Introduction

Welcome to my training session/book on Closing Gaps in Attainment. I hope you enjoy it and find lots of practical strategies you can make your own and use in your teaching. You are invited to contact me with any questions and for *free* consultation and support- both for you and your teams in using these strategies- at **geoff.hannan@btinternet.com**

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How the Training Works

- The content is presented in the form of **Activity** and **Debrief.**
- Each of the activities is devised to introduce *and model* the key strategies for narrowing gaps.
- In my training session, after each I activity I will debrief the ideas briefly and pause to give you thinking time and to ask questions.
- Each section in the book has a detailed analysis of the underpinning pedagogy for you to study later (to avoid cognitive overload during the training!)
- Evidence bases are noted in the Appendix.

A wide range of additional support materials and classroom resources are available on our website.

Training Objectives

To provide a platform of key multi-adaptable, evidenced-based strategies for narrowing attainment gaps.

To present an analysis of the related issues and the pedagogy underpinning the above strategies.

Support Materials

You can download a wide range of training notes and classroom resources to support the strategies in this book on the author's webpage.

You are most welcome to reproduce them for use in your school (*only* please).
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www.hannans.org.uk/closing-gaps Password: cpd101

Content/PDFs:

1. Disadvantaged children and negative emotional schemas Workshop Notes
2. **Developing Language in Early Years**- Workshop Notes
3. **Building Language in KS2 and KS3-** Workshop Notes
4. **'Active Reading'**- Workshop Notes
5. **The Active Classroom** Workshop Notes
6. **Mind Gym**- A complete SEL and Metacognitive Programme of Study for 9–13-year-olds (copy to print in-house- pro bono bound copies available from Geoff Hannan at cost price.)
7. **Mind Gym Learning Journal**- A weekly journal, learning notes and SMART target book for young people (black and white copy to print in-house- pro bono bound copies available at cost price.)
8. **Classroom Posters and Thinking Frames**- on central teaching and learning strategies from Section Three of the book
9. For OFSTED: Workshop- **Closing Gaps**- **Deep Dive Best Practice Indicators**
10. **Tips for the Positive Management of Behaviour**
11. **Counselling and Providing Emotional Support to Children-** Workshop Notes

Part One

Starters
To challenge and engage
To personalise and communicate relevance

Activity 1

Activity 1 Debrief

The Importance of Lesson Starters Especially for Disadvantaged Pupils

Lesson starters play a crucial role in setting the tone for learning, and they are especially important for disadvantaged pupils who may face additional barriers to engagement and attainment. Their significance and provides strategies for effective implementation:

1. Setting the Tone for Learning

Lesson starters help pupils transition from previous activities into a focused learning mindset. For disadvantaged pupils, who may experience instability or lack of routine outside school, a consistent and structured start to lessons can provide a sense of security and predictability.

2. Promoting Engagement and Participation

Effective starters immediately involve pupils in learning, reducing off-task behaviour and increasing voluntary participation. This is particularly beneficial for disadvantaged students who may struggle with motivation or confidence.

3. Activating Prior Knowledge

Starters that review previous learning help disadvantaged pupils bridge gaps in understanding and reinforce memory through retrieval practice. This aligns with Rosenshine's principles of instruction, which advocate beginning lessons with a short review of prior learning.

4. Building Confidence and Inclusion

Inclusive starter activities—such as low-stakes quizzes, visual prompts, or collaborative tasks—can boost self-esteem and ensure all pupils feel capable of contributing. This is vital for disadvantaged learners who may feel marginalised or less confident in their abilities.

5. Addressing the Disadvantage Gap

Research from the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) shows that strategies like metacognition, oral language interventions, and feedback are particularly effective for disadvantaged pupils. Lesson starters can incorporate these strategies to support learning from the outset.

Strategies for Inclusive Lesson Starters

Here are some effective strategies to make lesson starters inclusive:

- Use "Do Now" Tasks: quick, accessible activities that pupils begin immediately upon entering the classroom.
- Incorporate Retrieval Practice: short quizzes or memory tasks to reinforce previous learning.
- Visual and Kinesthetic Activities: drawing, sorting, or building tasks to engage different learning styles.
- Collaborative Starters: pair or group discussions to promote peer support and shared learning.
- Differentiated Tasks: provide tiered activities that allow pupils to engage at their own level.
- Universal Design for Learning (UDL): ensure starters offer multiple means of engagement, representation, and expression.

Activity 2

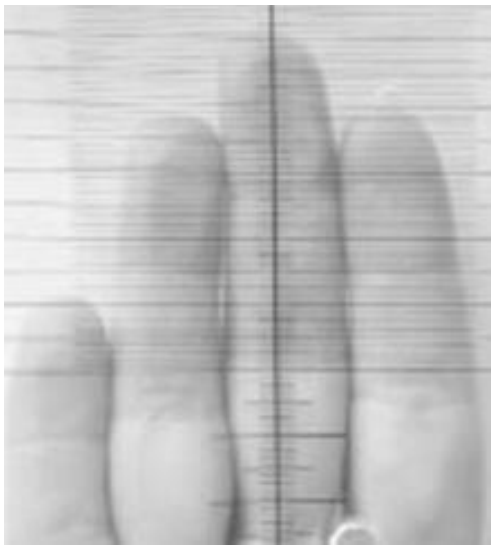
Objectives: To introduce learning themes and communicate personal relevance.

Descriptive

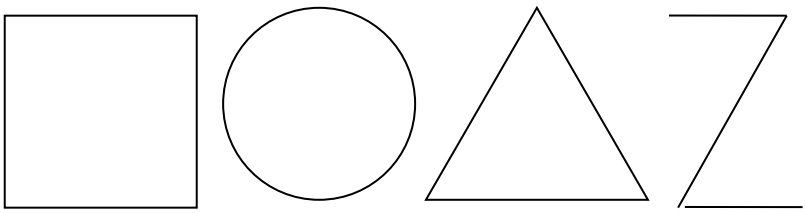
What little boys and girls are really made of

Our sex and gender have significant impact on our own lives and the lives of children and young people as they grow to adulthood. This section explores the key understandings of sex and gender differences and how they might impact learning. You will see how these understandings inform the strategies later in the training.

Please draw around the fingers of your hand



Doodle for two minutes using these shapes. You may use any or all of the shapes once or more.



Activity 2 Debrief

Sex and Gender Differences

All human cultures treat males and females differently yet in very similar ways.

Observe and you will see many differences in the ways that the sexes engage in tasks, absorb skills and understandings and recall learning. You will also see many differences in their emotional and motivational responses.

These gender differences are not 'binary' with there being, for example, a totally delineated and separate male and female brain. Each of us is on a continuum between femininity and masculinity and is a complex product of our genetic propensities, our environmental influences and random chance.

Also, of course, notions such as gender are cultural constructs. Whilst differences within groups are greater than differences between groups, understanding some of the likely sex/gender differences can be a tool to ensuring we address the needs of both groups in our classrooms.

It can also be a tool that points us to the needs of an individual child, through the lens of her or his gender. Understanding gender differences within this context is an essential tool for delivering equality of opportunity and good diversity practice.

On average:
Girls speak earlier and develop language faster
Girls develop 'theory of mind' earlier
Girls develop pro-social behaviours earlier
-Girls currently out-perform boys in all curriculum subjects at all levels in British schools and in all countries around the world.

Additional Notes

One in 17 adults in Britain identify themselves as gay: with a third of these self-identifying as bisexual and two thirds homosexual.

Gender identity and sexual orientation are two different things. For example, being transgender is about an individual's gender identity, while being gay is about an individual's sexual orientation; and while many children, who go on to identify as lesbian, gay or bisexual express 'gender-expansive' behaviours, whether they are transgender is about *identity* rather than sexual attraction. Most of us possess both a gender identity and a sexual orientation and a transgender young person or adult can also identify as gay, lesbian or bisexual.

Gender dysphoria is the diagnosis typically given to a person whose assigned birth gender is not the same as the one with which they identify. Transgender identity is not a mental illness that can be cured. Rather, transgender people frequently experience an authentic and continuing disconnection between the sex assigned to them at birth and their internal sense of who they are.

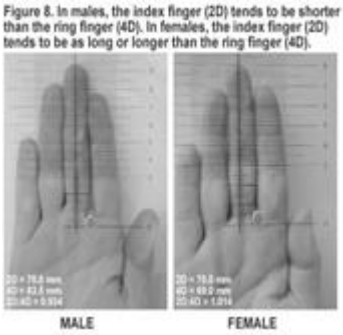


Figure 8. In males, the index finger (2D) tends to be shorter than the ring finger (4D). In females, the index finger (2D) tends to be as long or longer than the ring finger (4D).

Fingers

Relative finger length seems to be an indicator of where an individual's brain lies on the continuum between female and male. In most male hands the ring finger is longer than the index finger whereas in most female hands they are the same length or the index finger is longer.

Shapes

Carl Jung, the Swiss psychiatrist, postulated the idea of universal symbols in the collective consciousness of Humankind. Broadly speaking he ascribes the square to security, the circle to love, the triangle to ambition and the zed to sex. The activity of doodling with these symbols causes much hilarity and debate when I use it in training; especially when I say that many believe doodling as in the activity reveals one's current unconscious mental state and point out in what they have just doodled that males use more zeds and triangles and females more squares and circles! Check it out with your learners: I find the same to be true with young people.

Differences in Learning Styles Between Males and Females

The topic of sex differences in learning styles has been widely explored in educational psychology. While individual learning preferences vary greatly, some general trends have been observed between males and females. Understanding these differences can help educators tailor their teaching strategies to better support all learners. Cognitively, females tend to exhibit stronger verbal and language-based skills from an early age. Importantly, **reflective thinking** skills are more pronounced and better developed in females which provide advantages in most traditional curricular areas and potential disadvantages when it comes to mathematics and some science-based areas This often translates into a preference for reading, writing, and discussion-based learning.

Males, on the other hand, often excel in visual-spatial tasks, which can influence their engagement with subjects like mathematics, engineering, and science. These cognitive tendencies suggest that boys may benefit more from visual aids and spatial reasoning activities, while girls may thrive in linguistically rich environments.

In terms of learning preferences, girls are generally more inclined toward collaborative and structured learning environments. They often excel in tasks that require communication, organization, and attention to detail. Boys may prefer hands-on, experiential learning and often benefit from physical engagement and movement during lessons. This difference highlights the importance of incorporating a variety of teaching methods to accommodate diverse learning styles.

Behaviourally, girls tend to develop self-regulation and attention control much earlier than boys. This can lead to better performance in traditional classroom settings, where sustained focus and compliance with rules are valued. Boys, however, may be more prone to impulsivity and distraction, which can affect their academic outcomes, especially in early and adolescent education. Providing opportunities for active learning and incorporating breaks can help address these behavioural differences.

Motivationally, girls often display higher levels of intrinsic motivation. They are more likely to complete assignments thoroughly and on time, driven by a desire to achieve and please authority figures. Boys may be more performance-oriented, responding better to competition, challenges, or external rewards. Understanding these motivational drivers can help educators design more effective incentive systems in the classroom.

The implications for teaching are significant. Educators should strive to use multi-modal teaching strategies that include visual, auditory, and kinesthetic elements. Encouraging collaborative learning while also providing individual challenges can help engage both boys and girls.

It is also crucial to avoid reinforcing gender stereotypes and instead focus on nurturing each student's individual strengths and interests.

The Importance of Teachers Understanding the Subtleties in Sex and Gender Differences

In educational settings, an awareness of the subtle differences between sex and gender is more than a matter of social sensitivity—it is a cornerstone of effective, inclusive teaching. Sex refers to biological attributes, while gender encompasses the socially constructed roles, behaviours, and identities. These factors influence how learners perceive themselves, interact with peers, and engage with academic content. Teachers who recognize and respond to these nuances are better equipped to foster learning environments where every student is encouraged and supported, regardless of their identity.

One of the most significant benefits of gender awareness in education is its role in promoting equitable learning opportunities. Research has shown that boys and girls, and learners of diverse gender identities, may differ in communication styles, preferred learning modalities, and classroom behaviours. These variations are not universal, but understanding typical patterns helps educators tailor instruction and engagement strategies more effectively. For instance, a teacher might integrate collaborative discussion for students who thrive on social learning, while offering independent tasks for others—recognizing that these preferences aren't dictated by gender but may correlate with it in complex ways. By doing so, educators avoid reinforcing stereotypes and instead allow learners to express their individuality.

Gender awareness also plays a critical role in emotional and cognitive development. Boys may be socialised to hide vulnerability, leading to under-addressed emotional needs, while girls might be more susceptible to self-doubt especially in subjects traditionally seen as masculine, such as mathematics or science. Without sensitive intervention, these dynamics can hinder performance and self-esteem. Teachers who are attuned to these realities can provide affirmations, guidance, and mentorship that challenge restrictive norms and encourage students to grow beyond societal expectations. Additionally, this awareness reduces the impact of stereotype threat—a psychological phenomenon where fear of confirming a negative stereotype undermines performance. By fostering classroom cultures that celebrate diversity, teachers help students focus on their potential rather than on perceived limitations.

Creating a gender-inclusive classroom also means affirming the identities of students who may not conform to traditional gender binaries. Children and adolescents who identify as nonbinary, transgender, or gender nonconforming often face social stigma and misunderstanding. Educators who are informed about these identities can adopt inclusive language, support student autonomy in expressing their gender, and address discrimination proactively. This doesn’t just benefit marginalized learners—it cultivates empathy, acceptance, and emotional intelligence among all students.

Finally, understanding gender differences is not solely about student diversity—it invites educators to examine their own biases and teaching practices. Many teachers unconsciously respond differently to boys and girls, whether by calling on them at different rates, offering varied feedback, or holding divergent expectations. Through reflection and professional development, educators can develop greater self-awareness, adjust their behaviours, and grow as culturally responsive practitioners. In doing so, they become not only conveyors of knowledge but champions of equity and dignity in education.

General Classroom Management Strategies to Improve Especially Boys' Academic Attainment

Improving boys' academic attainment requires a multifaceted approach that addresses engagement, behaviour, motivation, and differentiated instruction. The following is a list of classroom management tactics designed to support boys in achieving their full academic potential.

1. Engagement Strategies

- Incorporate hands-on, experiential learning activities.
- Use technology and multimedia tools to enhance lessons.
- Provide opportunities for movement and physical activity during lessons.
- Use ‘gamification’ techniques to make learning more interactive.
- Offer choices in assignments to increase autonomy and interest.

2. Behaviour Management

- Establish clear, consistent rules and expectations.
- Use positive reinforcement to encourage desired behaviours.
- Implement structured routines to provide stability.
- Use visual schedules and cues to support transitions.
- Apply restorative practices to address behavioral issues constructively.

3. Motivation and Encouragement

- Set achievable goals and celebrate progress.
- Use competitive elements in a healthy and inclusive way.
- Provide regular, specific feedback to build confidence.
- Encourage peer mentoring and collaborative learning.
- Recognize and value effort as much as achievement.

4. Differentiated Instruction

- Adapt teaching methods to accommodate different learning styles.
- Use small group instruction and especially pair work to provide targeted support.
- Incorporate real-world examples that resonate with boys' interests.
- Provide scaffolding to help boys build on prior knowledge, writing and especially reading.
- Use formative assessments to guide instruction and provide timely interventions.

5. Building Relationships and Classroom Culture

- Foster strong teacher-student relationships based on trust and respect.
- Create a classroom environment that values diversity and inclusion.
- Encourage open communication and active listening.
- Model empathy and emotional regulation.
- Promote a growth mindset and resilience.

Ensure that lessons have a clear reflective step and reflective thinking is taught as a discreet skill.

To Improve Especially the Performance of Boys

- Ensure a reflective step is used in lessons to secure conceptual understandings
- Teach and use steps especially 'Go for Five' and Descriptive-Reflective-Sequencing.
- Chunk teaching and learning
- Scaffold thinking as well as writing
- Require reflective articulation of learning
- Use Think-Communicate-Write
- Use Read-Think-Communicate
- Reward effort especially
- Reward pro-social behaviours
- Use Learning Partners and work a third of the time with girl
- Think 'motivation'- use hooks, experiential/active learning and simulations

This list is especially useful to serve as questions to ask yourself about an individual boy's learning development needs

Secondary students practising reflective thinking in my 'Exam Success Road Show' - it is noticeable how the girls shine at this task and how much more difficult the boys find it.

To Improve Especially the Performance of Girls

- Encourage experiential trial and error learning
- Encourage guess and test
- Encourage speculation
- Ensure equal participation in the classroom e.g. by using 'no hands' questioning
- Encourage assertive behaviours
- Praise the attempting of difficult tasks and overcoming initial failures
- Work a third of the time as Learning Partner with boy
- BE EVER VIGILANT AND RESPOND TO *ALL* KINDS OF SEXUAL HARASSSMENT

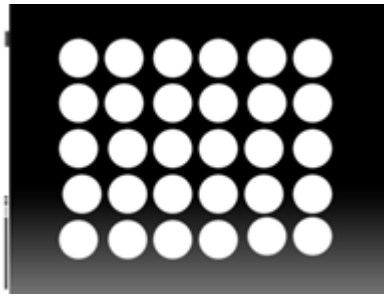
This list is especially useful to serve as questions to ask yourself about an individual girl's learning development needs.

Activity 3

Reflective

Guess and Test

If all the children in Britain were represented by a typical class of 30 Primary School children how many would currently be living in poverty?

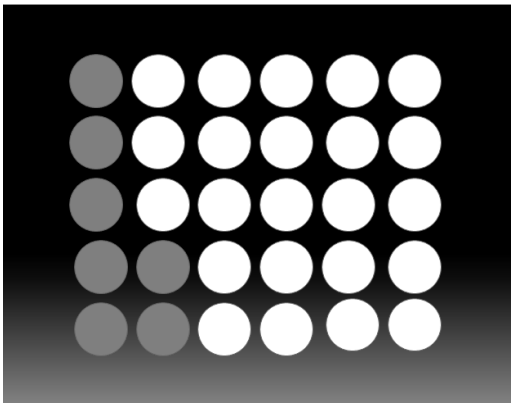


Which of these statements are true?

1. Poverty stunts physical growth and development.
2. Poverty hinders social and emotional development.
3. Poverty increases the likelihood a child will have a chronic health condition.
4. Poverty increases infant and child mortality rates.
5. Poverty shortens life expectancy.
6. Poverty gives children more preventable diseases.
7. Poverty creates, perpetuates and widens achievement gaps.
8. Poverty increases parent stress and impairs parenting practices.
9. Poverty introduces more neglect, insecurity and instability into children's lives.
10. Poverty increases the violence children personally experience and witness.

Activity 3 Debrief

Answers



1 IN 4 children live in poverty in the UK
(ONS 2021)

All of statements are true.

Challenges Faced by Disadvantaged Children and Young People

Disadvantaged children and young people often face a wide range of challenges that can significantly affect their ability to succeed in education and beyond. These challenges are deeply rooted in socioeconomic, structural, and personal factors that interact in complex ways.

One of the most significant barriers is poverty itself. Children from low-income families may lack access to basic necessities such as nutritious food, stable housing, and healthcare.
These conditions can lead to poor physical and mental health, which in turn affects concentration, attendance, and overall academic performance.

Additionally, families experiencing financial hardship may not be able to afford educational resources like books, internet access, or extracurricular activities that support learning and development.

Educational inequality also plays a major role. Schools in disadvantaged areas often receive less funding, which can result in larger class sizes, fewer experienced teachers, and outdated learning materials. These schools may struggle to provide the same quality of education as those in more affluent areas. Furthermore, teachers may have lower expectations for disadvantaged students, whether consciously or unconsciously, which can negatively impact students' self-esteem and motivation.

The home environment is another critical factor. Parents or caregivers who are dealing with financial stress, long working hours, or limited education themselves may find it difficult to support their children's learning. In some cases, children may take on caregiving responsibilities or experience instability due to family breakdowns or frequent moves, which can disrupt their education.

Health and well-being are closely linked to educational outcomes. Disadvantaged children, for example, are more likely to experience chronic stress and depression.

Inadequate social policies and support systems can also fail to address the root causes of inequality, allowing these disparities to persist across generations.

Finally, the digital divide has become increasingly important. Access to technology and the internet is essential for modern learning, yet many disadvantaged families cannot afford reliable devices or broadband. This gap became especially apparent during the COVID-19 pandemic, when remote learning highlighted the stark differences in access and support between students.

Addressing the challenges faced by disadvantaged children and young people requires a multi-layered approach involving families, schools, communities, and governments. Here are some key strategies that can help close the gap:

The Likely Learning Weaknesses and Special Education Needs of Children from Disadvantaged Backgrounds

Language and Communication Delays:
- Limited vocabulary exposure at home.
- Difficulty understanding and using complex sentence structures.
- Less practise with reading and storytelling, affecting literacy skills.

Cognitive Development Challenges:
- Lower working memory and attention span due to stress or lack of stimulation.
- Difficulty with problem-solving and abstract thinking.
- Slower processing speed especially affecting timed tasks.

Poor Academic Readiness:
- Limited access to early childhood education.
- Gaps in foundational skills like number sense and phonemic awareness.
- Less familiarity with books, numbers, and structured learning environments.

Emotional and Behavioral Issues:
- Higher levels of stress, anxiety, or trauma interfering with concentration.
- Difficulty forming secure attachments with teachers or peers.
- Increased likelihood of behavioral issues disrupting learning.

Lack of Motivation and Self-Efficacy:
- Low expectations from adults or past failures leading to lack of confidence.
- Less persistence in the face of challenges.
- Limited exposure to role models who value education.

Limited Access to Learning Resources:
- Few books, internet access, or quiet study spaces at home.
- Infrequent participation in extracurricular or enrichment activities.
- Less parental support with homework due to time, education level, and/or language barriers.

Health and Nutrition Issues:
- Poor nutrition affecting concentration and energy levels.
- Chronic health problems or lack of access to healthcare leading to absenteeism.
- Undiagnosed vision or hearing problems affecting learning.

Sex and Gender Differences

Boys from disadvantaged backgrounds are more likely to under-attain than girls from these backgrounds (see section two).

White working-class boys are consistently identified as one of the lowest attaining groups in UK education, particularly when measured by academic outcomes such as GCSE results and progression to higher education.

Academic Performance

Evidence submitted to the UK Parliament shows that white working-class pupils—especially boys—perform worse than most other ethnic and socio-economic groups, with the exception of Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller children, who tend to have even lower attainment.

Contributing Factors to Underachievement

The underachievement of white working-class boys is linked to a complex mix of factors including:
-Differences in male neurology compared to female un catered for in educational settings
- Socio-economic disadvantage
- Lower parental engagement with education
- Limited access to high-quality schools

- Cultural attitudes toward education
- Geographic isolation in some communities

Comparison with Other Groups
The Education Policy Institute highlights that disadvantaged White British pupils (especially those eligible for free school meals) tend to have lower attainment than disadvantaged pupils from most other ethnic backgrounds, including Pakistani, Bangladeshi, and Black African groups.

The Negative Effect of Sexist Social Media on Adolescent Males

1. Reinforcement of Harmful Gender Norms
Toxic masculinity: exposure to sexist content often promotes rigid ideas of masculinity—such as dominance, emotional suppression, and aggression.
- Peer pressure: boys may feel compelled to conform to these norms to gain social acceptance or avoid ridicule.
2. Distorted Views of Relationships and Consent
Sexist media can normalize disrespectful or controlling behaviour toward women, leading to:
  - Misunderstandings about healthy relationships
  - Increased risk of engaging in or tolerating abusive behaviour
3. Mental Health Consequences
Emotional suppression: the pressure to appear 'tough' or unemotional can lead to:
  - Anxiety
  - Depression
  - Difficulty forming close relationships
- Low self-esteem: Boys who don't fit the stereotypical mould may feel inadequate or alienated.
4. Increased Aggression and Antisocial Behaviour
Studies have linked sexist and misogynistic content with:
  - Greater acceptance of violence
  - Increased likelihood of bullying or harassment
5. Online Radicalization
Some online communities use sexist rhetoric as a gateway to more extreme ideologies, drawing in vulnerable adolescents through:
  - Echo chambers
  - Influencer culture that glamorizes misogyny
What Can Be Done?
- Media literacy education: teaching boys to critically evaluate online content.
- Positive role models: Promoting diverse and respectful representations of masculinity.
- Parental and school involvement: Open conversations and supportive environments can counteract harmful messages.
Peer Mentoring- establishing student groups to monitor sexism and support fellow students.

General Classroom Strategies for Supporting Disadvantaged Learners

1. Language and Communication Delays

- Encourage peer conversations and social skills development through **highly structured talk partners** and group work.
- Encourage thinking skills development through **the teaching of metacognition.**
- Use rich oral language activities like storytelling, show-and-tell, drama and role play.
- Incorporate visual aids and gestures to support understanding.
- Provide explicit and subject-specific vocabulary instruction.

2. Cognitive Development Challenges

- Use short, focused tasks with clear instructions to support attention.
- Sequentially extend these as the lesson continues using **clearly delineated steps.**
- Incorporate games and puzzles that build memory and problem-solving.
- **Scaffold learning with step-by-step guides and visual organizers**.
- Offer frequent breaks and movement-based activities.

3. Poor Academic Readiness

- Conduct baseline assessments to identify gaps and tailor instruction.
- Use multi-sensory teaching methods (e.g., phonics with movement).
- Provide extra support through small group interventions.
- Integrate play-based learning to build foundational skills and **simulation-based learning for older students.**

4. Emotional and Behavioral Issues

- Create a safe and predictable classroom environment.
- **Use positive behaviour reinforcement** and clear expectations.
- **Incorporate social-emotional learning (SEL) activities into curricular contents.**
- **Build strong teacher-student relationships through mentoring, check-ins and regular feedback through 'conferencing' techniques.**

5. Lack of Motivation and Self-Efficacy

- Set achievable goals and celebrate progress.
- Use growth mindset language and praise effort.
- Provide choice and autonomy in learning tasks.
- Share success stories and role models from similar backgrounds.
- **Engage students in monitoring their own learning through can-do lists, self-targeting, self-development time and teacher conferencing.**

6. Limited Access to Learning Resources

- Offer access to books, technology, and all needed materials.
- Use free or low-cost digital tools for learning (e.g., educational apps).

- Partner with local libraries or community centers for resources.
- Send home simple, resource-light activities for reinforcement.

7. Health and Nutrition Issues

- Be flexible with attendance and catch-up support.
- Provide healthy snacks if possible or work with school programs.
- Watch for signs of vision/hearing issues and refer for screening.
- Incorporate movement and mindfulness to support well-being.

Developmental Targets need to be SMART and short term.

Challenges Gifted Children May Face

While being gifted can offer many advantages, it can also present unique challenges for children. These challenges may affect their emotional, social, and academic development.

Here are some common problems gifted children might face:

- Social isolation: gifted children may struggle to connect with peers who do not share their interests or intellectual level.
- Perfectionism: they may set unrealistically high standards for themselves, leading to stress and anxiety.
- Underachievement: some gifted children may become bored in traditional classrooms and disengage from learning.
- Emotional sensitivity: gifted children often experience intense emotions and may have difficulty managing them.
- Pressure to perform: expectations from parents, teachers, or themselves can create overwhelming pressure.
- Difficulty with authority: they may question rules and instructions, which can lead to conflicts with adults.
- Asynchronous development: their intellectual abilities may outpace their emotional or social maturity.

Understanding and supporting gifted children is essential to help them thrive. Providing appropriate educational challenges, emotional support, and opportunities for social interaction can make a significant difference in their development.

Strategies to Help Gifted Children in the Inclusive Classroom

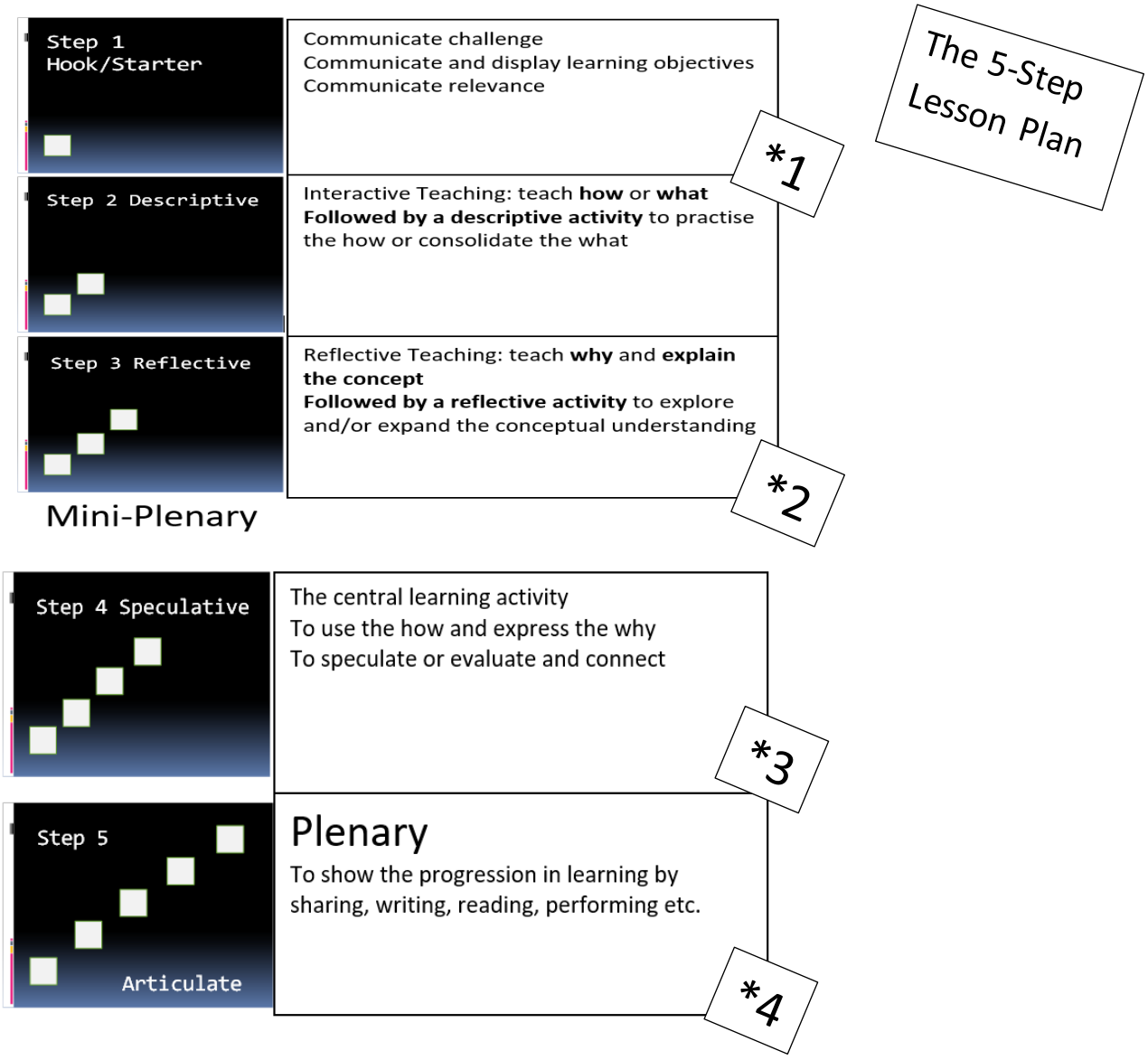
Gifted children often require differentiated instruction and support to thrive in a classroom setting. Here are several strategies educators can use to help gifted students reach their full potential:

- Provide differentiated instruction tailored to the child's strengths and interests.
- Offer opportunities for independent study and self-directed learning.
- Use open-ended questions and tasks that encourage critical thinking and creativity.
- Incorporate project-based learning to allow exploration of complex topics.
- Allow flexible grouping so gifted students can collaborate with peers at similar ability levels as well as act as guides to lower ability children at times.
- Provide access to advanced resources and materials beyond the standard curriculum.
- Encourage mentorship opportunities with experts or older students.
- Support social-emotional development through counseling and peer interaction.
- Use formative assessments to guide instruction and challenge students appropriately.
- Create a classroom environment that values curiosity, risk-taking, and intellectual exploration.

Part Two

Using
D-R-S
R-T-C
T-C-W

Closing Gaps: Key Strategy 1-
Use Descriptive-Reflective-Speculative Sequencing



*1. Especially important for the disadvantaged learners and as content for overlearning and pre-learning.

*2. Especially important for boys.

*3. Frequent opportunities here to differentiate to the needs of individual learners and extend gifted students by MBWA.

*4. Highly important to all learners in building learning competencies and confidence.

Activity 4

In pairs please read out loud in turn, taking a paragraph each…

Using Descriptive-Reflective-Speculative Sequencing in Lessons
-Frequently and periodically
-Teach the sequence and encourage its use in thinking, writing and reading

Incorporating the **Descriptive–Reflective–Speculative (DRS)** sequence into teaching practice can significantly enhance learning outcomes, particularly for **under-attaining students**. When a teacher actively uses this structure in their lesson delivery, it not only supports student thinking but also models a clear, logical progression of ideas that students can internalise and replicate easily.

In the **descriptive phase**, the teacher begins by guiding students to observe, recall, or describe what they already know or can see and then clearly teaches the how, what, when, where, who of the new learning content.

This should be interactive and might involve prompting them with questions like, *"What do you notice?"*, *"What happened in the story?"*, or *"What do we already know about this topic?"*
The teacher's role here is to validate all contributions, creating a low-stakes environment where students feel safe to participate. For under-attaining students, this phase is crucial—it allows them to engage without fear of being wrong and builds their confidence from the outset.

Moving into the **reflective phase**, an especially important one for boys, the teacher encourages students to think more deeply about what they've described or now know. This might involve asking, *"Why do you think that happened?"*, *"What does this tell us?"*, or *"How does this connect to what we learned before?"* Here, the teacher models reflective thinking aloud, demonstrating how to analyse and interpret information. This scaffolding is especially helpful for students who struggle with abstract reasoning, as it shows them how to move from facts to meaning in a metacognively structured way.

In the **speculative phase**, a highly important one especially for girls., the teacher invites students to explore possibilities and imagine alternatives. Questions like, *"What might*

happen if…?", *"How could this be different?"*, or *"What would you do in that situation?"* open up space for creativity and critical thinking. The teacher's role is to encourage curiosity and reassure students that there are no wrong answers in this phase—only ideas to explore. For under-attaining students, this can be a transformative experience. It shifts the focus from performance to possibility, helping them see themselves as capable thinkers and contributors.

By teaching through the DRS sequence, the teacher not only structures the lesson in a way that supports cognitive development but also models a way of thinking that students can adopt. This approach builds confidence, deepens understanding, and nurtures creativity—all essential for helping under-attaining students thrive.
In using D-R-S sequencing you will observe how naturally self-differentiating it is, allowing scope to extend the understandings and skills of all learners.

Your Thoughts

Closing Gaps: Key Strategy 2-
Use the Sequence READ-THINK-COMMUNICATE

Use Read-Think-Communicate

-Individually *and* in Paired Reading

How the Read–Think–Communicate Sequence Benefits Under-Attaining Learners and Narrows Attainment Gaps

1. Read – Building Background Knowledge and Vocabulary

What it involves:
- Learners engage with a text (written, visual, or multimedia).
- Focus is on understanding key ideas, vocabulary, and structure.

How it helps under-attaining learners:
- Exposure to academic language: many under-attaining learners have limited vocabulary. Reading, especially when chunked into small but frequent sections, builds familiarity with subject-specific terms and sentence structures.
- Contextual learning: learners see how ideas are developed and supported in real texts, which models good thinking and communication.
- Access to content knowledge: reading provides the foundational knowledge needed to participate in deeper thinking and discussion.
- Scaffolding comprehension: with support (e.g., guided reading, annotations, glossaries), learners can access texts that might otherwise be too challenging.

2. Think – Processing and Making Meaning

What it involves:
- Learners reflect on what they've read.
- They identify key ideas, make connections, and form opinions or questions.

How it helps under-attaining learners:
- Encourages active engagement: instead of passively reading, learners are prompted to think critically and personally about the content.
- Supports memory and understanding: thinking time helps consolidate learning and improves retention.
- Develops metacognition: learners begin to understand how they process information, which is key for becoming independent learners.
- Reduces pressure: thinking before speaking or writing gives learners time to organize their ideas, which is especially important for those who struggle with language or confidence.

3. Communicate – Expressing and Refining Understanding

What it involves:
- Learners share their thoughts through discussion, debate, or presentation.
- This can be done in pairs, small groups, or whole-class settings. Think pair work as the main process but extend regularly into group work but always using a pair work step first.

How it helps under-attaining learners:
- Builds confidence: speaking is often less intimidating than writing. It allows learners to test ideas in a supportive environment.
- Improves language skills: verbal communication helps learners practise vocabulary and sentence structures in context.
- Clarifies thinking: explaining ideas to others helps learners refine their understanding and identify gaps.
- Encourages participation: structured talk routines (e.g., sentence starters, talk partners) ensure all learners have a voice, not just the most confident.

Overall Impact on Narrowing Attainment Gaps

The Read–Think–Communicate sequence:
- Scaffolds complex tasks into manageable steps, making learning more accessible.
- Promotes equity by ensuring all learners have time and support to engage with content.
- Develops core skills in reading comprehension, critical thinking, and oral language —key predictors of academic success.
- Fosters a growth mindset, as learners see that understanding and expression improve with practice and support.

Practical Example

Task: Explore the causes of climate change.

- Read: Learners read a short article or infographic on climate change.
- Think: they highlight key causes and jot down questions or reactions.
- Communicate: in pairs, they discuss what they found most surprising or important, using sentence starters like “I noticed…” or “I wonder…”

This approach ensures that learners who might struggle with comprehension or expression are supported at each stage, building confidence and competence over time.

Frequency: 50% of Reading Time

Benefits of Using Paired Reading in the Classroom

Paired reading is an instructional strategy where two students read together often pairing a more proficient reader with a less proficient one. This collaborative approach to reading offers numerous benefits in the classroom setting.

1. Literacy Development
- Enhances reading fluency and comprehension through repeated practice.
- Provides immediate feedback and correction from peers.
- Encourages vocabulary development and pronunciation skills.

2. Social Interaction
- Fosters a sense of cooperation and teamwork among students.
- Builds communication skills and confidence in reading aloud.
- Promotes peer support and mentoring relationships.

3. Student Engagement
- Increases motivation and interest in reading activities.
- Encourages active participation and accountability.
- Makes reading a more enjoyable and interactive experience.

Implementing paired reading in the classroom can significantly enhance students' reading skills, social development, and overall engagement. It is a versatile and effective strategy that supports diverse learners and promotes a collaborative learning environment.

Frequency of Paired Reading:
1 in 3 reading activities

Student Log

Log your reading activities this week. Term:

Reading	W1	W2	W3	W4			
Purpose							
For fun							
For finding out/checking information							
For learning how to do something							
For understanding the world							
For understanding people							
For advice							
Out of curiosity							
Ways							
To myself silently							
To myself out loud							
Paired reading taking turns							
Skimming: looking to get an overview							
Scanning: looking for key words or info.							
Chorus reading in the classroom							
To							
Parent/relative/sibling/carer							
Teacher/ Teaching Assistant/Tutor							
Pet (seriously- good for practising reading)							
What							
Fiction							
Non-Fiction							
Websites							
Magazines/ Newspaper/Instruction manuals etc.							
MY OWN WRITING- Do this regularly.							

Activity 5

With your partner write a short note to another pair expressing your gratitude for having them as colleagues at your school.

Now cut out your note and take it to them.

Closing Gaps: Key Strategy 3-
Use the Sequence THINK-COMMUNICATE-WRITE

Use Think-Communicate-Write

-Individually and in Paired Writing

NB In most classrooms, there is too much writing and not enough reading. The former can mitigate against the variety of learning experiences that students need and the latter leave literacy skills underdeveloped; especially in its pivotal uses in learning for information finding and understanding.

How the Think–Communicate–Write Sequence Supports Under-Attaining Learners

1. Think – Building Cognitive Readiness

What it involves:

- Giving learners time to process a question or task before responding.
- Encouraging them **to reflect**, make connections, and plan their ideas.

How it helps under-attaining learners:

- Reduces cognitive overload: learners who struggle often need more time to process information. Thinking time allows them to organize their thoughts without pressure.
- Promotes metacognition: they begin to understand how they think and learn, which is crucial for long-term progress.
- Levels the playing field: high-attaining students often respond quickly. Structured thinking time ensures everyone has a chance to engage meaningfully.

2. Communicate – Verbalizing Ideas to Strengthen Understanding

What it involves:

- Pair or group discussions, think-pair-share, or whole-class dialogue.
- Encouraging learners to articulate their thoughts before writing.

How it helps under-attaining learners:

- Clarifies thinking: Talking through ideas helps learners refine and deepen their understanding.
- Builds confidence: Speaking is often less intimidating than writing. It gives learners a chance to test ideas in a low-stakes way.
- Language development: many under-attaining learners struggle with academic language. Communication provides a scaffold for vocabulary and sentence structure.
- Peer modelling: hearing others' ideas can inspire and guide learners who are unsure where to start.

3. Write – Consolidating Learning Through Structured Expression

What it involves:

- Learners write down their ideas after thinking and discussing.
- Writing is seen as the final step, not the starting point.

How it helps under-attaining learners:

- Improves quality of writing: because they've already thought and talked through their ideas, learners are more prepared to write clearly and coherently.
- Reduces anxiety: writing can be daunting. This sequence breaks it into manageable steps.
- Supports independence: over time, learners internalize the process and become more confident writers.

Impact on Narrowing Attainment Gaps

The Think–Communicate–Write sequence:
- Provides equitable access to learning by scaffolding complex tasks.
- Encourages participation from all learners, not just the confident few.
- Improves outcomes in both writing and oral language, which are key indicators of academic success.
- Fosters a growth mindset, as learners see that their ideas are valued and can improve through collaboration.

Practical Example

Task: Write a paragraph explaining the water cycle.
- Think: learners are shown a diagram and given 2 minutes to jot down key stages.
- Communicate: in pairs, they explain the cycle to each other using sentence starters.
- Write: they then write a paragraph using vocabulary and ideas discussed.

This approach ensures that even learners who might struggle with writing have had time to build understanding and confidence before putting pen to paper.

Frequency: up to 50% of writing tasks

The Effectiveness of Paired Writing Tasks in the Classroom

Paired writing tasks involve students working collaboratively in pairs to complete writing assignments. This instructional strategy has gained considerable attention for its potential to enhance student engagement, improve writing skills, and foster peer learning.

Key Benefits

- Enhanced Collaboration: students learn to communicate and negotiate ideas effectively.
- Improved Writing Skills: peer feedback and shared responsibility lead to higher quality writing.
- Increased Motivation: working with a partner can make writing tasks more enjoyable and less intimidating.
- Development of Critical Thinking: students evaluate and refine each other's contributions.

Challenges

- Unequal Participation: One partner may dominate the task while the other contributes less.
- Conflict Resolution: Disagreements may arise over content or writing style.
- Assessment Difficulties: Evaluating individual contributions can be challenging.

Strategies for Implementation

- Clear Guidelines: provide structured roles and expectations for each partner.
- Training in Collaboration: teach students how to give constructive feedback and resolve conflicts.
- Monitoring and Support: teachers should observe and guide pairs to ensure effective collaboration.
- Reflective Activities: encourage students to reflect on their collaborative experience and learning outcomes.

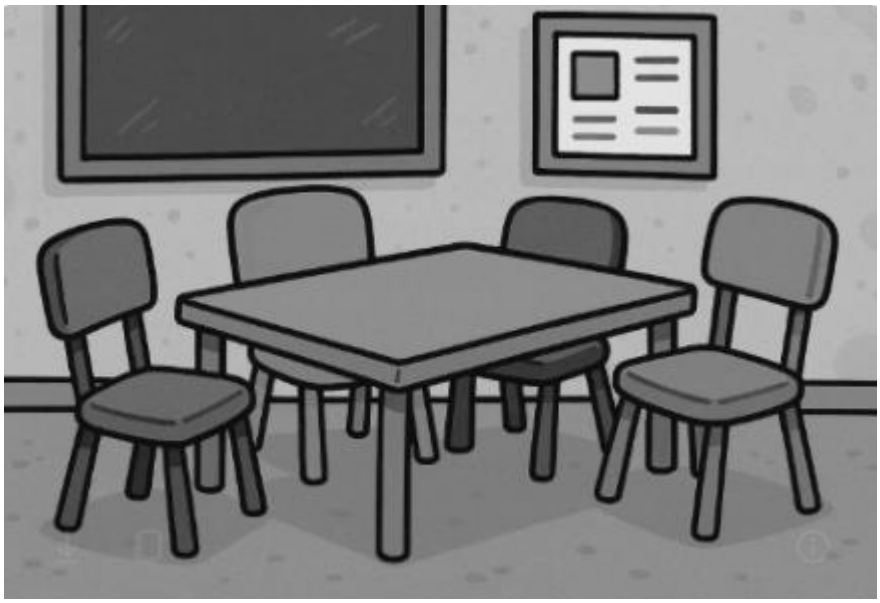
Paired writing tasks can be a powerful tool in the classroom when implemented thoughtfully. By promoting collaboration, enhancing writing skills, and fostering a supportive learning environment, this approach can contribute significantly to student development.

Paired writing: 1 in 3 of extended writing tasks

Part Three

Activate Proximal Learning

Activity 6



You have 4 different chairs (say, red, blue, green, yellow): how many **ways you can arrange them** around the table?

Use puzzles, quizzes and low stakes testing frequently to aid and test retrieval.

Closing Gaps: Key Strategy 4-
Realise the Potential of Proximal Peer Learning

Use 1/3 1/3 1/3

Set up Three Sets of Formal 'Learning Partners' in the Classroom:

- **Mixed Gender/Similar Ability**
- **Single Gender/ Mixed Ability**
- **Friendship/ Self-selected**

Rotate every half-half term

The Educational Value of Rotating Learning Partners in the Classroom

Setting up a rotation of three Learning Partners in the classroom using the above pairing—offers a rich, inclusive, and dynamic learning environment that benefits all students. This strategy not only supports academic growth but also fosters social-emotional development and helps narrow attainment gaps.

Why Rotate Learning Partners?
Rotating learning partners prevents social stagnation and cliques, exposes students to diverse perspectives, builds social-emotional skills like empathy and communication, and ensures equity by giving all students access to different types of peer support.

Learning Partners - For all students:

- - Encourages collaborative problem-solving.
- - Promotes mutual respect for different learning journeys.

- - Helps teachers differentiate instruction more effectively.

Educational Benefits of the Mixed Gender / Similar Ability Pairings in the Classroom

- Pairing students in mixed gender and similar ability groups is a strategic approach that fosters academic growth, social development, and inclusive learning environments. This method combines the benefits of gender diversity with the cognitive alignment of similar academic levels, creating a balanced and effective learning partnership.

Academic Benefits

- - Encourages equitable participation: Students of similar ability levels are more likely to contribute equally, leading to balanced collaboration and shared responsibility for learning.
- - Enhances peer learning: learners can explain concepts to each other using language and examples that are accessible and relatable, reinforcing understanding for both partners.
- - Promotes academic confidence: working with a peer of similar ability reduces intimidation and fosters a safe space for asking questions and making mistakes.

Social and Emotional Benefits

- - Breaks down gender stereotypes: mixed gender pairings encourage students to collaborate beyond traditional social groupings, promoting mutual respect and understanding.
- - Builds communication skills: students learn to express ideas and listen to diverse perspectives, enhancing interpersonal skills.
- - Fosters empathy and cooperation: working with peers of different genders helps students develop emotional intelligence and collaborative habits.

Classroom Culture and Inclusion

- - Encourages inclusivity: mixed gender/similar ability pairings ensure that all students are included in meaningful academic interactions.
- - **Supports differentiated instruction**: teachers can tailor tasks to the ability level of the pair, ensuring appropriate challenge and support.
- - Promotes a positive learning environment: students feel valued and supported, which contributes to a more cohesive and respectful classroom culture.

Mixed gender/similar ability pairings offer a powerful combination of academic alignment and social diversity. By leveraging the strengths of both dimensions, educators can create dynamic learning experiences that support all students in achieving their full potential

Benefits of Working in Single Gender / Mixed Ability Partnerships in the Classroom

Incorporating single gender/mixed ability partnerships into classroom practice offers a unique blend of social and academic benefits. This approach allows educators to leverage the strengths of diverse learners while creating a supportive and inclusive environment. Below are the detailed benefits of this strategy.

Academic Benefits

- Mixed ability pairing allows for peer tutoring, where higher-achieving students reinforce their understanding by helping others, and lower-achieving students receive support in a non-threatening environment.
- Single gender settings can reduce performance anxiety and stereotype threat, especially in subjects where

gender disparities are common.
- Students may feel more comfortable asking questions and participating actively, leading to deeper engagement and improved learning outcomes.

Social and Emotional Benefits

Single gender groups can foster a sense of camaraderie and reduce social distractions, allowing students to focus more on learning.
- Mixed ability settings promote empathy, patience, and collaboration, as students learn to appreciate different perspectives and learning styles.
- These partnerships can build confidence and resilience, especially for students who may feel overshadowed in mixed-gender or high-ability groups.

Classroom Management and Inclusion

- Structured partnerships help teachers manage classroom dynamics more effectively by balancing personalities and learning needs.
- This approach supports inclusion by ensuring that all students, regardless of gender or ability, have opportunities to contribute and succeed.
- It encourages equitable participation and helps break down social barriers that may exist in more homogeneous groupings.

Working in single gender/mixed ability partnerships some of the time provides a balanced and thoughtful approach to collaborative learning. It supports academic growth, fosters social-emotional development, and promotes an inclusive classroom culture where every student can thrive.

Benefits of Working in Self-Selected Friendship Pairs in the Classroom

Allowing students to work in self-selected friendship pairs can have a significant positive impact on their academic, social, and emotional development. This strategy, when used thoughtfully and in balance with other grouping methods, can enhance engagement, motivation, and learning outcomes for all students.

Comfort and Trust

Working with a friend provides a sense of safety and emotional security. Students are more likely to take academic risks, ask questions, and express confusion when they are with someone they trust. This comfort can lead to deeper engagement and more meaningful learning experiences.

Increased Motivation and Enjoyment

Friendship-based pairings often lead to higher levels of enthusiasm and participation. Students are more motivated to complete tasks and stay on task when they are working with someone they enjoy being around. This can lead to improved productivity and a more positive classroom atmosphere.

Peer Encouragement and Support

Friends often provide emotional and academic support to one another. They can encourage each other to persevere through challenges, offer explanations in a relatable way, and celebrate each other's successes. This peer support can be especially beneficial for students who struggle with confidence or academic skills.

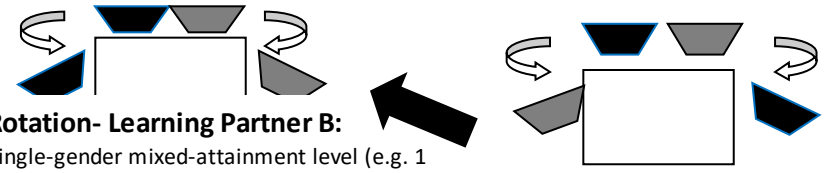
Development of Collaboration Skills
While working with friends, students still need to navigate collaboration, share responsibilities, and resolve disagreements. These experiences help them develop essential teamwork and communication skills in a low-pressure environment.

Student Agency and Ownership
Allowing students to choose their partners gives them a sense of control over their learning environment. This autonomy can increase their investment in the task and foster a sense of responsibility for their own learning.

Balanced Implementation
While self-selected pairs offer many benefits, it is important to balance this approach with other grouping strategies to ensure equity and exposure to diverse perspectives. Rotating between different types of pairings can help all students develop a broad range of social and academic skills.

Overall Impact on Learning and Attainment
Rotating through these three types of partnerships balances comfort and challenge, develops well-rounded learners, nurtures inclusive values, and narrows attainment gaps by ensuring all students benefit from peer support and varied learning contexts.

Learning Partners and Classroom Layout



Rotation- Learning Partner B:
Single-gender mixed-attainment level (e.g. 1 with 15; 2 with 16)

Learning Partner A: Mixed-gender, attainment level= every day sitting positions

Rotation- Learning Partner C:
Change tables- Friendship: free choice

Class arranged in three sets of pre-arranged Learning Partners:

- A: Mixed-gender attainment level
- B: Single-gender mixed-attainment level
  With ½ class attainment spread (Level 1 with Level 15, Level 2 with Level 16 etc)
- C: Friendship- free choice

Changed every half-term

Some Strategies to use:

- Paired discussion especially in response to questions:

'Here's my question; talk with your LP and share ideas'
'Find me 5 things that you know about...'
'See if you can remember what we learnt about this last lesson'
'Tell your LP what you have learnt this lesson'
'With your LP work out a difficult question to ask me'

- Paired writing (especially with LP A)
- Paired reading (especially with LP B and C)
- Paired activity (all LPs - ensure collaboration through providing just one worksheet)
- Paired activity, shared with table and extended to group work
- PEER LEARNING LPs tasked to explore and report back on curriculum topics with minimum facilitation by teacher (Whole table planned and aspects delegated)

SUGGESTED OPTIMAL TEACHING TO TASK RATIOS AND INDIVIDUAL TO PROXIMAL LEARNING RATIOS (PARTNER LEARNING)
The task ratio is broken down into two types of task: individual and 'proximal' through pair work in the above rotations

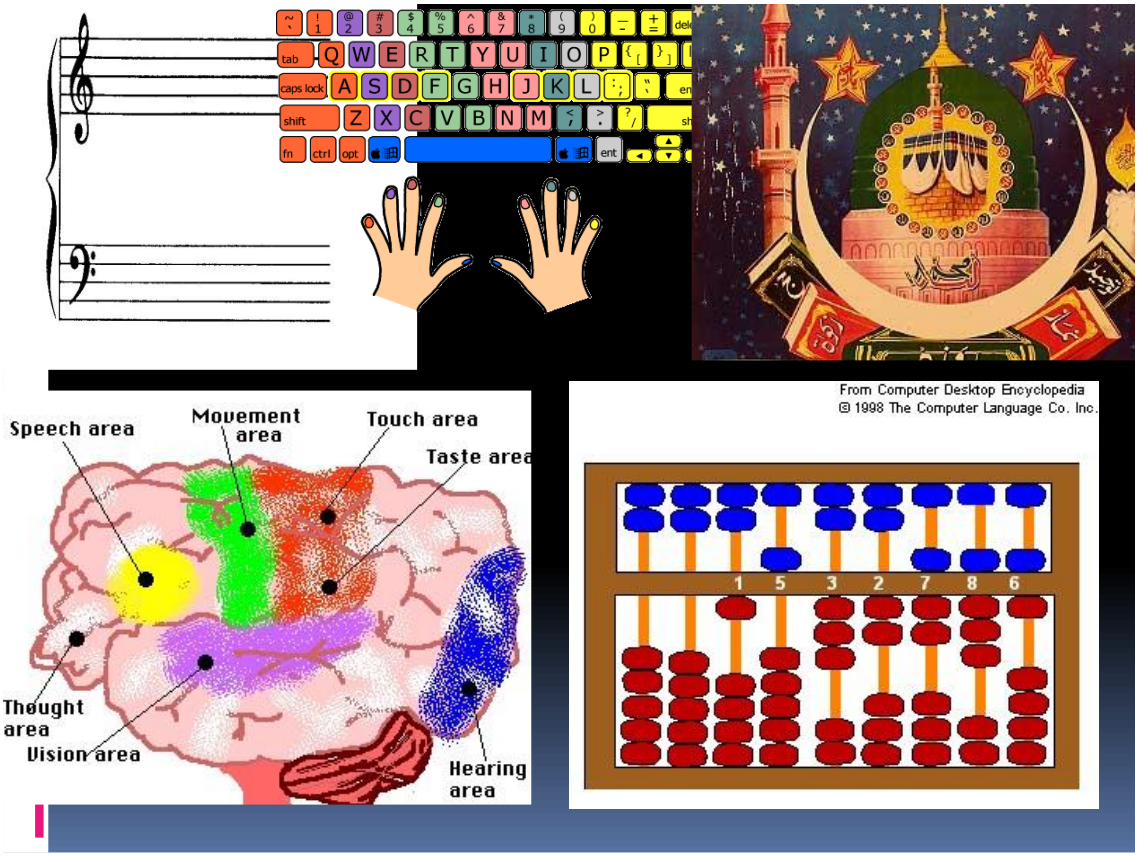
	(I : P)	(I : P)	**(I : P)**
KS2	KS3	KS4	
MATHS	1 : 2 (1:1)	1 :2 (1:1)	1 : 3 **(2:1)**
MODERN LANG	1 : 3 (1:2)	1;4 (1:3)	1 : 4 **(1:3)**
ENGLISH	1 : 3 (1:2)	1 : 3 (1:2)	1 : 4 **(1:1)**
SCIENCE	1 : 3 (1:2)	1 : 3 (1:2)	1 : 3 (1:2)
TECHNOLOGY	1 : 3 (2:1)	1 : 4 (3:1)	1 : 5 (4:1)
HISTORY	1 : 3 (1:2)	1 : 3 (1:2)	1 : 3 (2:1)
GEOGRAPHY	1 : 3 (1:2)	1 : 3 (1:2)	1 : 3 (2:1)

Thus: in Maths in KS2 and KS3, about half the *doing* time is done individually and half in pairs. Rotating learning partners and working on a mathematical operation together proves a very effective strategy for raising attainment.

Part Four

Teaching Metacognition
Empowerment

Activity 7



What do these things have in common with one-another?

Think-Call Out

Closing Gaps: Key Strategy 5-
Teach Metacognition

5.1 Teach Steps: 'Go for Five'/ 'Go for Three'

Overtly teaching steps and categorisation is especially crucial to lower attaining students because it helps them process information in a consistent, structured and manageable way. Many less secure learners thrive on routine and predictability, so breaking tasks into clear, sequential steps allows them to understand and complete activities with greater confidence and independence.
Multi-step directions and categorisation also supports cognitive development, improving problem-solving skills and executive functioning, which can be challenging for disadvantaged students.
Additionally, using *consistent* repetition together with visual aids and hands-on demonstrations can enhance comprehension and retention, making learning more accessible and engaging.

'Go for Five'/'Go for Three' is a powerful multi-adaptable thinking tool that fosters sequential thinking and analysis. For example, if you have a problem to solve then first think of *five* possible solutions and then select the best one. You may not be able to find all five possible solutions, but the technique encourages you to look more deeply past the first one or two ideas that might readily come to mind. Better solutions are often found in ideas three and four.

'Go for Five' is also a tool for delineating an optimum number of steps and remembering a linear process such as how to plan a task or how to recall something like a mathematical operation. (It's remarkable how so many of these need five clear steps- probably for the reasons below.)

Encourage learners to use 'Go for Five' frequently and especially in tasks they find more difficult to do or recall.

Why Five? Our brains seem to hold information best in odd rather than even numbered groups. **With three being optimum for short term cognition (working memory)** and five being enough *but not too much* for medium term retrieval.

Just think about how often we use this number quite unconsciously. Politics abounds with five-point plans. There are five key study areas in many school subjects and there many other ways it is used in other walks of life. Once this has been pointed out, you will notice how frequently this number is used to group and more easily recall information.

Another significant point is that going for a maximum of five avoids cognitive overload, again especially important for less secure learners. Too easily diagrams and flow charts can become overcrowded with too much information and thus difficult to recall. Visual impact and recall seem to be threatened by more than five components (hence the staves on a sheet of music).

Here are some ways to use and teach 'Go for 5':

For developing and remembering process skills:

- Five steps for doing something.

For post-analysis:

- Five steps you used/ five things that happened.

For recalling information:

- Chunk facts, details, main points in groups of five to remember them better

For developing reflective and speculative thinking:

- Think of five possible solutions to a problem then chose the one you think is best.
- Think of five reasons why something might have happened and then decide on the most likely.
- Think for five reasons for doing something and five reasons against doing it then decide whether to do it!
- Five good things about- five bad things about an influence, an action, a situation etc.
- Plan five things to include in your writing before writing.

Display posters about important learning and retrieval skills and refer to them frequently:

PDFs of colour classroom posters are available on the webpage, File 9.

5.2 *Teach* Retrieval

'Tell your partner what you have learnt this lesson.'

1. Retrieval Practice

Retrieval practice involves actively recalling information from memory rather than passively reviewing it. This strengthens memory and improves long-term retention. Techniques include self-quizzing, flashcards, and practice tests.

Classroom Example: after a lesson on ecosystems, the teacher gives students a blank sheet and asks them to write down everything they remember about the topic. Then, they compare their notes with a partner and fill in any gaps.

2. Concept Mapping

Concept mapping is a visual representation of relationships between concepts. It helps students organize and structure knowledge, making it easier to understand and recall.

Classroom Example: in a history class, students create a concept map linking key events of World War II, showing causes, effects, and relationships between events.

3. Summarization

Summarization requires students to distill information into concise summaries. This encourages them to identify key ideas and understand the material deeply.

Classroom Example: a language teacher introduces new vocabulary on Monday, reviews it briefly on Wednesday, and quizzes students on Friday and the following week.

4. Questioning Techniques

Encouraging students to ask and answer questions promotes critical thinking. Techniques include Socratic questioning, self-questioning, and using Bloom's taxonomy to frame questions.

5. Teaching Others

Explaining concepts to peers or teaching others reinforces understanding and highlights gaps in knowledge.

6. Spaced Repetition

Spaced repetition involves reviewing information at increasing intervals over time. This technique combats forgetting and enhances long-term retention.

7. Interleaving Practice

Interleaving mixes different topics or types of problems during study sessions. It improves the ability to distinguish between concepts and apply knowledge flexibly.

REVISION FILE CARD SUBJECT_____TOPIC_____

DESCRIPTIVE key facts: What, Where, How, Where, Who

	REFLECTIVE: Reasons and Understandings
1	1
2	2
3	3
4	4
5	5

SPECULATIVE: Connections, Similarities Dissimilarities, Ideas and Guesses

1. Read the card out loud to yourself.
2. Then turn it over and explain it someone else.
3. On the back write a few quiz questions to test yourself later.

Quality Questioning

Sequence your questions: Descriptive-Reflective-Speculative

- How, What, When, Who
- Why
- If, like... in contrast to... evaluate

Sequence your questions: Closed-open & hard-soft (see below)

- Hard: Fact, information about= Descriptive
- A little soft: Connections, personal relevance= Reflective
- Very soft: Creative= Speculative

Plan core questions before lesson

- These are the questions I want children to be able to answer-D, R, S
- Direct- Talk with Partner/ by name- have 'no hands' time
- Here's my question...give thinking time
- Follow-up responses and allow time to think more deeply
- Go for Five (or three)

Questioning prior to and during Think-Communicate-Write

- Find me three/five answers to my question
- Find me five things you remember from last lesson
- Find me five words that describe X
- That uses the word X (key word, scientific/technical term etc) and explains what it means
- That uses five steps to explain how to X (step-by-step explanation of doing something)
- That provides a detailed response that explains why you think as you do
- That uses a statement followed by the word "because…"
- That gives a detailed response that explains why X (conceptual understanding) happens/is as it is
- That illustrates by comparison using connectives such as *in the same way/equally/similarly/ as well as*
- That attempts to contrast one thing with another using connectives such as *however/but/on the one hand, on the other*
- That tries to persuade using words such as *obviously/of course/clearly/surely/certainly*
- That gives an opinion using words such as *it would seem that/maybe/perhaps/definitely* etc.

Questioning as part of Read-Think-Communicate

- What am I looking to find out/answer?

Best Practice indications

- Questions planned before lesson
- Questions addressed to individual pupils by name

Time given to work out responses e.g. 'Thirty seconds: find me five answers to this question'

- Questions that drill down to deeper understandings and require reflection e.g. 'Why do you think this is?'
- Questions that compare and contrast with previous learning e.g. 'How is Y like X' 'How is this dissimilar to...'
- Questions that require verbal connectives e.g. 'Explain your ideas using 'on the one hand and on the other'
- Questions that check pupil progress and understandings
- Pupils are required to pose/answer their own and one-another's questions

5.3 Teach Planning Skills -Especially Plan-Do-Review

Planning is a foundational metacognitive skill that involves setting objectives and determining the steps necessary to achieve them. When students plan effectively, they consider what they need to learn, how much time they have, and what strategies will be most effective. This foresight helps them approach tasks with a clear roadmap, reducing anxiety and increasing efficiency.

Monitoring refers to the ongoing awareness of one's understanding and performance during a task. Students who monitor their learning are able to recognize when they are confused, when a strategy is not working, or when they need to adjust their approach. This self-awareness allows them to make real-time changes that improve their learning outcomes.

Evaluating is the process of reviewing and assessing the effectiveness of one's learning strategies and outcomes after completing a task. It involves asking questions like 'Did I meet my goal?' or 'What could I have done differently?' This reflection helps students identify successful strategies and areas for improvement, fostering continuous growth.

Self-questioning is a technique that encourages students to ask themselves questions before, during, and after learning. Questions such as 'What do I already know about this topic?' or 'Does this make sense?' help students stay engaged and deepen their understanding. It promotes active learning and critical thinking.

Target/Goal setting involves identifying specific, measurable, and achievable objectives. When students set clear goals, they are more motivated and focused. Target/Goal setting provides direction and a sense of purpose, which can enhance persistence and resilience in the face of challenges.

Strategy selection is the ability to choose the most appropriate methods or techniques for a given task. Students with strong metacognitive skills can evaluate different strategies and select the one that best suits the task at hand. This flexibility allows them to adapt to various learning situations effectively.

Reflection (here) is the act of thinking deeply about one's learning experiences. It involves considering what was learned, how it was learned, and how it can be applied in the future. Reflection helps students internalize their learning and develop a deeper understanding of themselves as learners

Thinking Frame

For Planning

Descriptive Step

What? How? **When?** Why?

Step 1
Step 2
Step 3
Step 4
Step 5

Reflective Step

Possible problems: Overcome by:

1
2
3

DODODODODODODODODODODODODODODODODODO

Speculative Step

How will I evaluate it afterwards? How will I know if it works?

1
2
3

5.4 Actively Teach Thinking Skills
Core Thinking Skills for Enhanced Learning and Retrieval

To support effective learning and information retrieval, students can be taught a range of core thinking skills. These skills help learners process, analyze, and retain information more effectively. Below is an analysis and explanation of key thinking skills, along with classroom examples for each.

1. Metacognition
Metacognition is the awareness and understanding of one's own thought processes. It helps students plan, monitor, and assess their learning strategies.
Classroom Example: students use learning journals to reflect on what strategies helped them understand a math concept.
2. Critical Thinking
Critical thinking involves analyzing facts to form a judgment. It encourages students to question assumptions, evaluate evidence, and make reasonable adjustments.
Classroom Example: during a debate on environmental issues, students evaluate the credibility of sources and construct logical arguments.
3. Inference
Inference is the ability to draw conclusions from evidence and reasoning rather than from explicit statements.
Classroom Example: in a literature class, students infer a character's motives based on their actions and dialogue.
4. Analysis
Analysis involves breaking down information into parts to understand its structure and meaning.
Classroom Example: students analyze a historical event by examining causes, key figures, and consequences.
5. Synthesis
Synthesis is the ability to combine different ideas to create a new whole or propose alternative solutions.
Classroom Example: after researching renewable energy sources, students design a sustainable energy plan for their school.
6. Evaluation
Evaluation involves making judgments about the value of ideas or materials based on criteria and standards.
Classroom Example: students assess the effectiveness of different persuasive techniques in advertising.
Teaching core thinking skills equips students with the tools to become independent, reflective, and effective learners. By embedding these skills into classroom activities, educators can enhance students' ability to learn and retrieve information meaningfully.

The 'Forensic Starter'

A 'Forensic Starter' is a short starter designed to teach a specific thinking skill that will then be used I the lesson that follows it. It is a highly effective tool for teaching and consolidating think and learning skills.

Here are some 'Forensic Starters'

Examples of Forensic Starters

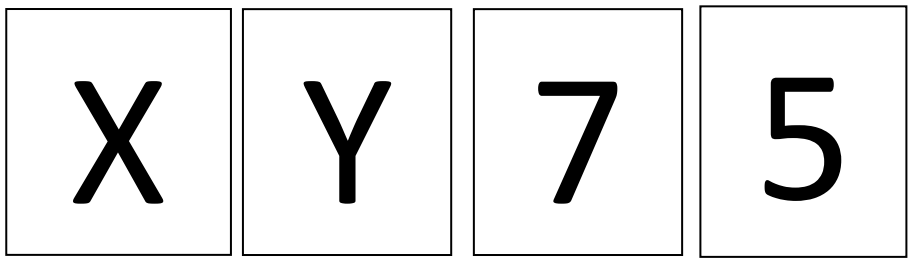
1. What is wrong with this statement: 'If at first you don't succeed- give up.' Find five things wrong with this idea. (Metacognitive Thinking)

2. A bat and a ball together cost £1.10. The bat is £1 dearer than the ball. How much is the ball? (Analysis)

3. In a garden weeds double in number every day. It will take 24 days for the weeds to cover the entire garden. How long will it take for the weeds to cover half the garden? (Analysis)

4. A father and his son are involved in a car crash. The father very sadly dies in the crash and the son is rushed to hospital. The surgeon says, "I am not allowed to operate on this boy because he's my son". Explain why. (Inference)

5. Susy is a bright girl who is very interested in animals and issues concerning conservation and the environment. Put these statements in the most likely order: Susy has short hair. Susy has a part-time job in a pet shop. Susy has a part-time job. (Inference)



6. Each of the above cards has a letter on one side and a number on the other. Which two cards should you turn over to check that the following statement is true: **if there is an X on one side there is a 5 on the other?** (Confirmation Bias)

7. You have a candle, a box of matches and some thumb tacks. How can you mount the candle on a wall? (Evaluation/Utility Bias)

Answers to Section 3/5.4 Thinking Skills

Answers

1. It should, of course, be 'try again!'
2. The bat costs £1.05 and the ball 5 pence.
3. The weeds cover half the garden in 23 days.
4. The surgeon is the boy's mother.
5. No actual one correct answer here but there is one wrong one. Option 3 must come before 2 since Susy having a part time job must be more likely that Susy having a part time job in a pet shop.
6. You should turn over the X card and the 7 card.
7. Take the matches from the tray and pin the tray to the wall to hold the candle.

Debrief

1. I hope you got this one right! Being successful at anything can involve a lot a failure. Children need to learn to 'fail well' by not giving up.
2. The bat costs £1.05 and the ball 5 pence. If you got it wrong, it is because you thought *instinctively* when really you needed to think a bit more about the answer. Good thinking is to think, 'Is this really good thinking?' and 'Test your answers.'
3. The weeds cover half the garden in 23 days. Well duh! Instinct again. Don't just rely on your first thoughts. Sometimes it's best to think backwards. This is an important thinking skill, for example in planning things. Good thinking is start with the question always in mind. Good thinking is to start with your goal in mind.
4. The surgeon is the boy's mother! (Or, less likely, his other Gay father.) Look out for stereotypical assumptions and the immediate appeal of first solutions or easy ideas to believe in. Some people believe an awful lot of rubbish because they quickly jump to conclusions. Good thinking is to look for evidence before making decisions.
5. You might have been misled by thoughts of Susy being an animal lover and into environmental issues. We are always looking for connections and can easily be misled by the assumptions we make. Good thinking is to look out for the assumptions you have made.
6. You should turn over the X card and the 7 card (you probably thought X and 5 card!). Think about it... you don't need to know what the 5 card has on the back of it; only what the X card has on the back of it. If you found an X on the back of the 7 card, the statement would not be true. This is called 'Confirmation Bias.' We frequently look for things that confirm the beliefs we already have about things rather than those which might challenge them. Good thinking is to challenge your own biases.
7. The problem here is about overcoming what is called 'Function Fixation.' When we think about a box of matches, we think about its function (such as lighting the candle). Instead, we might take out the match tray and pin in it to the wall to hold the candle. Be creative- think 'out of the box.!'

5.5 Actively Teach Self -Monitoring and Personal Target Setting

Ownership and Autonomy

Using the Exercise Book:

- Number the pages in pencil (so students can remove pages if required and then re-number).
- Have a content/'Can Do' page at the back. When a piece of work is finished, it is added to the contents page so it can easily be found for recall or revision.
- Keep a list of key words/phrases at the back of the book and test yourself to remember and explain them.
- Keep a checklist at the back of the book of things you have learnt (a learning log) and things you can do. Remind yourself of these regularly. LINK THESE INTO TEACHER ASSESSMENT PROCESSES.

Students should be encouraged to use a range of note-making methods including diagrams and pasted/annotated photographs (especially boys and PP students).

Students should be encouraged to evaluate their own and one-another's work.

The Exemplar Exercise Book
In addition, students could have an exemplar exercise book (especially in Maths and English) where, for example, they note in best key mathematical operations, sentence and grammatical constructions and analysis methods. This can then make an effective revision tool for exams

Feedback

Mark less but deeply
Perhaps use a sticky label system with voice recognition:

Well done, you can:
1
2
3
You are getting better at:
1
2
3
To improve further:
1
2
3
Resources to use:

After marking, set extended period of time for students to work on the improvements, e.g. a whole lesson working individually or in pairs. Students should articulate their learning at the end of this lesson, sharing it with their Learning Partner or table group.

TEACHER CAN 'CONFERENCE' WITH INDIVIDUAL STUDENTS DURING THIS…

Conferencing as a Technique for Providing Detailed Personal Feedback to Learners

What is Conferencing? Conferencing refers to a one-on-one or small group conversation between a teacher and student(s), focused on discussing the student's work, progress, and learning goals. It's often used in writing, reading, or project-based learning, but can be applied across subjects.

Key Features of Conferencing

Personalised: tailored to the individual student's needs, strengths, and areas for improvement.
Dialogic: it's a two-way conversation, not just the teacher giving feedback. Students are encouraged to reflect, ask questions, and set goals.
Timely: happens during or soon after the learning activity, making feedback more relevant and actionable.
Formative: helps guide learning while it's still in progress, rather than just evaluating it at the end.

Benefits of Conferencing

Builds trust and rapport between teacher and student.
Encourages student ownership of learning by involving them in the feedback process.
Clarifies expectations and helps students understand success criteria.
Supports differentiation, allowing teachers to meet diverse learning needs.

Example in Practice

In a writing lesson, a teacher might sit with a student for 5 minutes to:
Review a draft of their story.
Ask questions like, "What are you most proud of?" or "What part was hardest to write?"
Offer specific feedback, e.g., "Your opening is strong—can you add more detail to the ending?"
Set a goal together, such as "Work on using more descriptive language in the next paragraph."

Part Five

Strategic Target Setting

The Importance of Learning Strategy-Centered Leadership in Schools

Learning strategy-centered leadership in schools is crucial for fostering sustainable improvement, empowering staff, and enhancing student outcomes. It is important because it:

1. Aligns Vision with Action
Strategy-centered leadership ensures that a school's vision, values, and goals are clearly defined and consistently pursued. Leaders who understand strategic planning can align day-to-day decisions with long-term objectives, creating coherence across the school.

2. Promotes Evidence-Informed Decision Making
Strategic leaders use data and research to guide their choices. This helps in identifying what works, allocating resources effectively, and adapting to changing educational needs.

3. Builds Capacity and Resilience
By focusing on strategy, leaders can develop staff professionally, delegate effectively, and create systems that support innovation and improvement. This builds a resilient school culture that can weather challenges and sustain progress.

4. Enhances Collaboration and Accountability
Strategic leadership encourages shared ownership of goals. Staff are more likely to collaborate when they understand the strategy and see how their work contributes to the bigger picture. It also fosters accountability through clear benchmarks and expectations.

5. Drives Continuous Improvement
Rather than reacting to issues, strategy-centered leaders anticipate challenges and plan proactively. This mindset supports a culture of reflection, learning, and ongoing development.

6. Supports Equity and Inclusion
Strategic planning allows leaders to identify gaps in provision and outcomes, ensuring that all students—regardless of background—have access to high-quality education and support.

The Inclusive Classroom

Creating an inclusive classroom means fostering a learning environment where every student feels valued, respected, and supported. Here are some key principles to keep in mind:

- **Diverse Representation**: ensure that teaching materials reflect a variety of cultures, perspectives, and abilities so all students see themselves represented. Ensure that negative contexts are never applied to culturally significant words such as 'black' or 'Islamic'.
- **Ensure that all children receive praise** and sanctioning systems are applied quietly to individuals and are *never publicly* (such as names on the board or on negative lists). Such systems can raise anxiety levels amongst quieter children especially girls and enforce negative gender stereotypes amongst especially boys (the alpha-male effect of mostly boys' names being on such lists).
- **Accessible Learning**: awareness of likely cultural, sex and gender differences. Provide multiple ways including gender/cultural friendly ways for students to engage with content—such as visual, auditory, and hands-on methods—to accommodate different learning styles and needs. Relate the curriculum and learning directly to the real world and life experiences of all students.
- **Equitable Participation**: encourage all voices in the classroom by using discussion techniques that allow quieter students to share ideas and ensure no one is overlooked. Use 'No Hands' techniques frequently
- **Safe & Welcoming Atmosphere**: set clear expectations for respect and kindness, refer regularly to these bottom lines and address bullying, sexism or racial discrimination *immediately* if it happens. This is the only time that public reprimand needs to be used- with clear separation of the child from their mistake: 'X, do not say that - it's racist (sexist, unkind). We treat everyone with respect in this school. You are an intelligent young woman; I expect better from you.'
- **Differentiation**: adjust teaching strategies, **assessments and reports** to meet the individual strengths and challenges of students. Avoid generalised labels in your reporting systems such as Good/Bad Behaviour since these do not adequately reflect an individual child's propensities and challenges.
- **Culturally Responsive Teaching**: acknowledge and celebrate students' backgrounds integrating their experiences into learning. Communicate relevance and apply affirmation to the children's own positive beliefs and values.
- **Growth Mindset & Encouragement**: support students in taking academic risks, overcoming challenges, and developing resilience.
- **Explore holistic issues such as self-esteem. confidence and self-worth as part of everyday interactions and curriculum contexts.**
- **Teacher Awareness**: continuously self-reflect on biases and strive for inclusive teaching practices.

Audit the Above regularly

The Inclusive Classroom Audit	Autumn	Spring	Summer
Diverse Representation			
Posters			
Books			
Worksheets			
Teacher Language			
Behaviour Management			
Private Sanction			
Praise to correction ratio 4:1 at least			
Variety of Learning Methods			
Visual			
Auditory			
Kinaesthetic			
Reading/Writing			
Ensuring Equal Participation			
Hands up			
No Hands			
Pair and Share			
Jugsaw Grouping			
Mixed Gender Pairing and Groupings			
Single Gender Pairing and Groupings			
Mixed Ability Pairing and Groupings			
Ability Pairing and Groupings			
Climate			
Teacher Friendiness			
Student Kindness and Sharing			
Differentiaton			
One to One			
By Outcome			
By Task			
Cultural/Value Emphasis in Content			
Growth Mindset			
Communicating Expectations Regularly			

A simple retrospective checklist when planning can help teachers to deliver a varied and inclusive curriculum diet.

PRACTICE	WEEK						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
D-R-S Sequenced Lesson							
Learning Partner Tasks:							
Mixed Gender Ability							
Single Gender Mixed Ability							
Friendship							
Group Work							
Whole Class Interactive Discussion							
Think-Communicate-Write							
Paired Writing							
Read-Think-Communicate							
Paired Reading							
Metacognition							
3-5 Steps							
Retrieval							
Planning Skills: Plan-Do-Review							
Thinking Skills							
Self Monitoring and Target Setting							
Formative Assessement							
Peer Feedback							
Student Conferencing							

It can also be a valuable leadership tool: tick during learning walks periodically and consistently to monitor and maintain teaching and learning variety. It will also highlight gaps in provision.

Target Setting

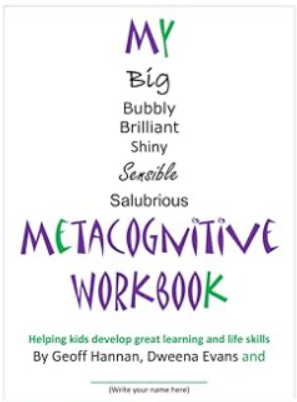
Purpose: Action:	What will success look like? What will it sound like?
How to Initiate? *(Think small steps over half a term)* 1 2 3 4 5	Where? When? How often?
Who else to involve?	How to embed?

Likely problems:	Mitigated by:
1 2 3	

By what metric will you measure success?

Starting measurement ____%
Looking to achieve____%

Other Books by Geoff Hannan



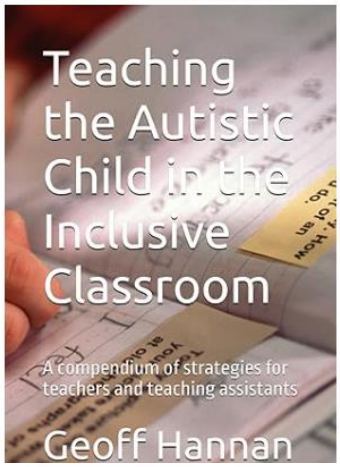
My Metacognitive Workbook: Helping kids develop great learning and life skills Paperback – 7 April 2023

by Geoff Hannan (Author), Dweena Evans (Author)

This fun and important workbook for 10 to 13 year-olds teaches kids:

- How to learn better and do well at school
- How to build their confidence and self-esteem
- How to develop their life skills
- How to deal with stress and anxiety
- And how to enhance and sustain good mental health

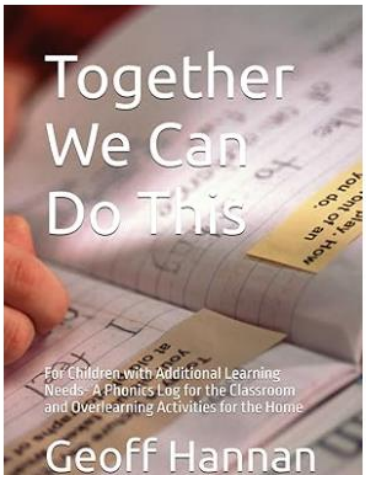
It is written by Geoff Hannan: an internationally recognized authority on teaching and learning with over forty-five years experience in working with young people, parents and teachers.
Geoff leads the young people through written and creative activities as they become co-authors of the book and explore significant aspects of wellbeing, important ways they can build their life skills and be successful in all they do.
In the process they learn powerful strategies to aid their understandings, information recall and academic attainment.



Teaching the Autistic Child in the Inclusive Classroom: A compendium of strategies for teachers and teaching assistants Paperback - 13 Jun. 2025

by Geoff Hannan Powys (Author)

In his latest book, well-known educationalist and trainer, Geoff Hannan presents a detailed best-practice guide to teaching the austistic child in the Inclusive Classroom.
Aimed at school leaders, teachers and teaching assistants, it presents a compendium of down-to-earth strategies for enhancing and improving learning, together with a complete 14-week life-skills and learning programme of study, adaptable to the needs of an individual child. It is fully supported by reproducible online resources and additional email support and advice by the author.
Contents
Section One: The Territory- a brief guide to autism, the potential difficulties autistic children face in their learning and best practices in the Inclusive Classroom.
Section Two: Teaching Core Learning Skills- five key multi-functional learning skills to teach autistic children.
Section Three: Positive Behaviour Management- a platform of proven tactics and techniques for establishing and maintaining good classroom behaviours for all, and ways to manage meltdowns, stimming and the unique potential challenges of the autistic child



Together We Can Do This: For Children with Additional Learning Needs- A Phonics Log for the Classroom and Overlearning Activities for the Home Paperback – 25 Aug. 2025

by Geoff Hannan (Author)

Together We Can Do This
Is a home-school link workbook with a wide range of materials for parents to use at home to support the phonics development of children with Additional Learning Needs- including those on the autistic spectrum and/or with ADHD and communication difficulties.

It includes a simple and quick log for Teaching Assistants to note a full year's learning content, lesson by lesson; plus resources to use at home for 'overlearning': a proven way to enhance AN children's progress and skills development.

Reading is crucial both to a child's academic success and their happiness at school. This book is designed to resource and engage children, teachers and parents to work together to enhance and improve their child's outcomes.

A storybook for girls aged 7-11.
Now available in all good book shops (and a few not so good ones).

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Direct Phone Number: 07947 840851
Email: geoff.hannan@btinternet.com
www.hannans.org,uk

Providers to/Funded by

45 years in business

Geoff Hannan has **half-price or whole-fee funding** throughout the '25-'26 academic year -available for Closing Gaps and Inclusion consultancy and training work with individual schools, Trusts and consortia.

If you would like him to work with your school or organisation, please email or phone in confidence to discuss possibilities.

Angela Hannan continues her very successful, highly valued work as a leadership coach with Heads and Senior School Leaders throughout '25-'26. Please contact for availability.

APPENDIX

Evidence Bases

Education Endowment Foundation

-A wide range of research supports the efficacy of all the strategies in this training.

The site provides:

- Evidence-based resources for early years, primary, secondary, and post-16 education
- The Teaching and Learning Toolkit
- Research reports and project evaluations
- Guidance on effective teaching strategies, especially for disadvantaged pupils

www. educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk

Academic References: Step-by-Step Approach to Teaching and Learning

Rosenshine's Principles of Instruction

Author: Rosenshine, B.
Year: 2012
Source: American Educator, Vol. 36, No. 1
Summary: Outlines 10 key principles including presenting new material in small steps, checking for understanding, and providi ng guided practice.
Link: https://www.aft.org/sites/default/files/Rosenshine.pdf

Explicit Teaching and Modeling

Author: Kentucky Department of Education
Source: Evidence-Based Instructional Practice #3
Summary: Explains how explicit teaching involves step-by-step instruction, modeling, and frequent checks for understanding.
Link: https://www.education.ky.gov/curriculum/standards/kyacadstand/Documents/EBIP_3_Explicit_Teaching_and_Modeling.pdf

Effective Teaching and Learning—A Five-Step Process

Author: Lumpkin, A.
Year: 2020
Source: Journal of Education and Culture Studies
Summary: Presents a structured five-step teaching model based on the Aristotelian triptych.
Link: https://www.academia.edu/123759487/Effective_Teaching_and_Learning_A_Five_Step_Process

Structural Learning: Explicit Instruction Strategies

Author: Main, P.
Year: 2025
Source: Structural Learning
Summary: Discusses how breaking down complex ideas into manageable steps improves engagement, retention, and learner confidence.
Link: https://www.structural-learning.com/post/explicit-instruction

Cambridge International – Approaches to Teaching and Learning

Author: Cambridge International Education
Summary: Emphasises scaffolding and active learning, referencing Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development and the importance o f structured support.
Link: https://www.cambridgeinternational.org/Images/271333-approaches-to-teaching-and-learning.pdf

Academic Research on Pair and Group Work in Classrooms

Pair and group work are widely recognized as effective instructional strategies that promote collaborative learning, critical thinking, and student engagement. This document summarizes key academic research findings, theoretical foundations, and benefits associated with the use of pair and group work in educational settings.

Theoretical Foundations

Collaborative learning is grounded in social constructivist theories, particularly Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), which emphasizes the importance of social interaction in cognitive development. According to Vygotsky, learners construct knowledge through dialogue and shared experiences, making peer interaction a vital component of effective learning.

Benefits of Pair and Group Work

- Enhances critical thinking and problem-solving skills through discussion and shared tasks.
- Improves communication and interpersonal skills.
- Fosters inclusivity and respect for diverse perspectives.
- Increases student engagement and motivation.
- Builds social capital and a sense of belonging among students.
- Supports academic achievement and retention.

Key Research Findings

1. Otienoh (2015) conducted action research in Kenyan primary schools, demonstrating that systematic incorporation of cooperative learning elements in group work significantly improved interaction opportunities in large classes. Pair work was less successful but still contributed to learner accountability.
2. Hassan et al. (2023) found that pair and group work positively impacted students' academic performance, interaction, and peer relationships.
3. Tenenbaum et al. (2019) performed a meta-analysis of 71 studies, concluding that peer interaction significantly enhances learning outcomes, especially when students are instructed to reach consensus.
4. Rahmat (2025) explored pair work in language classrooms through the lens of social constructivism, revealing strong links between language use, ZPD, and social interaction.
5. Collaborative learning research from Cornell University highlights benefits such as higher-level thinking, self-management, and leadership skills.

Practical Implications

Educators should design inclusive learning environments that encourage peer collaboration and support positive group dynamics. Strategies include structured group tasks, clear expectations, peer assessment, and scaffolding to maximize the benefits of collaborative learning.

Academic References Supporting Reading Development Through Communication

1. Oral Language Development

The Role of Oral Language Development in Reading Proficiency. IMSE Journal (2023). Available at: https://journal.imse.com/the-role-of-oral-language-development-in-reading-proficiency/

The Importance of Oral Language Development in Young Literacy Learners. ERIC (EJ1293447). Available at: https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1293447.pdf

Oral Language: The Foundation for Reading and Writing. Keys to Literacy. Available at: https://keystoliteracy.com/blog/oral-language-the-foundation-for-reading-and-writing/

2. Dialogic Teaching and Reading Comprehension

Elevating English Reading Comprehension: The Synergy of Dialogic Teaching and Technology Integration. International Journal of Information and Education Technology (2024). Available at: https://www.ijiet.org/vol14/IJIET-V14N8-2139.pdf

The Power of Dialogic Reading. Structural Learning. Available at: https://www.structural-learning.com/post/the-power-of-dialogic-reading

The Story So Far: A Systematic Review of the Dialogic Reading Literature. Reach Out and Read (2022). Available at: https://reachoutandread.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/Pillinger_2022_A-story-so-far-A-systematic-review-of-the-dialogic-reading-literature.pdf

3. Shared Reading Strategies

Changing Teacher Practices and Improving Student Communication Outcomes Through Shared Reading. Rural Special Education Quarterly (2024). Available at: https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/87568705241286894

Tiny Conversations, Big Impact: The Power of Dialogic Reading. The Six Shifts (2025). Available at: https://thesixshifts.com/2025/06/dialogic-reading/

Academic Research Supporting the Use of Oracy Skills to Develop Writing Skills
This document presents a selection of academic research studies that highlight the importance of oracy skills—speaking and listening—for the development of writing skills. These studies explore oral language development, dialogic teaching, and classroom strategies that link speaking and writing.

Rosenshine's Principles of Instruction
Author(s): Barak Rosenshine

Year: 2012

Source: American Educator, Vol. 36, No. 1

Summary: Outlines research-based instructional strategies including presenting new material in small steps and checking for understanding, which support both oral and written language development.

The Development of Oracy Skills in School-Aged Learners
Author(s): Cambridge English

Year: 2018

Source: Cambridge Papers in ELT

Summary: Explores the cognitive and social importance of spoken language and its role in supporting reading and writing.

Why Oracy Matters: Evidence Base for Positioning Oracy at the Heart of the School Curriculum
Author(s): Dr. Jonathan Doherty

Year: 2023

Source: English-Speaking Union

Summary: Synthesizes evidence from psycholinguistics, neuroscience, and education to argue for oracy's role in improving student outcomes, including writing.

Oral Language Supports Writing Improvement
Author(s): Allison Peck & Karol A. Moore

Year: 2020

Source: Neuhaus Education Center

Summary: Case study showing how structured oral language routines improve students' writing ability and vocabulary.

Oracy: The Literacy of the Spoken Word
Author(s): Oli de Botton

Year: 2016

Source: Edutopia

Summary: Discusses how purposeful dialogue and talk-before-writing strategies enhance student writing outcomes.

The Impact of Oral Language and Transcription Skills on Early Writing Production
Author(s): Cristina Rodríguez, Juan E. Jiménez & Jennifer Balade

Year: 2024

Source: Early Childhood Education Journal

Summary: Finds that oral language significantly predicts writing quality in kindergarteners, emphasizing its foundational role.

Academic Research Supporting the Importance of Teaching Metacognitive Skills for Academic and Personal Development

Pedagogical Training for Developing Students' Metacognition
Authors: Wass, R. et al.

Source: International Journal for Academic Development (2023)

Summary: This study highlights how pedagogical training enhances educators' awareness of students' learning needs and their own teaching practices. It emphasizes that students with high metacognitive awareness perform better academically, yet such skills are rarely taught explicitly.

Link: https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/1360144X.2023.2246442

Metacognition Research in Education: Topic Modeling and Bibliometrics
Authors: Chen, X. et al.

Source: Educational Technology Research and Development (2025)

Summary: A comprehensive analysis of 2568 papers reveals the growing importance of metacognitive instruction across disciplines. The study recommends integrating metacognitive strategies and analytics technologies to enhance learning outcomes.

Link: https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11423-025-10451-8

Making the Abstract Explicit: The Role of Metacognition in Teaching and Learning
Authors: Beach, P. et al.

Source: International Baccalaureate Policy Paper (2021)

Summary: This paper outlines key insights and promising practices for developing metacognitive knowledge, skills, and experiences in primary and secondary education. It supports lifelong learning through structured metacognitive development.

Link: https://www.ibo.org/research/wellbeing-research/metacognition/

The Effect of Metacognitive Awareness on Academic Success
Authors: Özçakmak, H. et al.

Source: African Educational Research Journal (2021)

Summary: A survey of 314 pre-service teachers found a strong correlation between metacognitive awareness and academic achievement. Participants demonstrated effective planning, monitoring, and evaluation of their learning strategies.

Link: https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1297101.pdf

Enhancing Metacognition in Educational Settings: A Comprehensive Review
Authors: Sarkar, S. & Mamun, F.

Source: International Journal of Trend in Scientific Research and Development (2023)

Summary: This review explores theoretical foundations and practical strategies for fostering metacognitive skills. It discusses implications for curriculum design, instructional practices, and assessment methods.

Link: https://www.ijtsrd.com/papers/ijtsrd59779.pdf

Metacognitive Skills in Learning and Pedagogy: A Systematic Review
Authors: Pandey, K. & Mohan, A.

Source: Journal of Cognition and Culture (2024)

Summary: A systematic review of research from 2010–2022 highlights the role of metacognition in developing self-awareness, critical thinking, and self-regulated learning. It advocates for integrating metacognitive strategies into educational systems.

Link: https://brill.com/abstract/journals/jocc/24/3-4/article-p268_5.xml