Tom Sherrington

TOM SAYS

> Students know that, eventually, teachers answer their own questions.
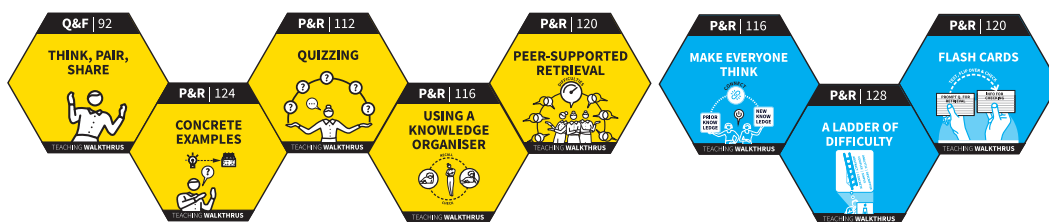
> Effort is not discretionary.

> It's a simple engineering of attention.

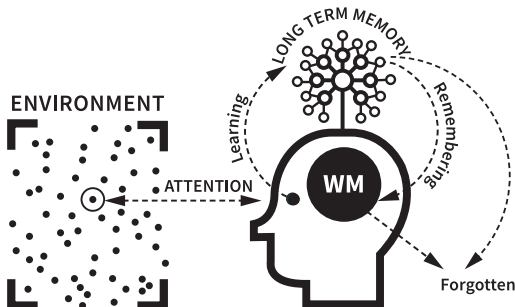> By giving a range of concrete examples, you're improving your own subject knowledge.

> A varied diet of retrieval practices is the key to success.

> Making flash cards doesn't improve memory. Retrieving their content does!

> The role of the Knowledge Organiser is not to be the curriculum.

REMEMBERING THE PUROSE

It is easy to forget the purpose of these retrieval strategies when closely involved with the details of their procedures. The aim is to practice activating what students know and make it available to their working memories.

THINK, PAIR, SHARE WALKTHRU
Q&F | VOL 1 | P.92

This strategy creates a culture in which everyone talks, maximising participation. Whenever students are talking about a topic that is not displayed in front of them, they are engaged in retrieval.

CONCRETE EXAMPLES WALKTHRU
P&R| VOL 1 | P.124

Generally, teachers give an insufficient number of examples. Yet, examples are great for both teaching and testing. So, remember to use them *both ways*, from concept to example and reverse.

QUIZZING WALKTHRU
P&R | VOL 1 | P.112

Ensure students are familiar with the content to be tested. Avoid the University Challenge phenomenon. Also avoid the turgid quizmaster question-by-question pace. Instead, use the board, so students can work at their own pace. Avoid celebrating success in a way that unthinkingly promotes a fear of errors.

USING A KNOWLEDGE ORGANISER WALKTHRU
P&R | VOL 1 | P.116

Designed to be quizzable, the KO should be useable by parents with little or no subject knowledge. There is no need to test the whole KO in one sitting. KOs must be clearly laid out for self-testing and have no decorative visuals.

PEER-SUPPORTED RETRIEVAL WALKTHRU
P&R | VOL 1 | P.120

This is a very powerful but underused strategy. Its power lies in the fact that the studen-tester has to know the content, so it motivated to learn it. But beware of the same person always choosing this role. Swapping A and B roles avoids this.

MAKE EVERYONE THINK WALKTHRU
P&R | VOL 2 | P.116

The strategies in this cluster are designed to activate prior learning and stimulate thinking. Well orchestrated, they ensure everyone cognitively participates.

FLASH CARDS WALKTHRU
P&R | VOL 2 | P.120

The biggest danger here is for students to make their own, using information that is incorrect. Create some templates or examples for students to follow. Use one side for the prompt and the reverse to check the content. Encourage varying the topic for a type of interleaved testing.

A LADDER OF DIFFICULTY WALKTHRU
P&R | VOL 2 | P.128

Finally, it's powerful to remember that retrieval alone can be insufficiently challenging. Move students on to making connections within and across topics.