

THE EVIDENCE-BASED CLASSROOM

Your practical, pictorial guide to some of education's biggest ideas

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TS Teach Secondary readers will be familiar with you as our 'resident word wizard' - but what's your actual job title, and what does it mean?

AQ My official job title is 'senior associate' at the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF), which I realise sounds pretty vague. My role takes in a few different things – I support research schools, and the development of resources, and I manage communication around topics like metacognition. I do like the variety; there is a good mix of quiet work, and being around large groups of people at conferences and in nurseries, schools and colleges.

How much of an understanding of metacognition did you have when you were teaching?

I think my understanding was quite limited at that point, and I suspect that's fairly typical. I'd heard of the term, and had a vague memory of it being covered somehow during my teacher training, but I couldn't do much with it in the classroom. Later, when I dug into it more, I started to realise the importance of things like monitoring and evaluating – teaching pupils how to plan. But how I taught was largely tacit; I didn't use explicit terminology, for example, which would have made a difference.

What are the actual advantages for students in understanding more about their own thinking processes?

The crucial advantage is that they gain key knowledge and skills that allow them to approach their end goals strategically – including sitting in an exam hall and performing at their best. Managing your own thinking, and being well organised and good at planning, gives you the armoury to do well in that context, as well as in others, including beyond the school gate, in the workplace. And we shouldn't underestimate



THIS ISSUE:
Alex Quigley, senior associate at the Education Endowment Foundation, on metacognition

the potential emotional impact, either. The self-regulating aspect of understanding metacognition offers concrete strategies for developing resilience and coping with all kinds of high stress situations.

If a teacher wanted to understand more about metacognition, what books or websites would you recommend for starters?

Well, although I might be accused of bias, the EEF guidance report is genuinely a really good place to start – it's based on well over a thousand research papers, and does a great job of simplifying the concepts and providing concrete strategies and tools. Cambridge International also has a good website, 'getting started with metacognition', and Dylan Williams explains it very well, too. There aren't many books and documents available, surprisingly – but *Metacognition*, by John Dunlosky and Janet Metcalfe, is definitely worth a look.

What do you think is the most common misconception people have about metacognition.

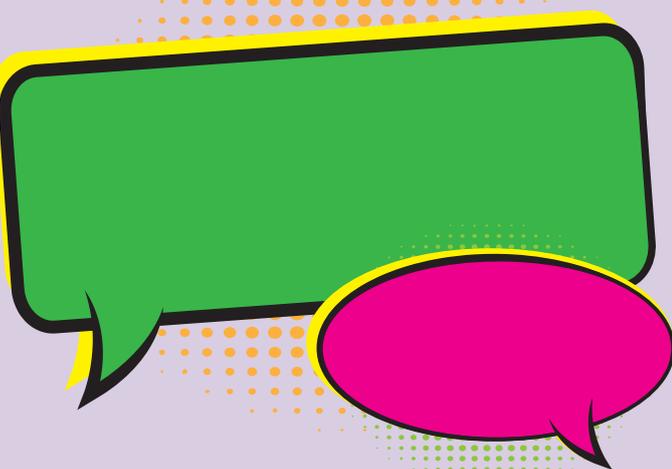
That you can be 'generally good at it'; that if you are able to plan a trip or sort out your bedroom, you'll automatically be great at problem solving in maths. Whereas in fact, metacognitive skills need to be subject specific. You need a set of strategies to plan and write a good essay; and that will be different from the set you need to conduct a sound physics experiment.

And finally... what is the single most important thing you think every trainee teacher should be taught before standing in front of a class of teenagers for the first time...?

That's a really hard one! But ultimately, it's about good classroom management and organisation; and asking really great questions.

7 ways to boost their WORD POWER

Try these simple strategies from **Dominic McGladdery** to help your pupils learn - and remember - the vocab they need for success



1 Use what they know

When introducing vocabulary, include a lot of cognates and near-cognates. This will help to boost the students' confidence in their own abilities as linguists. For example, the French word 'un sofa' is much easier to learn and retain than 'un canapé'.

2 Keep repeating

Repetition is a great way to learn and retain vocabulary. After all, that is how we all learnt to speak English. Get students to speak to you and to each other, as much as possible in the target language; think of all of the times you speak English in your classes when you really don't need to. Sometimes, I will put slips of paper in my pockets with key vocabulary on them. I pick one out, describe it, and ask the students to guess which one it is. It's a great way to practise individual words and has an appealing competitive element to it.

3 Face the music

Singing is such a good way for students to learn to pronounce basic vocabulary. You don't need to be the world's greatest singer, either. There is a cornucopia of foreign language learning songs on YouTube. You could even get pupils to write their own lyrics to popular songs. I find that learners are more likely to join in with songs than with other speaking activities, too.

4 Don't overload them

Little and often are the watchwords here. One of the worst things I have seen MFL colleagues do in the past is give students too many words to learn. American psychologist George A Miller's 'Magic Number Seven' (plus or minus two) idea, is a good rule of thumb. In 1956, Miller found that people can generally only keep between five and seven items in their short term memory. He also discovered that we are

better at remembering short words and numbers, as they have fewer syllables. I tend to ask students to learn lists of around ten words at a time – but I make sure that I include some cognates.

5 Quiz, don't test

Testing vocabulary can be demotivating for many students and is one reason that many will want to give up languages at the earliest opportunity. I always make sure that tests (or quizzes) have a part where the student has to write some English words. Scrapping the idea of a pass mark will also help. If failure is not possible, confidence and performance will improve. Also, providing time in lessons to learn vocabulary could prove to be motivating.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR
Dominic McGladdery is a blogger and teacher of French, German and Spanish with over 20 years' experience (domsmflpage.blogspot.com)

6 Teach dictionary use

Using a dictionary is one of those things teachers just assume students can do – but often they will not have been taught the skill, so it's worth you spending some time on it. Once they can use a dictionary properly, they can find their own vocabulary and not be limited to your lists or the back of the textbook. I also like to play dictionary games with students – for example, asking them to find five animals that could be kept as pets.

7 Don't compartmentalise

Revise and revisit vocabulary regularly, so that students become aware that it can be used in different situations. For example, I am using prepositions with my Year 7 class to describe where places are in a town; a few weeks ago, they used them to describe items in their houses.

“‘un sofa’ is much easier to learn and retain than ‘un canapé.’”

My brilliant CPD MOMENT

Forget tedious INSET days – these examples show how powerful truly innovative training can be...



“Discovering #TeamEnglish on Twitter was a revelation. It’s changed almost everything about my teaching, for the better.”

- Anon

“The CPD that I have been offered whilst at Ashfield School has been completely and utterly life-changing, and that is no exaggeration. Most recently I undertook Initial Teacher Training, which has seen me move from a supporting role to a teaching role. Through the school supporting me in gaining Qualified Teacher Status, I now hold a nationally recognised qualification, which will enable me to do a job that I love for years to come.”



- Sam Henstock, English teacher, Ashfield School

“Bohunt Education Trust offers a leadership programme in which I have participated for the last academic year. It offers mentorship, a second school placement, a research project and connections to professionals within and outside of our MAT. This process was tailored to my specific requirements; each element helped me to understand school leadership and my own vision more clearly.

Embarking on this adventure as my first headship might sound like an enormous undertaking, and it is, but I have a network of support available to me that I can call on within the Trust.” - **Georgette Ayling, headteacher at Bohunt School Horsham (due to open in September 2019)**

“The best CPD for me doesn’t involve long days out at conferences, but regular time in my term to meet with colleagues, discuss what is working well and what isn’t, and reflect on how we move forward together. We tell our students constantly about the need to reflect, but this applies to teachers as well. Deep and honest reevaluation of your practice with input from other professionals who know the students you face and the challenges of your context, is more useful than any buzzword or new initiative. The best school leaders make sure this is a regular opportunity for their staff.”

- Anon

“Through the Academy and our involvement with the local Teaching School I have been able to access the National Professional Qualification for Senior Leadership (NPQSL) and also qualify as an SLE, meaning I can support the development of others. The NPQSL has allowed me to critically reflect on where I am and where I want to go as a leader; I have been able to gather feedback on my own practice as well as exploring and investigating the work of others, and also to be more conscious of the way I interact with the staff for whom I am responsible.” - **Henry Sauntson, assistant principal (SLE), City of Peterborough Academy**

“At my previous school, each teacher was issued with a copy of Doug Lemov’s *Teach Like A Champion* and one of our senior leadership team went on a workshop and brought back some of his ideas to our in-house CPD sessions. I believe this has had the biggest impact on me and how I teach today. What I find useful about Lemov are the very simple activities that can slip into most lessons with ease, and really heighten opportunities for learning.

‘Write, Rewrite’, for example, where students respond to a question cold, then you ‘hunt not fish’ for the best answers, and collate them through discussion before students add to their notes. I also regularly use ‘I do, we do, you do’ as a modelling structure. These strategies aren’t big, showy ideas. It’s about going back to basics, or little routines you can build into your practice, with very little prep required.” - **Megan Reynard, English subject lead, King Edward VI School, Bury St Edmunds**

“Honestly – the best hour’s training I ever had was watching my son’s amazing piano teacher getting him to play with both hands at once for the first time. He started off convinced it was impossible, but she got him there, step by step, with this fantastic combination of firmness and reassurance. I try to bring that to my classroom now.”

- Anon