Abbots Farm Junior School

Teaching and Learning Policy

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Intent

Rationale

The most effective way to raise standards is to improve the quality of teaching and learning.

Education Endowment Foundation

Governor Report

Outstanding Leadership = Leaders ensure that teachers receive focused and highly effective professional development. Teachers' subject, pedagogical and pedagogical content knowledge consistently build and develop over time. This consistently translates into improvements in the teaching of the curriculum.

Ofsted

This evidence review clearly supports the view that a focus on effective teaching should be the starting point of lesson planning for pupils with SEND, not individual needs or labels – since effective teaching strategies and approaches appear to work universally to support children's learning

Education Endowment Foundation

SEND Evidence Review

AFJS aims

Our vision for Teaching and Learning is to ensure that:

- by developing the quality of Teaching and Learning, we improve outcomes and thereby life chances for all of our pupils
- we build a deep understanding and common language around **how children learn** so that teachers can make informed decisions about **pedagogical** choices, enabling children to **know more and remember more**
- we bring together the best available evidence around **memory** and **learning** into a coherent set of actionable principles so that all staff have clarity and understanding about what high-quality Teaching and Learning looks like
- we foster a culture of **continuous improvement** in which it is every teacher's professional obligation to improve their practise, driven by our ***Learners for Life*** ethos
- we provide structured and **personalised, evidence informed CPD** to focus the development of teachers on aspects of their practice that will have the greatest impact on pupil outcomes

Roles and Responsibilities

Teaching and Learning is a shared responsibility and everyone in our school community has an important role to play.

Teachers at AFJS will:

- follow the expectations for teaching and professional conduct as set out in the Teachers' Standards
- follow the expectations as set out in this policy to ensure high quality teaching
- help to create a well-sequenced, broad and balanced curriculum that builds knowledge and skills, following or designing schemes of work that uphold the high quality teaching principles
- sequence lessons in a way that allows children to develop from their own starting points

Support Staff at AFJS will:

- support high quality teaching and learning by following the expectations as set out in this policy

SLT/Assistant Head for Teaching and Learning at AFJS will:

- have a clear and ambitious vision for providing high-quality education for all
- plan and evaluate strategies to secure high quality teaching and learning across the school
- provide support and guidance through coaching and mentoring
- promote collaborative CPD practices across the school

Subject Leaders at AFJS will:

- have a clear and ambitious vision for promoting the actionable principles within this policy within their own subject
- exemplify a ***learners for life*** approach to developing their own teaching practice in order to lead by example in their subject area

Governors at AFJS will:

- monitor the impact of teaching and learning strategies on pupil progress and attainment
- monitor the effectiveness of this policy and hold staff to account for its implementation

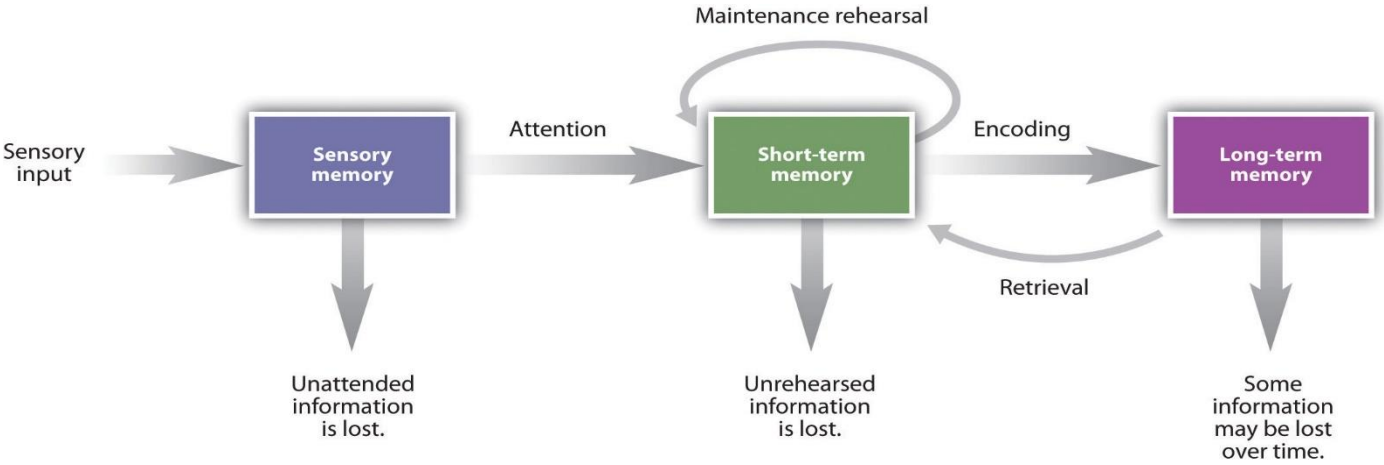
Parents/carers at AFJS will:

- value learning
- encourage their child as a learner
- support good attendance
- participate in discussions about their child's learning
- support and give importance to homework

Background Theory to inform practice

Memory

Learning is about committing knowledge to long-term memory, not immediate performance. For this to happen, a pupil first needs to pay attention to a stimulus. This attention places the stimulus into their short-term memory. Then, for the information to be encoded, the pupil needs to link this information to prior knowledge. If the information is not encoded or linked by the working memory, it will not transfer to long-term memory. Then the knowledge must be retrieved and rehearsed in order to commit it to long term memory.

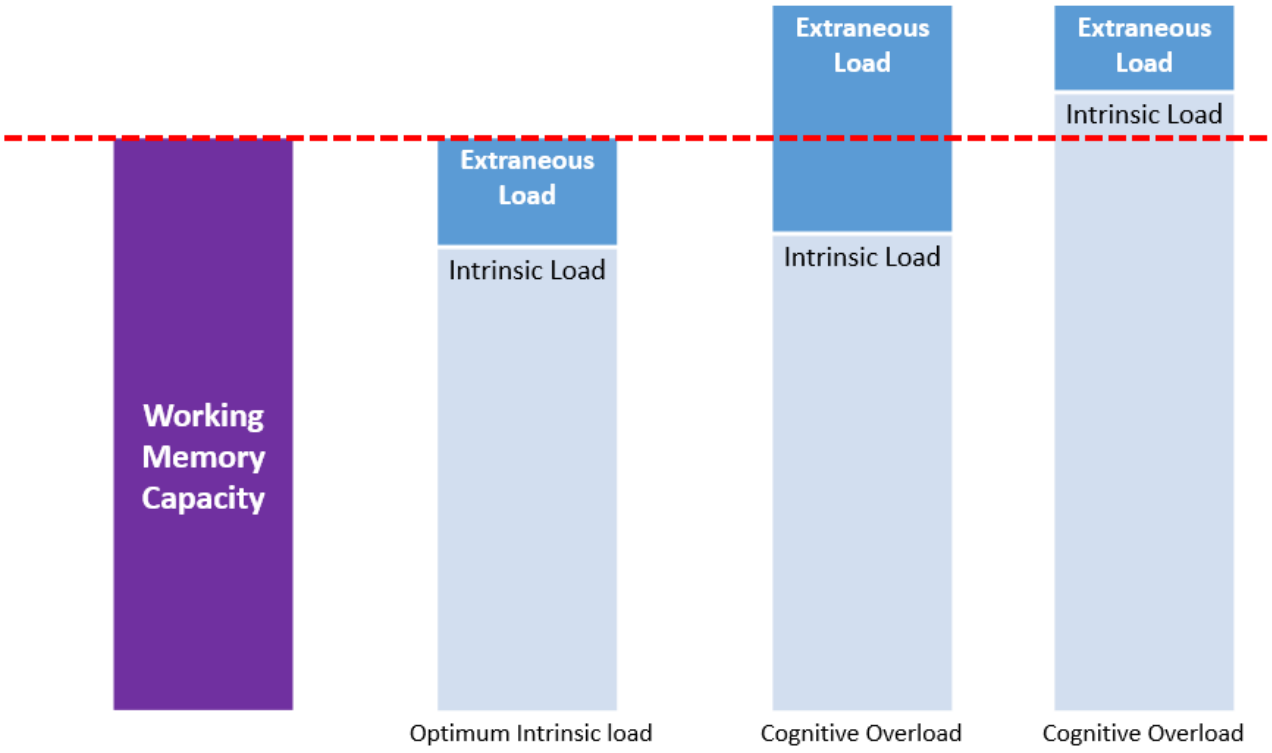


Cognitive Load Theory

Intrinsic Load = the information to be learned. The bit that we want children's working memories to be occupied with.

Extraneous Load = comes from the structure and design of the task (including the instructions and superfluous information) and draws children's working memory away from the information to be learned.

The core recommendation of Cognitive Load Theory is to reduce extraneous load to free up the working memory to focus on intrinsic load, therefore increasing learning.



Novice v Expert Learners

Novice and Expert learners learn differently. Experts have developed extensive mental models in a specific field through years of experience. This allows them to assess challenges rapidly and respond fluently, efficiently and successfully. Novices lack these mental models: when they examine a problem, they focus on superficial features, so they respond inefficiently, painstakingly and often unsuccessfully.

Novices	Experts
Little relevant background knowledge	Lots of relevant background knowledge
Relies on working memory – lacks the knowledge and automaticity of procedures needed. This leads to cognitive overload	Relies on long term memory – recalls related facts and learned/automatic procedures
Problem solving requires following clear steps	Problem solving is intuitive
Sees superficial details	Sees underlying structures
Learns little when exposed to new information	Learns a lot when exposed to information about which they are already knowledgeable
Learns best through explicit instruction and worked examples	Learns best through discovery approaches
Struggles to transfer principles to new contents	Is able to transfer principles between related domains

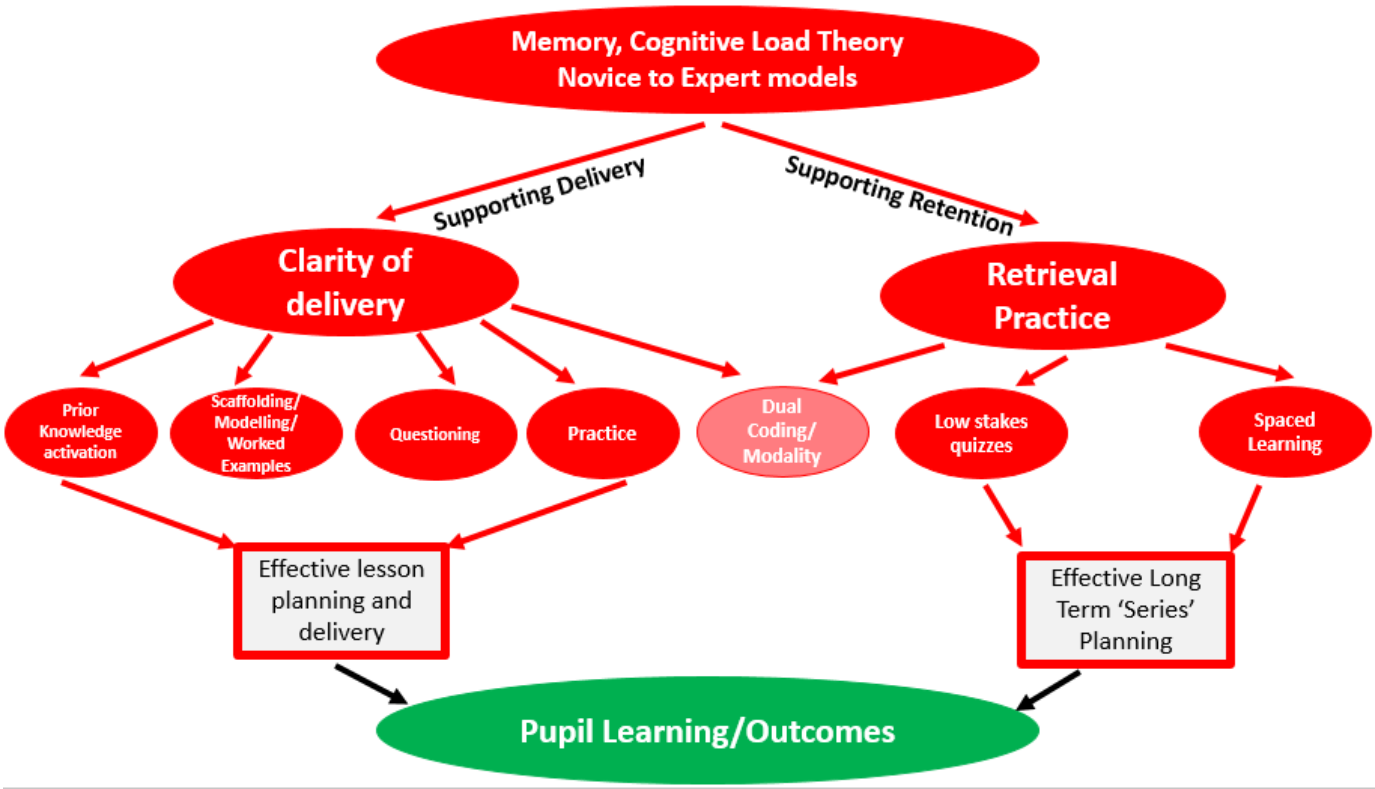
Implementation

Teaching Principles

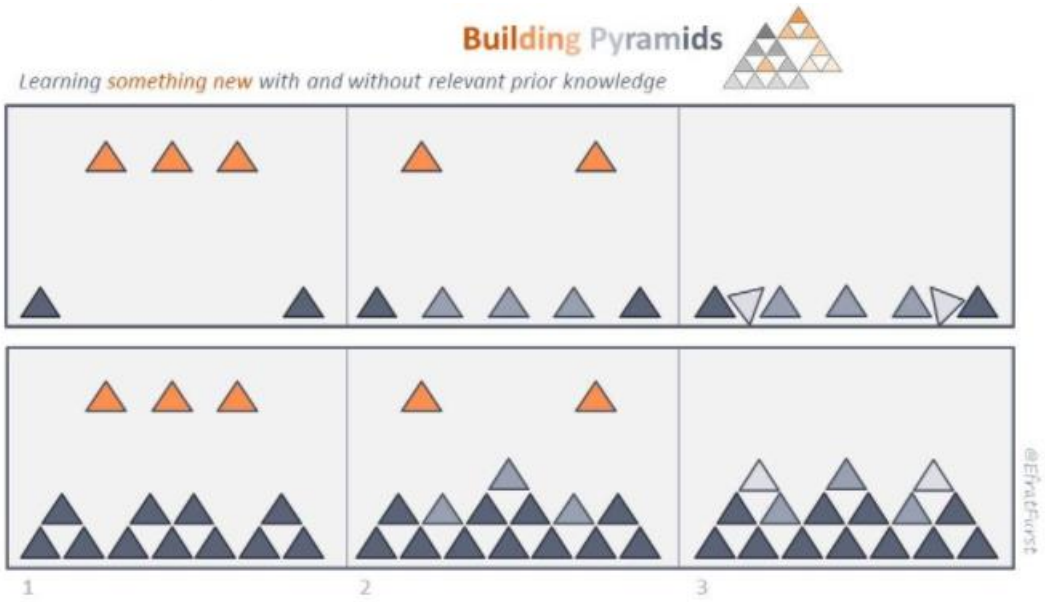
In order to deliver a curriculum that takes account of children's limited working memory capacity, the neurological processes by which knowledge is moved from short term to long term memory, and the learning behaviours of Novice learners, a set of core teaching principles are used across the curriculum. These principles transfer the theory into actionable pedagogical practice.

To ensure that teaching takes account of limited working memory, a series of '**supporting delivery**' principles are followed.

To ensure that learners are supported in transferring knowledge from short term to long term memory a series of '**supporting retention'** principles are followed.



Prior Knowledge Activation



Caption - Without prior knowledge the new information cannot be integrated meaningfully (creating a structure), and will most likely not survive over time. New knowledge that can be actively linked to prior knowledge can be added to a pupil's developing schema and is more likely to be retained over time.

Strategies used to activate prior knowledge in all learners include:

- Show me boards
- Prior knowledge retrieval quizzes
- Practicing pre-requisite skills
- Pre-teaching vocabulary

Modelling/Scaffolding/Worked Examples

Teachers develop pupils' metacognition by modelling their own thinking out loud throughout their explicit instruction. Through metacognitive modelling, a new concept or strategy is presented to pupils clearly, succinctly and accurately, allowing for deeper levels of understanding and learning. Pupils are then guided through their own practice in order to apply this 'thinking', working towards independent application.

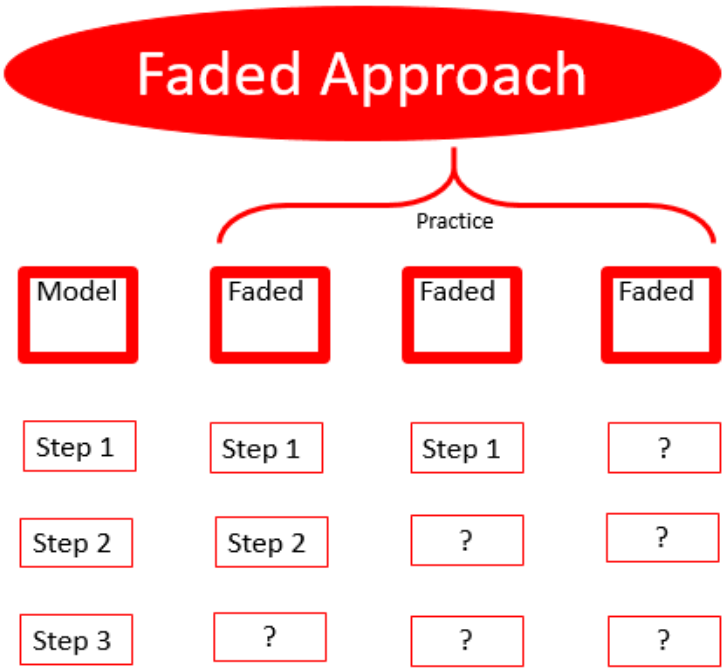
I do, We do, You do Approach

Explicit Instruction (I do): When modelling a process to children, teachers verbalise their own thought processes to solve a problem, answer a question, write a text, etc. Revealing the thought processes of an expert learner, helps to develop children's metacognitive skills so that children can began to take on these thought processes.

Shared models (We do): By questioning a range of pupils in the class (using **cold calling**) when modelling a very similar problem/task, teachers are able judge whether the children have followed the modelled strategy and are ready for independent practice

Independent Practice (You do): By practising a similar problem/task independently, children can start to encode the new learning to long term memory

The **Alternation Strategy** is a strategy teachers use to apply the **I do, We do, You do** approach to modelling. The learning is scaffolded so that opportunities to practice are similar to those modelled and that as models move on, there is minimal new learning introduced each step so that children's working memories are not overloaded because the learning has been chunked.



The **Faded Approach to Worked Examples** is used by teachers when modelling more complex processes/ learning. Teachers model the whole process/skill **(I do)** and then children practice the process/skill, with the number of steps they have to complete increasing until children are fully independent.

Deliberate Practice

Both within lessons and within sequences of lessons, teachers provide time for children to practise skills and knowledge acquisition before applying these to more complex questions/tasks.

Subject Specific examples include but are not limited to:

- English - practice of Punctuation and Grammar skills within sequences of lessons before extended writing
- Geography and History – development of substantive knowledge over a series of lessons before answering 'big questions'
- Maths – developing fluency with number and calculation skills before applying to problem solving and reasoning

Questioning

Questions allow teachers to determine how well the material has been learned and whether there is need for additional instruction. The most effective teachers ask more questions and ask children to explain the process they used to answer the question.

Barak Rosenshine

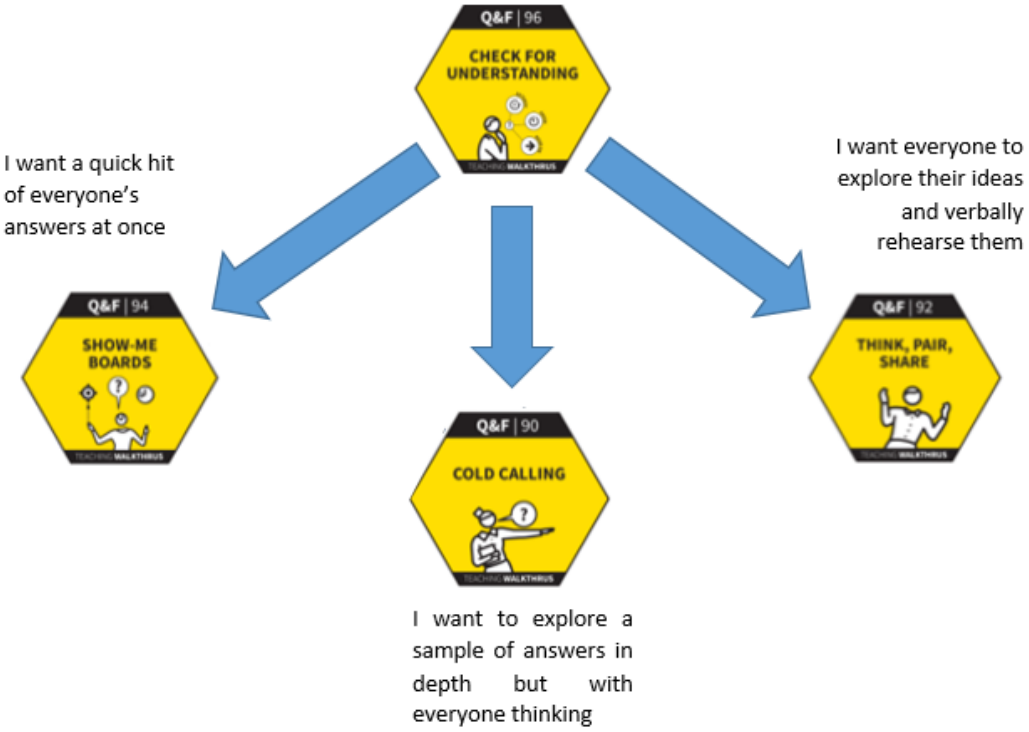
The wrong way to check for understanding is to ask only a few questions, call on volunteers to hear their (usually correct) answers, and then assume that all of the class understands. Another error is to ask, “Are there any questions?” and if there aren’t, assume everyone understands

Barak Rosenshine

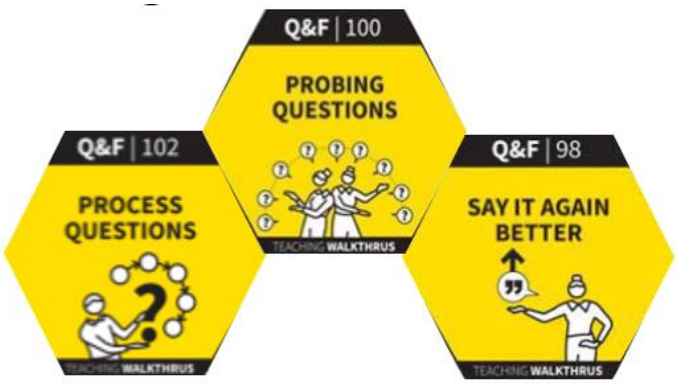
Questioning serves two main purposes within teaching at Abbots Farm:

- Questioning for assessment purposes
- Questioning for moving children on

‘Questioning for assessment’ enables teachers to effectively judge the understanding of the children in the class and take appropriate next steps in response to this. These questioning strategies are used by teachers at Abbots Farm



'Questioning for moving children on' enables teachers to challenge children to think more widely about their knowledge, making greater links and developing more complex schemas. These questioning strategies are used by teachers at Abbots Farm.



At Abbots Farm Juniors, teachers use effective questioning relevant to the subject, including, but not limited to:

Maths
https://thirdspacelearning.com/blog/9-effective-questioning-strategies-improve-pupils-understanding-key-concepts-maths/

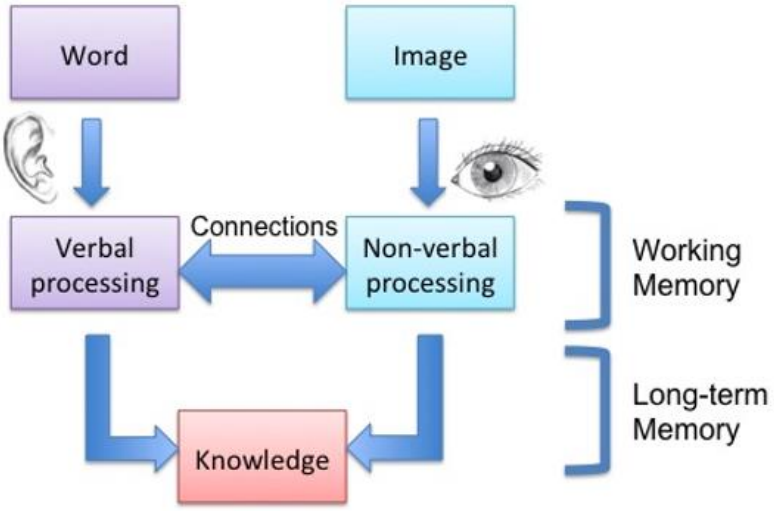
https://nrich.maths.org/2473

Science
https://pdst.ie/sites/default/files/Draft_Questioning_Handout_FaSMEd.pdf

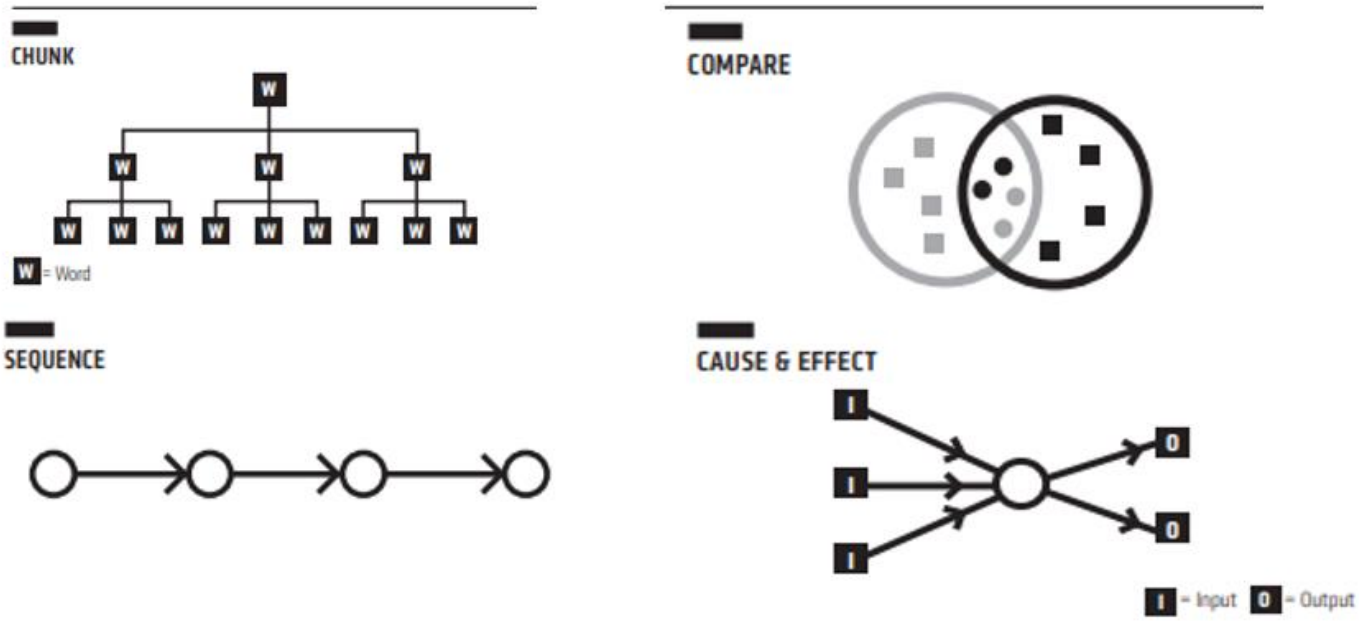
Reading
Reading Domains

Dual Coding/Dual Modality

Teachers use clear diagrammatic models with verbal narrations to present their own schema. This gives children two channels, verbal and non-verbal, by which to process the information, reducing the cognitive load on the working memory. Pupils being provided with opportunities to trace and orally rehearse their own explanations, as well as recall and redraw models from memory, strengthens their learning further and supports the transfer to long term memory.

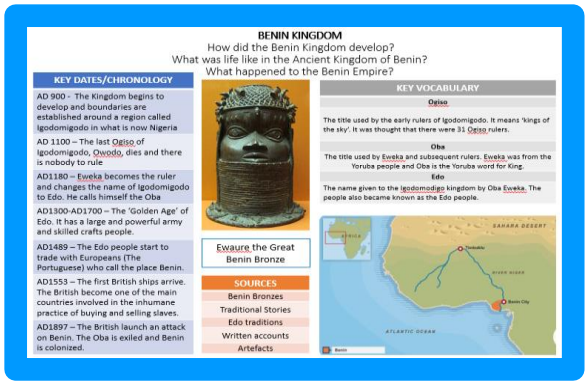


Effective diagrammatic models used by teachers at AFJS include:



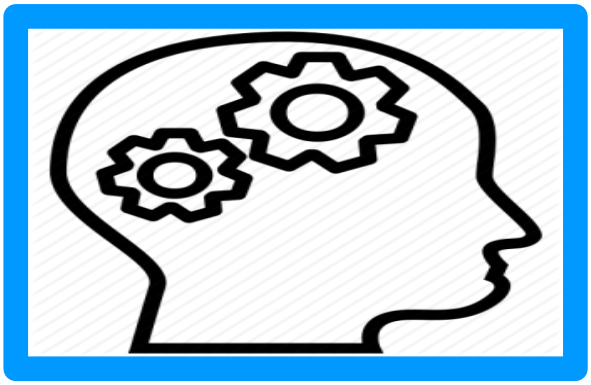
Retrieval Practice
Teachers use retrieval activities to provide children with opportunities to strengthen the encoding of new learning to long term memory.

Retrieval activities are planned with **5 key principles** in mind:



1. Knowledge Organisers

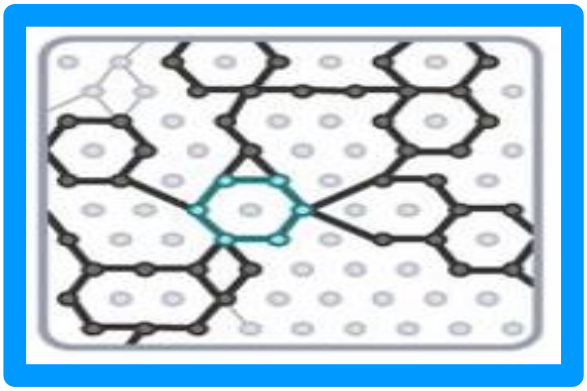
Key knowledge is planned for as part of subject/topic knowledge organisers. This key knowledge and vocabulary forms the core content for retrieval practice.



2. Everyone Thinking

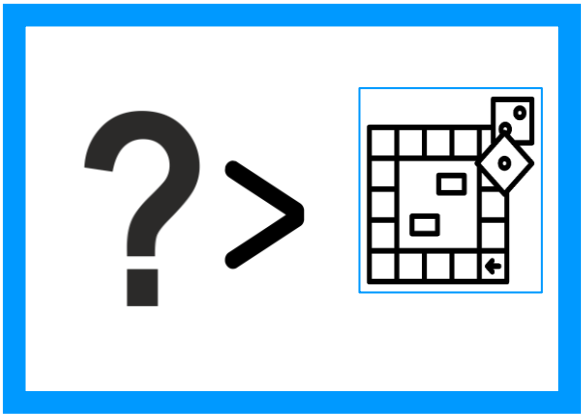
Questioning strategies are used to ensure all children are thinking, for example:

- Show me boards
- Think, pair, share
- Cold Calling



3. Linked to Prior Knowledge

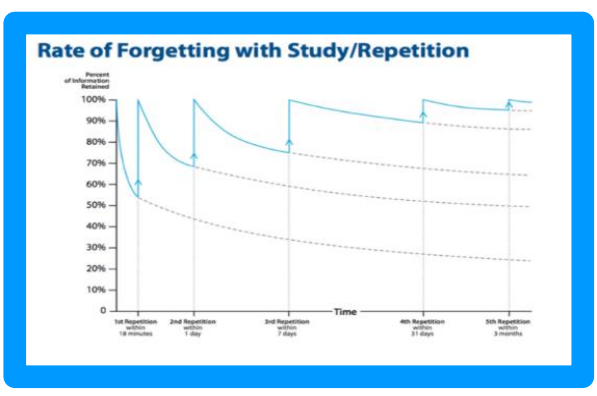
Retrieval questioning focuses on pre-requisite knowledge and skills and explicit links to new learning are made to support pupils' development of schemas to support long term memory.



4. Question Design

Teachers focus their planning on designing questions that will elicit the important knowledge. Tasks are designed to be simple and straight forward and often similar tasks are repeated in different contexts or with different knowledge to reduce extraneous load and avoid cognitive overload.

See 'Further Reading' for specific retrieval activities



5. Daily, Weekly, Monthly Review

Retrieval tasks are spaced out over time to include Daily, Weekly and Monthly reviews based on Ebbinghaus' Forgetting Curve

Impact

Monitoring

The impact of the Teaching and Learning Policy will be regularly monitored and reviewed by SLT and the Assistant Head for Teaching and Learning through a range of monitoring actions. Monitoring will focus on the aims of this policy with an emphasis on whether high quality teaching practices enable children to know more and remember more, therefore leading to higher outcomes for all.

Whole School Monitoring Actions
Learning Walks
Lesson Observations
Book Trawls
Pupil Interviews
Data analysis
1:1 coaching sessions
Peer Monitoring Groups
Progress Meetings

Assessment

Teachers will assess the impact of the Teaching and Learning Principles on the outcomes of their pupils through regular formative assessment practices. Assessment practices will focus on whether children have retained the key knowledge and vocabulary from subject knowledge organisers as well as the key knowledge and skills identified by subject leaders on summative assessment documents.

Formative Assessment Practices
Quizzes
Retrieval activities – see Further Reading
Applying knowledge and skills across contexts
Applying knowledge to ‘big questions’ e.g. in Topic and Science
Data analysis

Professional Development

CPD to support Teaching and Learning at Abbots Farm is:

- Focused on quality first teaching
- Underpinned by the teaching standards
- Developmental
- Research Informed

CPD is mapped out across the school through a range of whole school, supported and personal development opportunities.

Whole School CPD	Personal CPD	Collaborative CPD
Staff Meeting Schedule	Lesson Observations + feedback	Peer Monitoring Groups
Learning Walks + Feedback	Progress Meetings	Subject Leadership Teams
	1:1 coaching sessions	Collaborative planning within staff meetings
	Subject Leader Support Meetings	
	Performance Management Meetings	
	Planning support	

Sustainability

In order to ensure the sustainability of the principles and practices within this policy, these actions will be undertaken:

- Performance Management processes and targets will relate to aspects of the policy
- Subject Leaders will use the Teaching and Learning practices from this policy to identify keys areas to develop within their own subject *(pedagogical subject knowledge)* and will continue to monitor their impact on pupil outcomes
- Recruitment practices will be aligned to the Teaching and Learning policy to prioritize a commitment to evidence informed teaching practices when employing new teachers
- Induction procedures and support packages will align to the principles and practices within the policy

Further Reading

Suggested reading which underpins the ideas and practices within this policy include:

- Teaching Walk Thrus – Tom Sherrington and Olivier Caviglioli
- Teaching Walk Thrus 2 – Tom Sherrington and Olivier Caviglioli
- Dual Coding - Oliver Caviglioli
- Rosenshine's Principles in Action – Tom Sherrington
- Why Students Don't Like School – Daniel T Willingham
- Cognitive Load Theory in Action – Oliver Lovell
- Memorable Teaching – Peps Mccrea
- Lean Lesson Planning – Peps Mccrea
- Retrieval Practice Resource Guide – Kate Jones

Reviewed and updated by Nicky Seneschall-Jones October 2022
Next review: December 2023