

Teaching and Learning Policy

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THE JO RICHARDSON

SUCCESS FOR ALL

C O M M U N I T Y S C H O O L

ACHIEVE

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Teaching and Learning at JRCS

Aims of the policy

- To describe the vision of teaching and learning at JRCS
- To outline the way the school will monitor and support the quality of teaching and learning
- To ensure a consistency of approach
- To establish our expectation of students as learners
- To establish JRCS' expectation of teachers as facilitators of learning
- To describe the key features of excellent lessons (Teaching techniques / methods)
- To ensure a safe, stimulating and motivating learning environment for all.
- To provide a range of different teaching and learning approaches which reflects different student starting points and learning needs

Our aims and vision for teaching and learning at JRCS

The success of a lesson at JRCS is not defined by what the teacher does, but by what students learn. Teachers have freedom to employ whichever teaching strategies they wish; however, the selection and deployment of these strategies should happen with the following as our ultimate aims:

- All students, regardless of their backgrounds, circumstances, individual needs or prior attainment make rapid and sustained progress and achieve well, over time
- All students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is supported by their lessons
- Expectations are high of all students; students should be challenged by their learning. A student working is not the same as a student learning or practising their learning
- Students' understanding is systematically and effectively checked throughout lessons by teaching staff and teachers intervene with striking impact, where appropriate
- Reading, writing, communication and numeracy are taught effectively across the curriculum
- There are high levels of engagement and commitment to learning in lessons
- Marking provides formative feedback, which students act upon to deepen and extend their learning

Is there a 'best' way to teach?

Research suggests that, depending on the needs of the learners, the most effective teaching approaches may vary greatly. Sometimes student-centred constructivist approaches to learning can be highly effective; this approach is also sometimes called discovery learning, task-based learning or problem-based learning. However, Direct Instruction (sometimes called didactic teaching or teacher-directed learning) can also be effective, particularly with younger students and those developing core literacy and numeracy skills. For the teacher, regardless of the style of teaching that is adopted, it is important to plan ways to systematically check whether students are learning as a result of the approach being employed.

Lesson Structure

There is no set lesson structure at JRCS, but the following is likely to be present in all lessons and is a good place to start lesson planning. The phases below may appear several times in lessons. All lessons should be punctuated by teachers assessing the understanding of students and intervening accordingly.

- Starter: visible to students as they enter the classroom – engaging and relevant
- Exposition: students in receipt of / explore new knowledge, skills or understanding
- Practice: students apply the new knowledge, skills or understanding to secure, deepen or enhance learning
- Reflection: an opportunity to reflect on what has been learned

The teaching 'bottom line'

Although teachers are free to choose their approach to individual lessons, this document contains guidance on how JRCS expects to see the various strategies used, when they are employed. Seven areas of teaching are included on this document. For each there is a **'bottom line'** - these are the things that must happen in all lessons, when this teaching strategy is used. Next comes **'further recommended strategies'** - these are strategies teachers might want to employ; they might be harder to execute in the classroom but could lead to better learning outcomes. Finally comes, **'Try something different / Gold Standard'** - these are strategies that might be quite tricky to employ effectively in the classroom but which, when done well, could have the most positive effect on teaching and learning.

Without OFSTED lesson observation grades to assess the quality of teaching at JRCS, we still need to be able to do the following:

- Provide feedback to teachers HODs and SLT so they are aware of standards and are consistently improving them
- Quickly identify staff who need support, and put that support in place
- Allow staff the opportunity to build evidence to support them through the appraisal process
- Gather data to make sure that the departmental and school SEFs are up to date and accurate

Monitoring and supporting the quality of teaching and learning at JRCS

Learning walks

- Likely to involve SLT and HOD. They will visit a range of lessons and record what they find on capture documents. External partners may help carry out learning walks to secure SLT / HOD's knowledge of standards
- No more than 20 minutes in any lesson
- No grades applied to staff or lessons
- No more than three SLT led learning walks in a department in a year.
- Learning walks should aim to visit each person in the department at least twice, but not more than three times.
- Learning walks will usually take place over more than one day, but should go on for no longer than one week
- Information collated by SLT / HOD.
 - Summary feedback document to whole department identifying areas of strength and development should be sent straight after the learning walk
 - Feedback and areas for development for individual staff should be provided, in writing, in good time following the learning walk

One hour observations against teachers' standards:

- NQTs / SD / ITT have these throughout the year, as per induction programmes
- Staff undergoing capability procedures, as per support programme
- Individual teachers, HODs or the Headteacher can arrange up to three one hour observations against teaching standards in the course of an academic year. Teachers may want to arrange to be observed to help them gather evidence for the appraisal process or to enhance their knowledge of standards. The Headteacher may decide one hour observations should be carried out if serious concerns are raised through the process of learning walks and book checks.

Pupils' books / student voice

- Book checks – three per year led by SLT. Feedback to staff alongside feedback from learning walks at the end of each term
- Student voice
 - Year group specific student voice (multiple subject), led by SLT / HOY, evidence collated and then any subject specific details shared with HOD
 - Subject specific student voice (multiple year group – including sixth form), led by HOD / SLT LM

Data

- After data collection points, full analysis of performance by subject, teacher and year group
- Staff should analyse their own class performance and record interventions on data sheets
- HODs should analyse departmental performance
- SLT / HOD will identify teaching groups / student groups that are underperforming and raise with teaching staff, HODs as appropriate

Routines, expectations and rewards in the classroom

Bottom line strategies

- At the start of lessons teachers should meet and greet students at the door of the classroom (for teachers teaching in more than one room this, understandably, will be hard to achieve)
- For every teaching group staff should have a seating plan and the coloured school data sheet. The seating plan should be carefully considered, with a pedagogical underpinning. Students should not just sit with their friends
- Upon entering the room students should get their planners and equipment out and put them on their desks
- Staff should make a note of any students arriving after the bell has gone and make sure they are set a twenty minute detention for lateness at an appropriate point during the lesson. Classes should not be released early, with the exception of staff on break duty, and should not be released late
- Students should not be allowed to leave the classroom to go to the toilet or to get a drink. The only exception to this is if a student has a medical condition, recorded in their planner and countersigned by Student Services or HOY
- A starter should be visible to students **straightaway**. It should be challenging and engaging – it does not need to involve writing but should act as a ‘hook’ to get students focused immediately. It might review prior learning.
- If writing is to take place in a lesson, the title and date should be written down and underlined. Lesson objectives and success criteria should not be copied into books, this takes too long
- Homework should **always** be labelled ‘homework’ in the margin, or completed at the back of exercise books.
- At the start of the lesson staff should make the objectives and success criteria clear to students as well as how the lesson fits in with their programme of study
- At transition points in the lesson, all students should stop working, stop talking, empty their hands, and make eye contact with the teacher (for students with autism, an expectation of eye contact may not be appropriate). Only then should the teacher continue. This is very important. Students who are not in receipt of the explanation/instruction that comes at the start of a new learning phase will not be able to effectively engage with it. Students still working on a previous activity should be told that they can return to it later or complete it for homework.
- All teachers should have a system that rewards good learning. Credits should be awarded for students who attempt activities that present them with genuine challenge, even if they are not successful. Department postcards, LOCs and other parental contact should be used for exceptional progress
- SWAT should be applied consistently in all classrooms – each stage should be made explicit to students
- Staff should check understanding throughout the lesson (mini-plenaries)
- There should be an opportunity for reflection at the end of each lesson
- If students have not engaged in the learning or not made sufficient progress, this should be addressed

Further recommended strategies

- Before entering the classroom, students line up outside with their planners out
- Clapping to settle the class – football style
- Give students responsibilities for some classroom routines, such as copying the success criteria from the projector onto the small whiteboard, or nominating students for praise or credits when they take on a particularly challenging activity / thought process
- 3B4Me: a routine that needs to be carefully implemented but can foster a very positive learning environment and reduce the time teachers spend answering questions. If students have a question they are encouraged to do three things before asking the teacher:
 1. students are encouraged to ask a peer
 2. students consult their books / the internet to try and find the answer
 3. Students ‘crowd source’ – ask the question, out-loud, to the group

Try something different / Gold Standard

- In some schools in the US, students are encouraged *en masse* to make a silent gesture of support to a classmate who is taking on a particularly challenging problem / question. This takes the form of rubbing the thumb, index and middle finger together. This can help relieve the pressure that a student can feel as the class waits for this answer, although it can cause general distraction if not managed carefully
- Invite students to use the red, amber and green pages in their planners to give constant feedback to the teacher to show whether they are learning / understand / are engaged (staff can decide). This routine can provide excellent real-time feedback to the teacher but the teacher has to be ready to face the feedback!

Bottom line strategies

Across all subject areas...

- Students have the opportunity to engage in extended writing, in line with departmental and whole-school policies
- Students are challenged on inaccurate use of spoken English, particularly slang and wrong use of tense, eg, 'we was going to...' rather than 'we were going to...'
- All staff consciously model good literacy in their own spoken English within the classroom
- Good listening skills are promoted via paired, group and whole-class discussion
- Students read a range of high quality reading materials with fluency. Weaker readers are supported through differentiated materials and/or teacher support
- A literacy display board is clearly visible in every classroom, which helps to promote literacy across the curriculum as well as subject-specific literacy skills and key terms
- Students should be encouraged to answer questions in full sentences
- Key words and subject-specific vocabulary are embedded in students' written work
- Each department has a marking policy that should be followed by teachers in that subject area. However, the following points should also be noted:
 - All peer and self-assessment should be carried out in green pen, as should responses to task marking
 - General classwork KS3 should not be marked grades or 'Life after Levels' (LAL) statements, all feedback should be formative. At the end of a unit the LAL statement is highlighted on the milestone sheet at the start of the unit and recorded in staff mark books for the purpose of data collection and reporting to parents
 - Students should have work regularly task marked (about every six hours of teaching) and the task should be responded to in green and then checked by the teacher
- Teachers give literacy-specific targets and feedback on written work, in line with departmental and whole-school policies. These are responded to in green pen. Literacy errors are marked using universal marking symbols:

Sp	spelling mistake
P	punctuation mark missing or incorrectly used
Voc	incorrect use of vocabulary
^	word missed out of sentence
~	unclear meaning or grammar within a sentence
//	new paragraph required

Further recommended strategies

- Teachers routinely use literacy data, as well as subject data, to plan and differentiate lessons
- Listening skills are actively flagged to students, eg, turn taking, responding to and building on what others have said, the ability to read non-verbal signals
- Spelling strategies are actively taught, eg, Look/say/cover/write/check, phonic break down, words within words. Teachers challenge students to attempt to spell a word, rather than giving spellings when requested
- Writing frames, literacy mats and other high quality literacy resources are used routinely to help students organise their ideas and improve their writing
- Students proofread and mark each other's work
- Students should regularly read out loud

Try something different / Gold Standard

- Literacy Leader students/ other students with high levels of literacy are actively used in the classroom to support their peers' learning by proofreading work, teaching literacy-focused sections of the lesson, etc
- Discussion leaders are used to good effect within paired and group work. The teacher steps back from facilitating questioning and discussion, nominating students to do this instead
- Collaborative writing is used as a classroom strategy, rather than teacher modelling/example answers
- Students are routinely taught to consider GAP (Genre, Audience, Purpose) of their writing, and to adapt the style and format of a written piece according to its audience and purpose
- Reading lists are available to students, containing a range of texts

Questioning

Bottom line strategies

- Wait time and 'no hands up'* (*"pose, pause and pounce"*)
 - When a question is posed to the class, sufficient time should be given for all the students in the group to consider it and ready their answer (a few seconds for low order questions, up to ten seconds for high order questions)
 - After the wait time, a student should be chosen by the teacher, not using hands up – this means all students will engage with the question, knowing that they might be chosen to answer it
 - Randomisation (using a random number generator, lolly sticks, etc) further supports this process
**when teachers are asking students to share personal experiences, 'hands up' might be appropriate*
- Questions asked should move from low to high order (descriptive, reflective, speculative)
- Teachers should not repeat a student's answer. Asking a student to repeat their answer more clearly helps to develop their oral communication skills. Teachers should not interrupt until the student has completed their answer
- Teachers should not move on from a student until they have:
 - gained an appropriate response, or
 - rephrased the question so the student can give an appropriate response, or
 - explained to the student they can have a few moments to think / discuss with their partner, but then the member of staff will return to them (either 1:1 or whole class) and expect an answer
- Whole class understanding should be periodically checked using AfL strategies, eg, thumbs up / down, hinge questions, mini whiteboards, etc.

Further recommended strategies

- Teachers make use of meditational phrases and questions which are more about 'wondering' than asking. Examples include: 'I wonder how you knew that' or 'Let me tell you something you may not have thought of yet...what do you think of that?'. "What if...?", "If you were going to guess...?" These questions can often act as a prompt or challenge to deeper thinking and responses.
- Parallel questioning: the first question is posed to the class. After the wait time and once the student who will answer has been identified, another follow up question is posed to the rest of the group to get them to engage with the answer they are about to hear. For example, "I would like you all to prepare a response to the answer you are about to hear which explains why you disagree with it."
- Develop Socratic questioning techniques in students

Try something different / Gold Standard

- Students developing and posing their own questions, to each other or to the teacher, which start at lower order questions but develop up to truly challenging questions (see Bloom's Taxonomy). Could students devise hinge questions for the class to attempt?
- Asking students to establish the questions they would like answered before embarking on a topic
- Setting a broad, philosophical question to the group – or a group – of students, rather than an individual, and then letting them shape an enquiry around it
- Tabards – give students roles and question them. This applies to all subjects, eg, "I am a covalent bond"

Planning to meet the needs of all learners – differentiation: support and challenge

Bottom line strategies

- When planning lessons teachers should take the following into account:
 - Prior attainment and learning, including KS2, KS3 or KS4 data – depending on age of student
 - Learning profiles (available from heads of department at start of year, from SDD or in shared area)
 - The needs of EAL students
 - Literacy data, such as standardised reading scores (on data sheets)
 - Any information provided by SDD which will help planning for SEN students, including behavioural and emotional needs
- The lesson objectives and success criteria for each lesson, and across a programme of lessons, should provide challenge for all students
- New key terms and vocabulary should be flagged up
- Time must be given to considering whether resources need to be edited, or activities modified, to make sure all learners find the work accessible and challenging
- Do not teach to the ‘middle’, work should provide challenge for all students – check this throughout the lesson (possibly by using red / amber / green pages in the planner)
- Helping another student is not an extension task
- The use of LSAs / Co-Educators should be carefully planned; joint planning is best. As a minimum, SOW should be shared prior to the programme of study starting. Liaise with Head of SDD to get further information about working closely with LSAs / Co-Educators
- Do not clutter PowerPoint slides – keep them simple and the instructions clear
- If students are not making progress, consider the most basic questions: Can they hear? Can they see? Can they read?

Further recommended strategies

- Consider the advantages of differentiating equipment / stimulus / outcome – the task does not necessarily need to be different
- A task can be ‘chunked’ or scaffolded to allow all students to access it
- Students use skills ladders to set themselves more challenging learning objectives
- For students with low reading levels, provide a glossary and simplify text
- Dark Pink students as leaders / facilitators in classroom
- Wider reading list provided to students
- Do not automatically group all SEN students together, give them choice in their groupings
- Provide homework for SEN students on stickers or paper to be stuck into planners
- Use of talk partners to provide additional support and confidence
- Kinaesthetic opportunities to reinforce learning: blocks / plasticine to model the journey of a river, etc.
- Be aware of whether levels achieved by students have been achieved with or without adult support
- Emphasise or promote cross-curricular links, students learn well from overlap and repetition
- Subscribe to subject specific magazines and use as extended reading
- Try to make sure learning activities engage all learning styles – visual, auditory, kinaesthetic
- Challenge cards

Try something different / Gold Standard

- Challenge board; stretch and challenge activities always visible to students
- Provide students with work from a different Key Stage, eg, teach A-level lessons to Y9
- Challenge workshops for whole year groups
- Work actively with students to develop a personalised learning experience: “What can I do to help you learn best?”
- Agree strategies for support with struggling students – a silent code if a student wants help but is embarrassed to ask

Student led learning: paired, group and independent work

Bottom line strategies

- Paired or group work is a very good way of ensuring all students are engaged in the lesson, and provides excellent opportunities for students to think for themselves in a less pressurised setting than whole-class questioning. However, the following should be kept in mind:
 - Students do not naturally know how to work in pairs / groups – make expectations very clear and consider modelling what ‘good’ paired / group work looks like or give students different roles
 - Try to find a way of measuring whether students are working together / engaging with the activity, such as a simple capture sheet for them to tick off or highlight as they move through an activity
 - During paired / group work, working with others is not an option for students. They should be challenged if they are choosing to ignore their partner / group and work alone or seek distraction
- Students should regularly be given the opportunity to work independently. The following should be kept in mind:
 - as students are first developing independent skills, activities might need to be carefully scaffolded
 - resources need to be engaging, well planned and accessible to everyone
 - the teacher needs to explain very clearly how written or practical work should be presented, where it should be done and any health and safety considerations
 - when writing independently, remember that it takes time to go through the process of formulating ideas, drafting, editing and producing a final piece of writing
 - students should be expected, on occasion, to work in silence
 - teachers should be willing to withdraw help; students must work on their own

Further recommended strategies

- Provide students with the learning objective at the start of the lesson and get them to use their reflection sheets and skills ladders to set their own success criteria
- 3B4Me (see “Routines” section)
- Provide resources on the VLE to foster independence
- Group roles might include: scribe, leader, timekeeper, researcher, feedback person, questioner, resource person
- Or roles by attitude: the optimist, the pessimist, the questioner, the mediator, the crazy ideas person, the leader
- Get students to do some self / group assessment on how well they have worked with each other
- Group experts (jigsaw learning): a table of students learn one thing then break into different groups and teach each other
- Students learn in groups (as above) and then feedback to whole class
- Give students three tokens / buttons / ‘lives’ – each one represents a question and once they are used up students cannot ask any more – reward students who finish the lesson without using any ‘lives’
- Give students the LO and then present them with a carousel of activities so they work out how to get there
- ‘Take Away’ homework – students choose the one they want to complete
- Students visit work stations and complete different activities at each one
- ‘Thinking Hats’ to differentiate roles
- Provide independent learning opportunities on FROG
- Get students to reflect on their metacognitive process; talking others through their thinking
- Hot seating: a member of the group is questioned in role, as a character or even as a concept / process

Try something different / Gold Standard

- In terms of fostering a genuinely student driven learning experience, a question or topic would be given to a group or an individual student. They would then use the skills ladder for that subject to set themselves a suitable learning objective and a set of success criteria. They could then identify resources and devise a set of activities which would help them meet the objectives. The teacher would, ultimately, advise, support and facilitate, but the learning would be driven and managed by the student/s
- Students plan and teach starter activities or independent research linking to topics being studied

Teacher Modelling / Exposition / Explanation

Bottom line strategies

- The teacher should be very clear about what they want students to learn
- Teachers should 'commentate' on their thinking / thought process when explaining or modelling – "What have I just done?" – "Why have I just done that?"
- New language / spellings should be 'flagged up'
- Students should be concentrating on understanding what is happening, and on trying to remember what they have learnt
- Examples, in context or applied in another setting, can be useful
- For very complex ideas, where students need to follow the thinking of the teacher, students should be stopped from asking questions during this phase – with the opportunity for questions at the end

Further recommended strategies

- As this is often the phase of the lesson where the students are receiving new knowledge, skills or processes most intensively, it is at this point that the greatest consideration should be given to learning styles and to how to get students to engage with and remember the knowledge, skills or processes they are learning. Some of the following can be very effective:
 - Active learning: drama, role play, etc
 - Equipment based demonstration
 - The use of video or audio
 - Students singing in class in relation to a topic area
 - Music
 - Students physically 'doing' - such as using plasticine
 - Storytelling
 - Storyboards: explanation from teacher and student draws at the same time
 - The use of analogy or metaphor
- "The perfect model": this is the principle that the best example of modelling should be used, regardless of the medium, eg, videos of professional athletes used to show technique
- Use model answers – teacher or students read through, highlighting thinking, perhaps highlighting as they go – good model answers and weaker model answers can both be useful
- Photography: record images of staff during the modelling process and share them electronically so students can remind themselves at a later date

Try something different / Gold Standard

- Student demonstration: this is perhaps the hardest technique to introduce, but the one which can contribute the most to learning when successfully implemented. It is very dependent on the creation of the right classroom ethos, and the teacher needs to train students in the routines:
 - the teacher should model an explanation first, followed by a student
 - when students are at the front, the teacher should consider moving to the side of the room
 - listening students should be encouraged to give feedback, and ask questions of the student at the front
- Students film themselves teaching a topic
- Students attempt an activity in front of the group and then they and the group reflect on what went well and how to improve – learning through trial and improvement
- Students producing / marking each other's work on the visualiser
- Cross-curricular planning: working alongside other subjects so the knowledge, skills and understanding being taught in one subject are reinforced in another
- Provide a range of modelling resources (ICT / staff / worksheet with words / with images) and let students choose which suits their learning style best or, better, get them to prepare the resources

Fostering a Growth Mindset

Bottom line strategies/concepts

- Have a clear understanding of the mindset matrices (in planners)
- Implement language from the mindset matrices into teaching
- Strive for **learning goals vs performance goals** (learning goals: individuals seek to increase their competence and to understand or learn something new. Performance goals: individuals seek to gain favourable judgements of their competence or avoid negative judgements of their competence)
- Never refer to talent. Praise effort not attainment
- Sharing with students how far they are away from the skill they are trying to acquire. Do not share grades.
- Engaging 'challenge' activities
- Highlighting and embracing failure – enjoying the experience 'fun to fail.' Failures are NOT self-defining
- Emphasise practice, resilience and personal responsibility (independence). Highlight the experience of getting better. Use failure as a motivational tool and not a self-defining barrier

Language:

- "You're good at things you like because you work at them."
- "Every time you practise, you're making connections in your brain stronger."
- "Good - it's making you think - that's how your brain is growing."
- "Well done - you're learning to..."
- "Let's look at what you've achieved."
- "If you could already do it, you wouldn't be learning anything."
- "Your skills have really improved."
- "You can use this mistake. Think about why it didn't work and learn from it."
- Inspirational slogans and quotes:
 - 'Your success is my priority'
 - 'I love challenge'
 - 'Hard is good'
 - 'Question your inner monologue / the voice inside your head'

Further recommended strategies

- Have dialogue with students about **adaptive** and **maladaptive** learning
- Build in 'dealing with failure' as part of lesson focus – promote mistakes
- Refer to the malleable elasticity of the brain and its capacity to develop faster more efficient neurons
- Sharing examples, stories and experiences
- Urge students to understand that having the experience is not enough to learn; reflecting and revisiting are a key part of the learning process
- Make students have a clear understanding about the difference between work and learning
- Students are encouraged to begin to take control of their own learning
- Lead by example - staff reflect on their own learning with students

Try something different / Gold Standard

- Experiment with under-engineered lesson objectives with open-ended outcomes and encourage students to thrive in these environments as opposed to lessons with over-engineered lesson objectives
- Make reference to the 'inner monologue' and how to apply rationality to interpreting events
- Take on the role of cognitive therapist in the classroom. Be ready to tackle extreme interpretations of things that happen and the reaction to these skewed interpretations (exaggerated feelings of anxiety, depression, or anger). The fixed mindset inner monologue focuses on judgements "This means I'm a loser", "This means I'm a better person than they are", "This means I'm a bad husband", "This means my partner is selfish", "Therefore I'm an amazing cyclist". Growth mindset internal monologues are certainly sensitive to positive and negative information but they are attuned to implications for learning and constructive action: "What can I learn from this?" "How can I improve?" Cognitive therapy basically teaches people to rein in their extreme judgements
- Be willing to have students leaving lessons confused yet engaging and thinking at the end of lessons
- Encourage students to experiment with their learning
- Encourage students to develop strategies for mastery of knowledge/skills as opposed to examination gaming strategies

Knowledge is Power

Why does knowledge give us power?

1. **Knowledge underpins other learning:** in the first instance, knowing the meaning of words and having the ability to decode language is crucial for child development. Beyond that, factual knowledge is required to learn and practise skills. Having background knowledge in a subject allows links to be made, information to be 'chunked' and more information to be encoded into long term memory. "Memorising facts is like stocking a construction site with the supplies to put up a house. Building the house requires not only knowledge of countless different fittings and materials, but conceptual understanding too...mastery requires both the possession of ready knowledge and the conceptual understanding of how to use it" (*Brown, Roediger III, McDaniel*). The more information you already have in your long-term memory, the more new information you can retain. Knowledge is important not just in subjects that involve recall in written examinations. In art, a knowledge of formal elements such as line, tone, colour and pattern is important, as is a knowledge of artists from different contexts.
2. **Cultural Capital:** knowledge allows students to be successful in exams so, in that sense, gives young people from less affluent backgrounds the opportunity to be successful. However, a focus on enhancing vocabulary and making sure students experience a knowledge rich curriculum provides students with cultural capital. Young people from more affluent backgrounds are likely to develop a broad vocabulary at home. They are also likely to learn common cultural reference points at home. These might include knowledge of the arts (the Renaissance, Dickens), historical figures or events (Chartism as part of our history of radical democratising forces or the impact of Keynesian economics on post-war Britain), linguistic turns of phrase ("modus operandi"). They are likely to know about a range of professional careers and know about university from a young age. It is hard for students from less advantaged backgrounds to take their places at prestigious institutions and in professional careers if they feel culturally or socially excluded.

Memory

Memory is the residual of thought; thinking hard is more likely to aid recall. There are two memory stores: working memory and long-term memory. Working memory helps make decisions. It processes the world around us and compares the sensory information with information from the long-term memory to help us make decisions. Our objective is to help students encode and retain information in the long-term memory. This will enable them to retrieve relevant information when necessary. Last minute cramming for exams attempts to encode information into the long-term memory but it is less effective because the cognitive load is too much. If nothing has changed in long-term memory, nothing has been learned. Below are the principles that we will use to support students in successfully encoding information into their long-term memories.

- There are no quick fixes, we must start early
- Initial learning should be carefully planned; engagement is vital and challenge appropriate but not demotivating
- Information must be revisited and rehearsed regularly; retrieving knowledge regularly is more effective than restudying at the end of a course
- Embedding these principles will be a departure from the way we have traditionally thought about constructing SOW and lesson plans; careful time and consideration must be given to embedding these changes. 'The most general and useful idea that cognitive psychology can offer teachers is to review each lesson plan in terms of what the student is likely to think about' (*Willingham*).

Initial learning

Below are effective ways to reduce cognitive load and create the optimal conditions for learning new material:

- Embed initial knowledge by making learning **memorable** and **engaging**. Research suggests that 20% of students in lessons behave well but are passive and not focused on the learning.
- Present new information in **small steps**. Provide worked examples and offer images and text at the same time so that the learner does not have to remember one part while processing the other. Dual coding is recommended.
- Provide cognitive work that poses **moderate challenge** – it must be easy enough to solve but difficult enough to take some mental effort.
- **Generation learning:** students are given a problem or challenge prior to a lesson and the h/w could focus on asking the students to try and solve the problem before the answer is explored in the subsequent lesson. According to research, this approach will help deepen learning and improve memory.
- **Elaborative interrogation:** ask students to generate an explanation of why an explicitly stated fact or concept is true

- **Self-explanation:** ask students to explain how new information is related to known explanation, or explain steps taken during problem solving.

Effective initial learning leads to higher quality retention and retrieval of information

Retention and retrieval

Students need to learn strategies that have the most impact in terms of supporting retention and retrieval of knowledge. For example, practice testing, distributed practice, interleaved practice, elaborative interrogation, self-explanation. Spaced, interleaved and varied practice produces better mastery than massed practice. But these forms of practice are harder and so require more effort. Learning feels slower and rapid results and affirmations associated with mass practice are not evident. Students (and adults) labour under the misconception that we learn best through single-minded dogged repetition.

- Students should be encouraged to view testing as an opportunity to identify material of which they are not yet confident and not as something to be feared or begrudged. **Regular low-stakes testing** should be a feature in all SOW.
- **Interleaving** is a process where students mix, or **interleave**, multiple subjects or topics while they study in order to improve their learning. Rather than mastering one piece of information / concept etc, students are required to move quickly onto another, and then perhaps back. Traditionally, however, blocked practice has been common. This involves studying one topic very thoroughly before moving to another topic. At times interleaving seems especially counter-productive and confusing and is, therefore, seldom used. Just as students feel they have grasped a concept they are introduced to a new concept but the long-term benefits are evident. **The principles of interleaving should be applied to the construction of SOW and programmes of study.**
- **Varied practice** involves practising the same skill/knowledge in a different context rather than always practising it in the same context. For example, only ever applying the knowledge to a describe question, rather than applying the knowledge to an explain or a judgement question. The idea is that varied practice requires more brain practice and *'encodes the learning in a more flexible representation that can be applied more broadly'* (Brown, Roediger III, McDaniel). This approach helps us adapt to new situations in an unpredictable world, if we don't vary our learning (eg always studying the same flashcards in the same sequence) then we will find it harder to adapt to a new situation.
- One idea based on the concept of **elaboration** could be to get students to summarise the learning of a lesson or a unit in their own words at the end of a lesson or for h/w. Certain key trigger words could be given, but the emphasis would be to get the students to summarise the information themselves.
- Greater time should be given to helping students 'file' information effectively so it can be transferred to long-term memory. **Mnemonics** and memory techniques are key, but it should be emphasised that such methods work best when the students have already acquired the knowledge rather than using the methods to learn the material for the first time.
- Creative use could be made of displays, classrooms, corridors to help students associate information using the **'memory palace'** technique (method of loci). For example, whole **narratives** could be constructed by staff and students to help students remember the structure of a module so that they have a framework to identify how individual pieces of knowledge fit into the bigger picture.
- **'Drilling'** – extended practice is important. Memory will not be built without hard work.
- **Use of song**
- **Mindmaps**

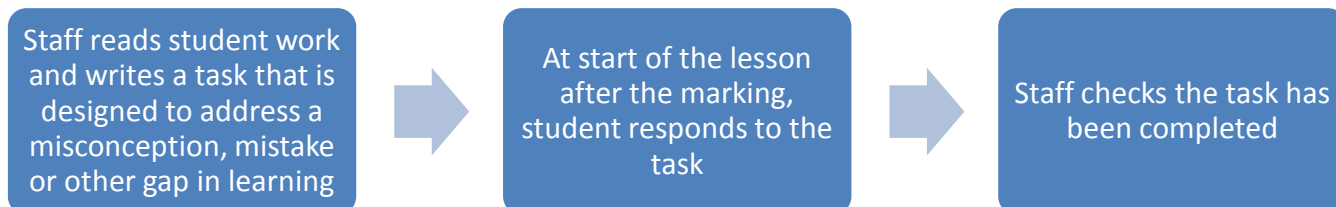
Task marking at JRCS

The purpose of this document is to support staff so we:

- Are clear about the nature and purpose of task marking
- Can draw on best practice from across the core departments to improve personal practice
- Have consistency in approach and outcome across the school

What is the purpose of task marking?

The key purpose of task marking is to identify where a student's work could be improved and support them in making that improvement:



What kind of marking is task marking?

The key feature of task marking is that it is a specific task that students complete in their books that improves the learning that they have already done. It should not be new work or extension work. It should be focused on making sure that gaps in the learning that have occurred in class are closed.

Task marking would commonly take one of the following forms:

- *The reminder prompt* – this is simply a reiteration of the learning objective and is most suited to higher attaining students. (e.g. Say more about saturation. Learning objective: to understand saturation point)
- *The scaffolded prompt* – involves the teacher giving examples and ideas as words or phrases and is suited to most students. (Say more about saturation. How much salt was used? How did you know saturation had been reached? When exactly was it reached?)
- *The example prompt* – is particularly supportive of lower attaining students – it involves the teacher giving exact models of what the student might write and the student is invited to choose one of these or to then write their own example. (Choose one of these statements and/or create your own: Harold was unlucky because he had fought another battle against Norwegians OR Harold had a lot of bad luck particularly having to fight William soon after the Battle of Stamford bridge)
- *Responding to literacy marking* – the most helpful practice here is to identify one or two paragraphs / pages worth of literacy errors using the literacy marking code. Students then correct the mistakes with green pen and then check the rest of their work for similar errors.

In the book they should clearly be labelled tasks. They might look like:

- "TASK: Re-write the highlighted paragraph / diagram / chart / making the following changes....."
- "TASK: Correct the highlighted literacy mistakes" "Re-write the misspelled words three times"
- "T: Have another go at the highlighted question and include specific data"
- "T: Make corrections where highlighted"

What is not task marking?

Not extension: Task marking should be about closing the gaps in knowledge, skills and understanding that book work suggests exist. It is not about setting extension activities. It should not be new learning. If the task being set is new learning then it is not really marking but, rather, teaching new content by writing in books.

Not comments: Task marking does not include making general comments on work, such as “you should use more key terms” or “you need to show workings”*. Also, if positive comments are written on work, it would be worth getting students to record them in the “what I did well” part of their reflection sheets, otherwise it’s very hard to know whether they have read them.

*Both of these would be fine if they were phrased and set out as tasks, e.g. “TASK: Re-write the first paragraph, adding four key terms”.

How often should we be task marking?

Student books should be thoroughly marked by staff once every six hours of teaching. Not all work should be task marked; normally it would be one or two identified pieces of work. It is likely that there would be examples of self / peer assessment in that time, also. At least one piece of work should also be marked for literacy and responded to by students – making this part of the task marking is the most efficient way of doing this.

When and how do students respond?

Student response should come at the start of the first lesson after the marking occurs. It is helpful if the student response is clearly differentiated from class work. (This is especially true if a couple of lessons have passed between the original work being produced and the marking). A good idea is to get students to leave a space under the original piece of work for the task. Students should label the response “Response to task marking” or something similar and complete the response in green pen. Staff should then show they have checked the work, although further detailed marking is not required. Stamps are good here, or a signature and date.

How do we set tasks out?

It should be clear that the task marking is a task, and not general comments etc. Some ways that this is done successfully is to write “TASK:” before the task or to put a “T” in a circle before it. In some departments they are highlighted, too. Tasks should be expressed as an instruction, not as a question.

What if the work over the previous six lessons is all correct – there are no gaps to close?

If this is the case then the work is too easy for the student. It is worth revisiting the SOW and lesson plans to make sure that all students are finding work hard. Students at JRCS should not be getting all their work right the first time.

What if the students have not done that much work?

Students should be doing lots of writing in their books. Content does need to be delivered to students and worksheets / handouts are sometimes needed to do this. These should clearly be responded to or interacted with by students though. This might be in the form of annotations, highlighting or summarising key points.