

**STUDENT AND PARENT**

**Teaching and Learning Bulletin**

**No. 3**



**Welcome to the third Teaching and Learning bulletin for students and parents.**

**The aim is to inform you once a term of the techniques that the teachers at PHSG are using in their lessons and the revision/memory strategies that we are encouraging the students to use in order to learn and recall information and methods that we teach them every day.**

**In this issue I will share with you:**

1. **Habits of Mind**
2. **Revision techniques**

**For more information about PHSG and Thinking click here :** [Plymouth High School for Girls - Thinking Schools Academy Trust (phsg.org)](https://www.phsg.org/page/?title=Thinking+Schools+Academy+Trust&pid=123)

## Habits of Mind

According to Kallick and Costa, the Habits of Mind are less about behaviour and more about intent.

A “Habit of Mind” means having a disposition toward behaving intelligently when confronted with problems, the answers to which are not immediately known. When humans experience dichotomies, are confused by dilemmas, or come face to face with uncertainties–our most effective actions require drawing forth certain patterns of intellectual behaviour. When we draw upon these intellectual resources, the results that are produced are more powerful, of higher quality, and greater significance than if we fail to employ those patterns of intellectual behaviours.

Habits of Mind are dispositions that are skilfully and mindfully employed by characteristically intelligent, successful people when they are confronted with problems, the solutions to which are not immediately apparent. When we draw upon these mental resources, the results are more powerful, of higher quality, and of greater significance than if we fail to employ those habits.

For many students, some or all of these Habits of Mind will be already be in development.

We will be focussing on these Habits of Mind in the coming term.

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| **PERSISTING****Stick to it****Trying different strategies**;Finding different ways to reach your goals;Remaining focused. | **MANAGING IMPULSIVITY****Take your time**Thinking before acting (how many of us DON’T do that?);Choosing your response through ‘think time’ and ‘wait time’ – e.g. counting to three before calling out. | **THINKING FLEXIBLY****Look at it another way**Looking at something one way and imagining it a different way;Being open to alternatives;Coming at problems from a different angle;Redefining what the problem is. | **STRIVING FOR ACCURACY****Check it again**Striving for personal best;Setting high standards;Getting it right – doing it better;Checking and finding ways to improve constantly. |
| **LISTENING WITH UNDERSTANDING AND EMPATHY****Understand others**Devoting mental energy to another person’s thoughts and ideas;Making an effort to perceive another’s point of view and emotions. | **METACOGNITION****Think about your thinking; know your knowing**Being aware of your own thoughts, strategies, feelings and actions;Reflecting – what works and what doesn’t work?Having metacognitive awareness – how has the problem been solved?  | **QUESTIONING & POSING PROBLEMS****Identify how you know**Having a questioning attitude;Knowing what data, you need;Developing questioning strategies to develop that data. | **APPLYING PAST KNOWLEDGE TO NEW SITUATIONS****Use what you learn**Accessing prior knowledge;Taking knowledge beyond the situation in which it was learned. |
| **THINKING AND COMMUNICATING WITH CLARITY AND PRECISION****Be clear**Avoiding vague language;Being accurate when talking and writing;Avoiding over-generalising, distorting, deleting, exaggerating. | **CREATING, IMAGINING, INNOVATING****Try a different way**Coming up with new ideas;Being original. | **TAKING RESPONSIBLE RISKS****Venture out**Trying something new;Going outside the comfort zone – growing as a person;Measuring up the risks. | **GATHERING DATA THROUGH ALL SENSES****Use your natural pathways**Tasting, smelling, touching, moving, listening, seeing;Gathering different sorts of data;Learning best by taking information in using all senses. |
| **THINKING INTERDEPENDENTLY****Work together**Working with others;Learning from others;Using team work;Working effectively. | **FINDING HUMOUR****Laugh a little**Seeing the funny side of things;Laughing at ourselves;Avoiding laughing when it is inappropriate;Being able to see the bright side of life;Looking for opportunities to find humour. | **RESPONDING WITH WONDERMENT AND AWE****Have fun figuring it out**Being passionate, amazed, intrigued;Loving doing what you are doing. | **REMAINING OPEN TO CONTINUOUS LEARNING****Be open to new ideas**Striving to learn more, to improve, to get better;Making sure that you do not think you know it all. |

 REVISION TECHNIQUES

Taken from [Revision Techniques: A teacher's guide (structural-learning.com)](https://www.structural-learning.com/post/revision-techniques-a-teachers-guide)

## The Purpose of Revision

The goal of revision is to increase and strengthen the cues associated with prior learning so that the information can be readily available and [retrieved](https://www.structural-learning.com/post/retrieval-practice-a-teachers-guide) when needed.  This can include information about exam techniques, subject-specific key words, essay plans, dates, skills or facts.

Every time we retrieve a piece of information from our long-term memory, we strengthen a cue associated with that piece of information as well as the cues associated with [related pieces](https://www.structural-learning.com/post/direct-instruction-a-teachers-guide) of information.  Revision time can be used to increase the number of cues by completing activities that require prior learning to be used in multiple ways.

Active rather than passive retrieval is a factor in determining how successful a revision technique will be. Active revision strategies require students to do a lot of [thinking](https://www.structural-learning.com/post/intent-implementation-and-impact-a-curriculum-guide). Learning anything new is hard work and students will need to be in the right frame of mind. The human brain requires information to be [organised](https://www.structural-learning.com/post/rosenshines-principles-a-teachers-guide) and structured in such a way that it's easier to retrieve. This is the result of hard thinking and there are no shortcuts or real memory tricks we can use for this.

## Selecting the right topics for revision

[Students](https://www.structural-learning.com/post/developing-behaviours-for-learning) often need help identifying which topics they know well enough to revise less frequently and which topics require constant revision.  Providing students with plenty of opportunities to show you their [current understanding](https://www.structural-learning.com/post/formative-and-summative-assessments-a-teachers-guide), probably through completing past papers, will allow you to focus their revision on the topics that need the most attention.

If students are using flash cards or study notes during their revision sessions, encourage them to organise the cards into three piles: topics that need revision every two or three days, topics that need revision once a week, and topics that need revision less frequently than once a fortnight.  This will enable their revision time each day to be focused on the topics that need the most attention.

### **Retrieval**

This should be the first consideration of any revision session.  Encourage students to ask themselves 'does this [method](https://www.structural-learning.com/post/thrive-approach-a-teachers-guide) of revision require me to retrieve information from my long-term memory?'  There are so many ways that students can [retrieve information](https://www.structural-learning.com/post/retrieval-practice-a-teachers-guide), even during a short period of independent study:

* Completing past papers
* Reproducing study notes or thinking maps from memory
* Reading through previous essays and adding additional details without using notes
* Creating a list of [questions](https://www.structural-learning.com/post/how-to-use-dialogic-pedagogy-the-key-to-powerful-teaching) and writing model answers
* Spending ten minutes writing out the key words for a topic
* Brain dumps: putting pen to paper and writing as much as they can on a topic for 5 minutes

### **Elaboration**

This revision technique is designed to strengthen the [connections](https://www.structural-learning.com/post/how-to-use-dialogic-pedagogy-the-key-to-powerful-teaching) between different concepts in the long-term memory.  Students should read through their study notes for one or two topics, put these notes away and try listing the similarities and differences between the two passages they have just read.  This could also be done to compare two or more of the subjects they are studying.

Encourage students to gain a deeper understanding by asking themselves questions such as 'what if...?', 'why does...?' or 'how do we know...?'.

### **Visuals and Text**

Encourage students to use images and text to represent information in their study notes or flash cards.  This will give them additional cues to help their long-term memory retrieve the content when they need it.

**‍Interleaving**

Interleaving means moving between [different topics](https://www.structural-learning.com/post/the-spiral-curriculum-a-teachers-guide) during a revision session.  Students will be more productive if they spend 20-30 minutes (at GCSE) or 30-40 minutes (at A-Level) revising a topic before moving on to a different one.  They can alternate between two different topics during one revision session or work through topics from each of their subjects.

### **Spacing**

[Spacing revisio](https://www.structural-learning.com/post/spaced-practice-a-teachers-guide)n sessions for one topic over two weeks is far more beneficial than spending the same amount of time revising in just one day.  Ideally, students should be revising (retrieving) new information soon after it has been learnt and then increasing the length of time between each subsequent retrieval.

**IN THE NEXT ISSUE**

**Thinking maps and hats**