

ROSS MORRISON McGILL

MARK.  
PLAN.  
TEACH.

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BLOOMSBURY

## Journal Club no. 7

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Presentation

(by Paula Lobo)

# Mark.: 'It's not good enough!'

- **A balance should be struck between quality and quantity of marking**, considering 'why are you marking?' and providing *in-depth* feedback
- **The curriculum should drive teaching and assessment**, not the other way around
- **Marking is the 'greatest planning tool'**; 'diagnostic feedback' helps pupils make progress
- **Consider workload:**
  - Marking should be regular but not at a certain frequency
  - 'never be afraid of telling a student that their work is not good enough for you to spend time marking it'
  - Avoid triple-marking
  - Do not mark every page of work or 'tick & flick'.
- **Comments such as 'well done' or 'good' are a waste of time** – effective feedback is specific, accurate and clear '(It was good *because...*)'
- **Swap extensive written feedback for verbal feedback (OneNote?)** – evidence?
- 'If you have been told to evidence a particular school approach within a lesson ... your creativity is being stifled'

# Mark.: Summary

1. Develop a 'secure overview' before setting and marking an assessment, considering where you are in the curriculum and the purpose of the assessment
2. Use 'not yet' to motivate pupils (growth mindset)
3. Create a culture of live-marking (progress, workload)
4. Use marking codes that work for you & the pupils
5. Encourage re-drafting
6. Use marking & assessment to spot gaps in learning
7. Ask pupils to identify gaps in their own learning
8. Moderate student work in inform planning *in context*
9. Use self-assessment & peer-assessment
10. Avoid extensive written feedback; quality before quantity

# Plan.: ‘Stickability’

- Lesson planning should focus on learning and memory rather than ‘doing’. Teachers must consider which key points they would like students to remember for the next lesson. McGill considers this to be the most important thing that teachers should take away from his book
- ‘It is worth digging into schemes of work to see if they are current, relevant, and provide challenge’
- Curriculum reform is happening in many countries
- McGill suggested that departments should pair with another to review their lesson planning (?)
- McGill mentions the importance of practice retrieval, spaced practice and interleaving topics: *Make It Stick.*

# Plan.: Summary

1. Be clear and precise about what you want pupils to *learn*, rather than what you want them to *do*
2. Apply the ‘why’ test to all learning activities, including homework
3. Integrate imaginative teaching strategies to keep pupils engaged
4. Think about what learning should ‘stick’ in the minds of students, and encourage retrieval practice & interleaved practice
5. Keep students in the ‘struggle zone’ – challenged, but not stressed or anxious
6. Use ‘flying starts’ to set the tone of the lesson
7. Use seating plans for differentiation
8. Forward-plan by stockpiling resources and strategies
9. School should grant you flexibility to alter plans according to behaviour
10. Teaching is about more than examination results.

# Teach.: What improves teachers?

- 'If I had one regret, it would be that I have failed to use my wisdom and my position in schools to gather teaching staff together more frequently to talk teaching, to shape the dialogue and to help them be the best that they can be.'
- McGill highlights issues with teachers' mental health and suggests that we must address teacher workload and wellbeing
- McGill suggests every teacher should be coached, and time should be set aside for this. He suggests that schools should identify a group of teachers who wish to be trained to coach their peers. All staff who are new to the school should be coached.
- Coaching should involve no paperwork, but a 'common vernacular' instead. Feedback should take place within 24 hours and should be no longer than 30 minutes
- McGill refers to the strategy of 'Teacher Rounds', where teachers take it in turns to 'host', providing pre-round information (lesson context and plan) and then together teachers reflect on what happened in the lesson.

# Teach.: Summary

‘Teaching is not about ‘engaging’ students with as many jazzy, practical activities as you can think of’

- Be explicit about learning outcomes and keywords
- Apply modelling strategies
- Have courage to ‘go with the flow’ and deviate from the lesson plan if needed
- Establish a system of coaching to support professional development and improve teaching and learning in every classroom

# Mark. Plan. Teach.: Conclusion

- We need to strip back the political hogwash and keep teaching straightforward...let's not overcomplicate classroom life with shifting goalposts, fads and preferences dictated by external watchdogs and policymakers. Teaching and learning trumps everything we do in schools.
- Imagine a teacher complaining about how they were observed, but not being allowed to comment on the subjective view of an observer – the appraiser's decision is final, even if they are wrong.... Classroom observation is harder than you think.