

# Bishop Rawstone Teaching and Learning Newsletter, June 2015



## The themes for this newsletter are:

Differentiation  
Growth mindset – resilience and challenge  
Scaffolding writing  
Around School  
Worship Ideas

### Practical Differentiation

In Shanghai, *“the model of differentiation and ability is entirely different to that typical in England. All children are assumed to be capable of understanding, and ideas are elaborated in different ways in order to encourage individual understanding... Singapore, Shanghai, Japan and Finland...all support a central model of ability and progression”*

#### Teach to the top, support at the bottom

It is much easier to differentiate down than up so getting all students to do something they find difficult ensures all students will be challenged. They will naturally make mistakes and their struggle will allow us to better identify what intervention is needed – as individuals and as a class.

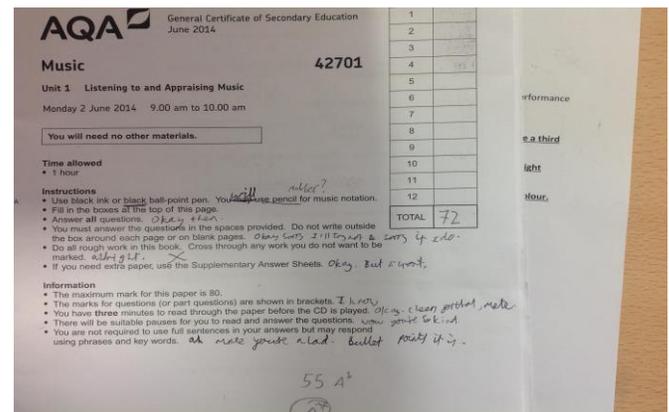
Students should be expected to get over the same bar, but will need different ladders so effective differentiation starts with the end point and then a plan of how to enable all students to get there. There are three important factors in effective differentiation:

**1. Routines and relationships** – knowing the data and your students will allow you to plan, deliver and tailor lessons to the individual needs of each student. The way seating plans, questioning and feedback is used will strengthen as relationships are developed and you determine just how you can support each individual student.

**2. Marking** – the most effective way to differentiate is by seeing what mistakes our students have made and then giving them specific feedback. Differentiate through ‘live marking’ as they are writing/working in class. By modelling and deconstructing the process slowly and carefully, students can tackle things in stages so that feedback is continual from the teacher or via peer/self assessment against success criteria and modeled work.

**3. Explicit modelling and scaffolding** – we know it’s not enough to provide a checklist of success criteria or an exemplar of outstanding work unless we allow students to pick apart why the piece is excellent and the thought process behind its creation. We don’t learn from watching experts work, we learn from having the process broken down so we can have a go ourselves and learn from our mistakes.

Ellen Palmer used this approach successfully with her Year 11 music class as she guided them through annotating their exam paper, making notes and responding to guidance given, even on the front page as can be seen below:



Some students need scaffolds to help them make a start but the trick is to know who needs what and then to remove these scaffolds as quickly as possible so students do not become over reliant on them. Students can also be hugely supported by speaking tasks. It is often true that they can write what they can say so improving what and how they say things can help them develop their written work – more on oracy in the literacy section.



Geraldine has been trialling using a visual icon as a marker for extra challenge on homework and classwork tasks. Named Challenge Man, it can be placed on a task so that pupils know what they can include within their work to maximise progress. With continued use, it becomes a familiar signpost indicating to pupils how they can push themselves to incorporate more complex structures and language within their work.

**“Skilful questioning is key.”** Jane Jones HMI.

1. Move from shallow, closed ‘memory’ questioning (who, what, where, when) to deep, open questioning:  
Convergent-thinking questions: why, how, in what way?  
Divergent thinking questions suppose, predict, if... then..., how might, what if...
2. Insist on oral precision: ‘say it again properly’  
[@Headguruteacher](#)
3. Use inclusive questioning [@HuntingEnglish](#)
4. Use wait time to gain extended responses  
[@Improving Teaching](#)
5. Require differentiated verbal responses: sentence, extended sentence, paragraph...
6. Develop effective questioning. Powerpoint [@Love Learning Ideas](#)
7. Differentiate responses:

Simple	Complex
Agree	Connect
	Expand
Build upon	Defend
	Disagree
Challenge	Diverge
	Rephrase
	Summarise

**Great website with ideas on differentiation:**

<http://www.lovelearningideas.com/blog-archive/2015/1/31/meaningful-manageable-differentiation>

**Mistakes are the portals of discovery’ – James Joyce**

There is a danger that some students flounder relative to others in a high challenge culture and a risk that they continually shoot their hands up for help, declare they can’t do it and quickly become labelled as low-achievers as expectations of them fall. Their own expectations of themselves also drop and as a result, they can produce work that is sub-standard; we associate certain students with their mediocre initial offerings without always enabling them to push forward, insisting that they produce and experience excellence. Like the message in [Ron Berger’s critique method](#) about Austin’s butterfly, students must be made aware that we will not accept mediocre work and they must be prepared to fail to succeed. Try this clip on failure. [Keep Moving Forward!](#)

## Deliberate and Continual Practice

Students often give up easily or see making mistakes as evidence that they are no good at something. Many students commit many hours to playing computer games where the goal is to master the game and reach the end. They get constant and instant feedback about what works and what doesn’t and then they get the opportunity to try out this feedback until they get it right. Kids that quickly give up at school are willing to persevere at Call of Duty until they overcome their limitations. Why do they do it? Because they want to win. Being killed endlessly is frustrating but the pleasure comes from mastery. However, the mastery comes from practising continually in order to get it right before they move on.

But why is it that these same kids moan at doing something hard in class? What is it that ‘engages’ them with computer games but turns them off with, say, fractions? Hattie says in *Visible Learning for Teachers*, ‘Sometimes learning is not fun. Instead, it is just hard work; it is deliberate practice; it is simply doing some things many times over. The kind of deliberate practice advocated here is *not* rote learning or repetitive ‘skill and drill’. Two important components are regular high quality feedback and plenty of opportunities to respond and perform.

## Brain. Book. Board. Buddy. Boss.

Being independent resilient learners and thinkers is part of being able to tackle any type of challenge but how can you stop students from constantly turning to you without first having used strategies to help themselves?

**Before you ask a question, think!**  
**Brain. Book. Buddy. Boss.**

What do I already know?

What have I got with me? (book, a textbook or anything that might help me?)

What do my friends know?

Finally, ask the teacher.

## What is Growth Mindset? Carol Dweck

**Talent and ability is not fixed. It can be developed and improved through high expectations, hard work, effort, determination and practice. This is what growth mindset is all about.**

Dweck believes that in a fixed mindset students believe their basic abilities, their intelligence, their talents, are just fixed traits. They have a certain amount and that's that. In a growth mindset students understand that their talents and abilities can be developed through effort, good teaching and persistence. They don't necessarily think everyone's the same or anyone can be Einstein, but they believe everyone can get smarter if they work at it.

This sounds very positive but also brings its problems as we start to question the way we talk to students and the way in which schools operate. Does this mean no one meets their target or fulfils their academic potential as no one really knows how far reaching it is? Developing a [growth](#) mindset rather than a fixed one is getting students to think about their own thinking. Enabling students to explicitly identify how they should plan, monitor themselves as they work, and evaluate themselves (and others) more consciously in each subject area. There are common principles to allow students to better self-regulate their learning.

- Create space for new ideas
- Strive for excellence
- Embrace the challenges
- Persist in the face of difficulties
- Understand that success requires hard work and effort
- Build time for self-reflection
- Learn from feedback
- Be inspired by the excellence of others

**Rich Tea**

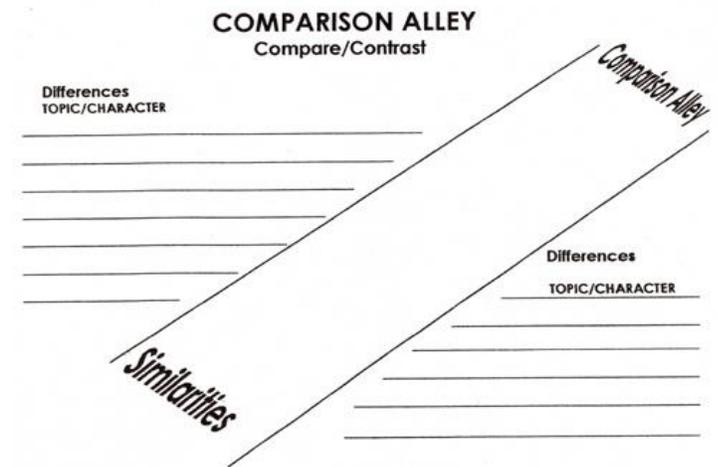


**Hob Nob?**

In a Peter [Kay](#) way, we need to produce the Hob Nobs of learners..not Rich Tea!

## Scaffolding Writing

When planning a comparison of two or more items, it is useful to list the similarities and differences in order to make the writing as clear and complete as possible. Some teachers use Venn diagrams but the space is not always big enough in the middle. You could try ...



Then to slow down their writing to get them to think about each word, sentence and paragraph, try.....

### **SLOW WRITING**

Students first have to double space their writing (which they find hard at first). Then you give them a series of questions for each sentence. For example:

1. Your first sentence must start with a present participle (that's a verb ending in '-ing').
2. Your second sentence must contain only three words.
3. Your third sentence must contain a semi-colon.
4. Your fourth sentence must be a rhetorical question.
5. Your fifth sentence will start with an adverb.
6. Your sixth sentence will contain a simile.

Once they've finished, they get to improve. This is where the double spacing comes into its own. They have to interrogate every single word and consider whether there might be a better word. They look at every sentence and ask, could it begin differently? Should it be longer or shorter? Are they sure it makes sense?

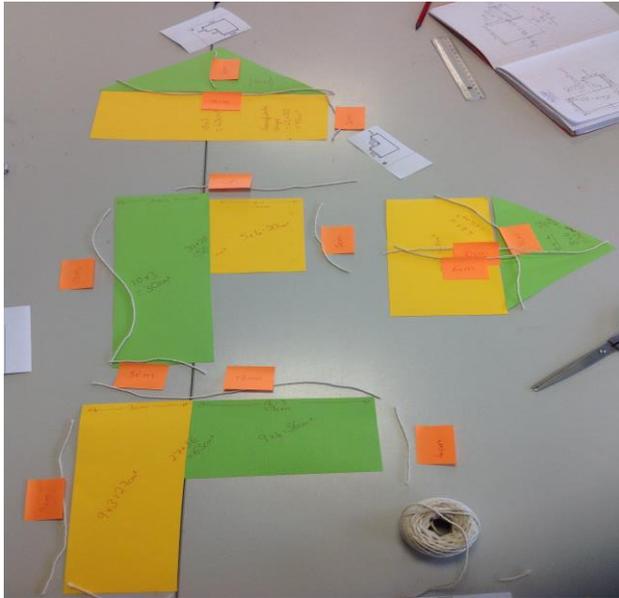
I tried this with my lower ability year 8s for varying sentences and it worked a treat; they all had to think about the content but also had to get the punctuation in. As a challenge, some created questions for each other.

### **Other Slow Writing ideas include:**

- pop a load of different sentence instructions into a hat and give everyone a random selection
- give students lists of numbers - the number of words in their sentences must conform to these numbers
- paired writing – get students to write alternate sentences and question each other about their choices

## Around the School

### String and post-its with Ellen and Irene



### Compound area in maths

### Pin interest with Claire

**Spelling Rules**

**Spelling Rules Reference Sheet** (link goes to "Print this Page" option on ...)

Scholastic.com

scholastic.com

Prepositions

above, below, beneath, beside, in, back, in front, of, between, in, out, inside

## Twitter with Tom

This year Twitter formed a major part of the revision schedule in geography. Dedicated half hour sessions covered one of the six units of work, delivering both content and exam tips. Each unit of work had a hashtag so that students could ask questions during the half hour and interact with their teachers. With these conversations being on Twitter rather than email, other students could see the interactions and add to the discussions. All tweets were added to a blog at the end of each session which students could access for their revision.

Over the last three months, the Twitter page received over 41 thousand impressions (every time a tweet is seen), from 583 tweets. Feedback from students is extremely positive and Twitter is something that humanities are looking to develop further.

### Geography Twitter Revision Sessions

Revise with us! We'll tweet everything you need to know for each unit of work. Have a question? Tweet us back and we'll answer it!

Water on the Land	The Restless Earth	Ice on the Land	Population Change	Urban Environments	Tourism
Monday 27th April	Tuesday 28th April	Wednesday 29th April	Thursday 30th April	Tuesday 5th May	Wednesday 6th May

All start at seven o'clock and last for just half an hour.

@brgeography

## Worship News

In the new academic year, there are going to be regular after school opportunities provided for support and training in leading, and involving students in leading worship in school. The first three will be:

- Wednesday 16 September
- Thursday 15 October
- Tuesday 10 November
- 



Sessions will run from 3.30 -4.30pm; the aim will be to better support colleagues for planning and leading worship. Additionally over the next few weeks some guidance documents I have written will be coming out, that will again aim to help you in this way.

Why not grab a cream tea and share ideas at the Teach Meet@ St Wilfrid's, Blackburn

Thursday, 2<sup>nd</sup> July, 4.30. Register on the link: <http://teachmeet.pbworks.com/w/page/94454525/TeachMeet%20Lancashire>