

# Teaching & Learning Newsletter

Bishop Rawstorne

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## Target Literacy

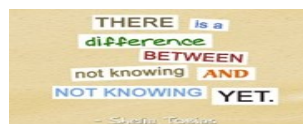


### Top Tips for Developing Accuracy in Written Work

1. Encourage independence by asking students to look in a **dictionary** for spellings rather than giving the answer (for difficult words it can be helpful to give pupils the first three letters to get them started.)
2. When you have corrected a spelling, ask the pupil to write the word out three times next to/underneath the correction, and encourage them to keep a spelling log of key words for future reference.
3. Use **peer assessment** as a means to mark for literacy eg. to check for accurate use of full stops and capital letters. Even getting them to check for correct use of capital letters in dates and titles will remind them of the importance of literacy in all lessons.
4. Get students to self assess for literacy, going through with a green pen correcting mistakes; don't take in any work which hasn't been self assessed first!
5. Set high expectations and stick to them. Insist that students redo any work that isn't up to standard and don't accept any work that hasn't been self assessed with green pen first.

### Themes for this Month

- *Developing accuracy in written work*
- *Growth mindset and resilience*
- *Enhancing the progress of vulnerable students*



### The Power of NOT YET!

Do some of your students give up? Do you have trouble motivating some students when the going gets tough? What about bright students who are risk adverse? With the move to the new GCSEs and the requirement for students to struggle for longer with problems, what can we, as classroom teachers, do?

You've probably heard of Dr. Carol Dweck who researched and coined the Growth Mindset idea. This is the research that says that most of us have fixed or growth mindsets and these can be different with each subject we encounter. However, it can be difficult for us to transition a student from a fixed mindset (I can't program this *full stop*) to a growth one (I can't program it *at the moment*). This is where the power of **NOT YET** comes in.

In **TAC**, we are using these powerful words to encourage and inspire resilience in problem solving and struggling with difficult tasks. We may use these super hero words to say any of the following:

"You have **not yet** fully answered the question"

"You have **not yet** included all of the detail to gain full marks"

"You have **not yet** mastered this skill"

"This homework is **not yet** finished"

"This homework is **not yet** good enough"

discourage. They begin the process of a student believing that they can improve themselves. They inspire the student to try again. They develop the **growth mindset** of not giving up. And ultimately, they build resilience and a **growth mindset** about your subject.

## Top T&L strategy: The Rule in the Room

One of the loveliest things about this strategy is that it really doesn't require much preparation – and no resource-making at all. The fun begins by sending one volunteer out of the classroom to wait outside the door where they can't hear the discussion that's about to take place between you and the remaining pupils. Whilst the volunteer is out of ear-shot, you will establish with the class, a **rule in the room** to which they must all adhere. The *rule* will of course be linked to what the pupils have been learning about. For example, if you have been teaching them about different **poetic devices**, you may want to test their understanding of one of the devices by setting a rule like: “**You must use alliteration somewhere in your answer**”.

When the volunteer re-enters the classroom, he or she must select classmates at random and ask each of them in turn, general “small-talk” questions, such as “**What did you do last night?**” “**What did you eat for breakfast?**” “**What is your pet's name**”, etc. Each pupil chosen to answer a question must do so by adhering to the rule in the room. - So if the rule was to use **alliteration**, they might make up an answer like: “Last night I **W**ent for a **W**alk in my **W**ellies because it was **W**et and **W**indy” or “For breakfast I ate **C**runchy **C**ornflakes with **C**ustard” or “My pet's name is **T**winkle **T**oes **T**oby”. The volunteer must, of course, listen carefully to classmates' answers and try to determine what the *rule in the room* might be.

What you're doing here, is requiring that the pupils give an **understanding performance** – a demonstration of how well they have understood and can apply a concept. After all, it's one thing to be able to repeat back to you parrot-style “Alliteration is where two or more words starting with the same sound are used in quick succession”... it is a different level of learning altogether to be able to **use** that technique in context...

The possibilities for the **rule in the room** are endless! Perhaps pupils have to cleverly include as many key terms from a particular revision topic into their answer as possible. Perhaps they have to answer the question as if they follow the customs of a particular country - or a particular historical era. Perhaps they have to answer as if they are a given fictional character or famous figure. Maybe they have to use a particular grammatical device or persuasive technique - or they have to answer in a particular rhythm. Maybe they have to include a prime number somewhere in their answer!

More great things about this strategy? It promotes **pupil led-learning**; in fact the pupils pretty much take over the lesson with this activity! It is also an activity which ensures that there are no “passengers” – every pupil is obliged to be hyper-alert because no-one knows who is going to be selected to exhibit the **rule in the room**!

## Narrowing the Gap: Strategies to

### Support your Vulnerable Students

We know that there is still work to do to enhance the progress made by vulnerable students and those with additional learning needs in order to narrow the attainment gap. Here are a few simple ideas :

- Mark their classwork and homework first, so that their feedback is the most detailed.
- Make sure that they are responding to your feedback through allowing sufficient DIRT time in class.
- Ask them personalised, differentiated questions to check for misconceptions
- Go to them first when checking understanding of tasks.
- Target them for giving praise and rewards.

## Developing Resilience in Gifted and Talented

### Students

A key starting point in unpacking resilience with gifted and talented students is to normalise the challenges they may face and explore the emotional responses they may have. It is important for the gifted and talented to feel they have permission to share their emotions: to be able to say when they are feeling stressed by workload, when nervous about exams and when feeling under pressure due to others' high expectations as well as their own. Rather than feeling these emotions must be kept silent and hidden to avoid losing their gifted status in the eyes of others, gifted students need to know these feelings are **natural responses**. There is nothing wrong with feeling nervous, anxious or fearing failure.

Developing resilient responses to the challenges of learning requires **self-knowledge**. While neuroscience may leave some cold, gifted and talented students can be expected to grapple with the working of the brain and gain an understanding of the processes involved when they are emotionally flooded. Understanding what is happening in the brain when we are stressed, nervous, angry or disappointed is the first step in taking action to regulate such emotions and therefore equipping the students with **strategies to respond resiliently**.

A new generation of social and emotional literacy programmes, such as **MindUP**, is introducing students to their brains. **MindUP** explores three core parts of the brain: **the amygdala, the pre-frontal cortex and the hippocampus**. By understanding the function of each brain part and their interconnectedness, students learn that being flooded by emotion is a sign of healthy brain function and happens to everyone. Additionally, they learn that when the amygdala kicks in and we feel under pressure, this slows access to long-term memory and prevents us from thinking logically and strategically. This self-knowledge **normalises the students' emotions** and generates the need for **strategies to cope**, to be **resilient** and to **move forward successfully**.