



Tom Sherrington

## SIDE LINES

### TRANSMISSION



E. D. Hirsch

The champion of knowledge, writes: *“This anti-transmission doctrine is probably the most astonishingly misguided principle yet devised under the natural-development conception.”*

### FAULTY THINKING



Christine Counsell

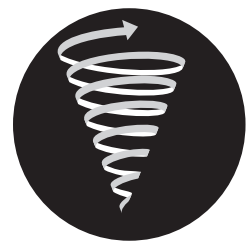
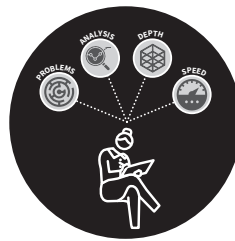
The key figure behind curriculum thinking in the UK, writes: *“Obsession with skill-based assessment objectives and mark schemes has twin casualties: (a) joyless learning; (b) it doesn't work.”*

### DANGERS OF ACCESS



Mary Myatt

In her curriculum guide to leaders, Mary writes: *“In our efforts to make things accessible to pupils we have sometimes made things too easy. This effort to make things accessible has led to the atomisation of materials offered to pupils.”*



### KNOWLEDGE-RICH CURRICULUM

One needs to embrace the notion that knowledge is important. It helps students learn, as the more one knows, the easier it is to learn new material. But, equally, it's important not to limit the idea of knowledge to facts alone — what can be tested and counted. Skills, performances and experiences are all included within the concept.

### SEQUENCE CONCEPTS IN SMALL STEPS

Part of Rosenshine's principles — the segmentation and sequencing of knowledge into small steps — is a critical strategy to avoid working memory overload. The beginning of this process starts with finding out students' prior knowledge. It's invaluable to ask oneself what one is assuming — as opposed to knowing — is retained in students' memory. As a CPD activity, exploring this strategy is best undertaken in departments or specialist teams, for subject details and sequences to be explored and agreed.

### COHERENT MAPPING

Weaving is a very appropriate metaphor for the task of designing content that reinforces and expands concepts learned earlier through recursive revisits over time. For that to occur, teachers need to know the curriculum design in order to plan for forging multiple connections.

### KNOWLEDGE & EXPERIENCE

Some things simply can't be adequately taught by verbal explanation alone. Materials need to be touched, spaces experienced and sensations encountered for schema to be fully constructed. However, it is often the case that some pre-teaching can make the subsequent experiences more significant — and memorable. Not all experiences are steps towards exam successes though. Many are simply valuable in themselves.

### PITCH IT UP

This is a mantra for challenging students — to demand sophistication, accuracy and precision from them. Constantly aware of the danger of dumbing down, teachers aim to establish depth of thinking before speed, and intensity rather than volume. That means weeding out the soft, easy, comfortable activities that don't demand sustained thinking.

### PLAN FOR READING

One of the biggest variables seen across schools is the amount of reading of non-fiction by students. It pays to measure quite how much reading happens in your lessons, every day. Build in reading in to your lessons, so you can model, teach and encourage reading of difficult texts and sophisticated vocabulary. If you leave it to take place in homework, your students will not have the opportunities to learn the skills and attitudes needed to become independent readers themselves.

### TIERED QUESTIONS & PROBLEMS

If all students are to have equal access to the curriculum, then they need to have opportunities for practice set at different levels. By designing banks of questions and activities — differentiated by complexity and speed — you create an inclusive and challenging classroom.

### CORE AND HINTERLAND

There's never enough time to cover the syllabus as well as to expose students to its intellectual and artistic contexts. Or so it seems. Yet, by sampling, you can expose students to representatives of different genres, movements and breakthrough of the past. Such stimulating exposure enriches and multiplies the connections students make within and across topic content. Instead of overwhelming students, this extra knowledge increases their capacity to absorb new material and create meaning from it.