply for leadership roles while others are less confident. Recent feedback from students suggests that it may be helpful to these less confident students if a member of staff were to encourage them to apply so please consider whether this is something your team might be able to do.

Finally, to the council, a fine bunch of young people who discuss and share matters that are truly important to them. It is by them, for them. We are lucky here at WLA: our council is devoted to improving their own circumstances as well as those of others (it was council who nominated both Ken and Eli for their Golden Apples). They firmly root their solution-based discussions around teaching and learning, and safety and welfare, they share all of their ideas with staff (via me in monthly minutes).
The iPads and also access to computers can be one of the most powerful tools available when preparing for any exam, test or controlled assessment. The primary reason being that they can grant students near total independence of learning and individualisation of tasks.

Last year the most popular uses by students to support revision were:

- Accessing past papers, mark schemes and reports. These were either direct through Exam board websites, or by being uploaded to Google Classroom or Milk for students to access.

- Accessing revision checklists, specifications and PLCs. These again were shared via Google Classroom or Milk.
- Accessing online textbooks through free or subscription websites such as Kerboodle or iBooks
- Using specific video sharing platforms to access revision clips or recap lessons. More and more of these are becoming available and several online tutors have their own channels on Youtube. These can be embedded in Google Classroom really easily. Other websites like Kahn Academy and Futurelearn also have lots of accessible revision videos.
• Accessing content specific websites. There are numerous examples of these across all subjects. The most obvious being BBC Bitesize or S-cool.

• Downloading, creating and accessing flashcards for solo revision. There are many sites that can be used for this, but Quizlet has a large base to choose from.
Completing and quizzing through low stakes assessment. Several websites and apps are great for this... The best I feel are Quizlet, quizlet live, Kahoot and Quizizz. They all have different functions, plusses and minuses.

Collaboration and Sharing. Students were able to share their revision resources, links to great websites and videos, responses to examination questions and also areas of need to support lesson planning online via Google Classroom.

Hopefully these suggestions will enable you to identify one key area that will enhance your classes preparation for any exam or test. If you would like any support in this please ask. All your classes should already be created for you in Google Classroom. All you need to do is login and post. (There is a guide on this in issue one of Changing Lives).
Last year students said:

"Sharing resources with other students has become much easier. We upload revision notes, links to great websites and explanation videos which we would usually have to find by ourselves, or wait until the lesson to share."

"iPads have been really helpful in the way that it is now so much easier to communicate with teachers and this way we now have a record of what has been said which makes it a lot less stressful when dealing with coursework and exam questions."

"During revision some teachers have just been constantly putting things online like specification sheets and activities that don't get lost so they are always there to go back to."

"Though this is not applicable to all subjects, the iPad has been incredible to do coursework on as recording videos instead of explaining what has happened through text. This saves so much time and can result in everyone getting better grades, especially those who don't communicate through text too well."

I use the iPads a lot for flash card apps when learning vocabulary. I find it's really helpful to do on the bus to and from school and in the car on the way to sport training, it doesn't require wifi and saves a lot of time as I'm not having to cut up and write my own flashcards - which become hard to carry around all the time.

For my essay-based subjects it is really easy to email my teacher with essay drafts and have them marked: it means I can have an essay marked in the same night instead of the next lesson. This means I can be more prepared for the lessons so the lessons become more in depth and thorough.

"The main benefit of having the iPads for revision is the one to one communication we can have with our teachers. Teachers can send useful revision links and printouts as well as documents created on all the different apps to help us right up until we go into the exam."

"I have found the iPad very useful in the sense of being able to download and access PDF past papers, this helps as I can learn the techniques needed and then can check how well I have been doing!"
‘Yes the iPad has helped me in both motivation towards work as it is easier and convenient, and organisation. I am able to research information that I do not know very easily which I can apply into my work or home learning. It is easier to access past papers, flashcards and tuition videos. Also for emailing teachers with queries, emailing for homework sheets/support and finally being able to use it on the bus to and from school.’
GENERAL DATA PROTECTION REGULATIONS (GDPR)
WHAT IS IT?

Stephen Lester

It is new Europe-wide legislation covering data protection which comes into effect on May 25 2018. It replaces the existing UK Data Protection Act.

Why the new legislation?
Because more and more activities operate across borders and the existing legislation which applies in individual countries does not work effectively. In addition, electronic cloud data storage operates across several countries, with back up servers just adding to the complexity. There are lots of concerns over data losses and breaches for example laptops with personal names, address and bank details, memory sticks with tax information, hacking into company websites and the more recent Facebook / Cambridge Analytica use of personal data.

What are the changes?
There is more right to information, to have data removed and organisations have to report data breaches within 72 hours. Individuals have a right to ask organisations what data is held on them and the specific reasons why the data is held. Organisations have to keep data secure and to protect it. We have to appoint a Data Protection Officer who will support us in meeting the GDPR and in investigating any data breaches.

What is personal data?
It includes a very wide range of information including: our names, addresses, phone numbers, email addresses, bank, credit cards, attendance data, attainment data, exams, references, performance management and images – photos and video. It includes data whether it is stored in paper or electronic form.

What is West Lakes Academy doing?
We have developed a GDPR Policy, covering how we will comply with the regulations. We have collated a summary of all the personal data which we hold, where it is stored, who has access to it (including other organisations e.g. the Department for Education and software systems). We are preparing our systems and procedures so we are able to respond to any requests which are made. We are ensuring that third parties have robust systems to protect academy data which is shared with them. We are tightening up procedures on access to data and systems such as: ensuring computers are secure (people not logged in on two computers); improved filtering and firewalls (we have changed all our security systems to the industry leading Sophos software); planning for encryption of all portable storage media (USB memory sticks and hard drives); and also ensuring our paper records are secure.
What do I need to do?

1. Read and understand the GDPR policy when it is published.
2. Protect all data: keep paper records secure, have strong passwords which you keep securely, get portable memory storage encrypted by Network Support, take particular care when using remote access especially on computers which are shared by other people, e.g. family.

We will continue to update everyone and refresh information on GDPR in the coming months.
BOOK REVIEW

Rebecca Graham

The author, Mike Gershon, is a Social Sciences teacher in London, a trainer and educational consultant, and the creator of the starter generator and plenary producer that we’ve used before in school. Therefore this means that all of Mike’s work is closely focused on giving practical, as well as quick tips, which can be quickly implemented into our everyday practice.

This book identifies three areas of teaching where stretching and challenging learners can be quickly introduced and gives a range of strategies to use. The three stages are: at the lesson planning stage, within the lesson structure and within the pace of the lesson. Gershon believes that in order for More-Able students to succeed they need to feel motivated, engaged and enthused by teaching as this fosters a love for learning in general. Consequently, they succeed as they are more familiar with puzzle finding and working through problems which allows them to connect ideas across subjects and achieve that elusive ‘perceptive’. What I find most useful about this book is that most of the strategies aren’t new or difficult to use in class, meaning that I can pick it up while planning or thinking about a lesson and five minutes later I’ll have something to try.

Gershon uses Vygotsky’s notion of the Zone of Proximal Development as inspiration for the strategies, suggesting that in order to challenge the Most Able you need to adjust your lessons so they are always being pushed to the edge of their capabilities. A lot of the strategies in his book aim to make students feel uncertain, forcing them to keep their thinking sharp and stopping them from becoming complacent and passive in lessons. Again this book comes in handy, because if I see that I have targeted my lesson too easy for my key students, I can bring out a couple of the questioning tools to make it more challenging and make them active learners again. Consequently, quite a few of his strategies essentially make the teacher play devil’s advocate, giving critical and opposing ideas as the basis of a lesson or during the lesson, in order to encourage the students to sharpen their critical thinking skills.

To give an example, I teach top set Year 9, which has a mix of high achieving boys and girls, some of whom enjoy English, and learning in general, and are therefore willing to try anything I throw at them, and others who tend to be more passive letting other students give all the answers and ideas. So I decided to use them as guinea pigs for Gershon’s book, as I was struggling to challenge all of them in the class. I started with planning: I was trying to get the students to consider alternative interpretations on their own, as they were very reliant on my opinion and viewed this as the only correct one. So I based my whole lesson around a controversial IF question. Consequently, I asked them what appeared to be a ridiculous and obsolete question - What would happen if Ophelia’s mother had been included in the play? I’d given them a section of the text to look at (which is something they were used to), and I went over their prior knowledge of gender roles in the 17th century and the key characters. But apart from that I left them alone for
20 minutes to consider the implications of this on Ophelia, Polonius, Hamlet, Laertes and the whole play’s message. The resulting answers were outstanding, including not only language and structural points but also comments on form which is much harder. They’d also naturally linked this to a feminist criticism of the text to help them explore Shakespeare’s reason for omitting the character: all of which is A Level! I couldn’t believe such a seemingly simple and random question could evoke such a developed discussion and it was because they were generally interested in why I’d asked such a random question. They also wanted to work out the puzzle, even my more reluctant speakers were arguing that their interpretation had merit. Although they did find it difficult at first, as I wasn’t giving any guidance on their thoughts, I’d tried to negate this by pairing them up for the discussion. This lessened the panic factor that their answers could be considered incorrect and I made sure to point out that as Shakespeare is deceased any interpretation (as long as it had justification from either within the text or within the context) could be considered correct. The result of this was a range of almost 15 different interpretations with a variety of evidence, but more importantly it made them feel more confident in giving their opinions and exploring evidence from across the text in later lessons.

I think the biggest thing I learnt, or was reminded, from reading this text is that I need to give tasks the appropriate amount of time. Stereotypically, I expect a More-Able student and group to grasp things quickly. However I think I need to remember that I’m usually asking them to reason out problems and activities that are infinitely harder, meaning they need to be given the focussed time to consider their answers. Without this I tend to get the equivalent of a maths answer with no working out, which means they are unable to understand the process needed to access higher level question in exams and therefore the task becomes less effective, no matter how engaging. After the initial 20 minutes and sharing of ideas, they did need (and want) extra time to find evidence to support points that were weak or unsubstantiated. By the 20 minutes they’d all clearly understood, and demonstrated, that they understood the way to interpret the text and require evidence. The extra time allowed them to hone these skills individually and ask any questions that were occurring. But I genuinely believe that this extra individual time is what made them better learners and interpreters in later lessons. Consequently, even during tasks such as DIRT time, I now give more time to allow students to consider their responses more carefully and come up with more developed answers. I also use this time to walk around the class and ask students more probing questions from the book such as –

- can you justify that view from elsewhere (which gets them whole text and structure marks as well as producing a more developed answer);
- is it possible that a 21st century audience would consider this differently (which gets them exploration of effect marks);
- and, my favourite is just to completely disagree and make them prove my argument before weighing up which side is more effective (which is both critical and evaluative).

I feel that this book and his blog has really supported my More-Able teaching this year. As well as the text itself being heavily broken down making it easy to read, it doesn’t require a cover to cover read in order to access and utilise the strategies making it a really quick go to guide. Especially as I don’t have a lot of time to sit and read big chunks of text to help planning. Plus it’s currently free on Kindle Unlimited – as well as in the library!

*50 Quick Ways to Stretch and Challenge More Able Students* is available in the CPD library now!
Providing advice

- Give non-confrontational advice to help students correct their inappropriate behaviour
- Make sure that the advice follows a ‘cause and effect’ model
- Share with them information about how the world works!

The rationale:
Giving advice is often a very much overlooked behaviour management strategy. It is important that the advice is about the behaviour and not the person! Try to make sure that the advice links the behaviour with an undesirable outcome. If it all possible try to make the advice positive!

A real life situation:

Mr Steale is a science teacher. There is an expectation that all students wear goggles when doing practical work that involves using hazardous chemicals. He notices that a group of five boys are not wearing their goggles. He walks over to the table and says to one of the boys, “Sam, it’s important to wear goggles when using acid in case it gets splashed in our eyes, thanks!” Mr. Steale then moves towards another group of students. All of the boys quickly put on their goggles.

Mr Sheldon has a different strategy. He uses humour to get the desired outcome. He says ‘It’s better to look a bit stupid than to never be able to look again?’
**Keep it short and simple**

- Give short, simple directions (simply describe the problem)
- Focus on the key issue (primary behaviour)
- Identify the problem (the behaviour not the person)
- Resolve the problem (give a choice)

**The Rationale:**
When we get frustrated with low-level persistent disruptive behaviour we tend to vent our frustration by going on and on about the behaviours. These extended ‘monologues’ often give students what they want—that is to see an emotional reaction. More often than not these ‘monologues’ focus on the negative, are directed at the person rather than the behaviour and have little impact on the original issues.

A real life situation:

Emma is often late for lessons because she has (allegedly) been gossiping, re-applying her make-up and doing her hair. Everyone in the class knows this and the class teacher has had enough. Compare the following interventions:

“That’s the final straw, Emma! I’m sick and tired of you sauntering into the room whenever you feel like it. If you spent less time preening yourself and more time in lessons you might do better in school. Your KUDOS career report was totally right...you’re never going to be anything more than a shop assistant. Your sister was the same etc…”

“Emma, you can choose to arrive for the next lesson on time or you can choose to do a lunchtime detention, thanks!” - short, sharp and straight to the point.