

Principles for Remote Instruction: Notes from a 'Teaching Like a Champion' Masterclass – [blog](#) by Tom Sherrington 21 January 2021

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This blog follows Tom Sherrington's attendance at a Masterclass delivered by 'Teach Like a Champion' author Doug Lemov and colleagues. The commentary below contains the main messages (Take-aways) that Tom Sherrington gained from the Masterclass which was delivered remotely.

1. Dissolve the Screen

Dissolve the Screen

- Warm Welcome
- Names
- First three minutes: Do Now
- Positive Narration
- Gestures and movement - exaggerate



The key here is to make students feel welcome and involved right from the start. Lively almost exaggerated up-beat delivery peppering all the interactions with student names is amazingly effective.

Take-away 1: Use names relentlessly to signal individual engagement amid the mass of faces onscreen or in a list on a chat. *Great to see you Michael, and Jess; Jamila, welcome! Thanks for your responses Mo, Melissa, James; great job Alice. Thank you Abdul.*

Take-away 2: Involve them in a task straight-away signalling that they are in a lesson, it counts, they matter, they can't sit back. It could be as simple as: *Ok, everyone see the first question – in the chat (or on your whiteboards) list three main points we covered last lesson. Go.* You don't just ask 'can anyone give me three points from lesson?'. The first task involves everyone.

2. Organise the Learning

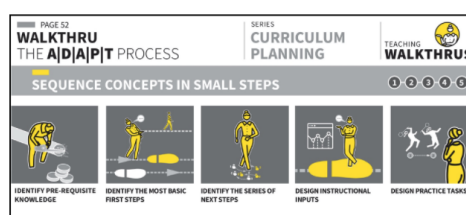
Organise the learning

- Orientation Screen at the start
- Task List - revisit
- Written and verbal instructions
- Pause points - for agency
- Tracking tools for offline work

In Today's lesson you will need:

Reading pp 34-45
Workbook on google classroom
The Today's Lesson question sheet

Pencil paper and camera for photo upload



The key is to make it really clear what students need to do in the lesson immediately ahead, to help them keep track, to develop their agency with remote learning and help them link each lesson to the wider scheme.

Take-away 3: Use a regular Orientation Screen – a familiar slide at the start of a live or remote lesson that tells students what they need for the lesson (workbooks, pencil, documents etc.) and what the key learning intentions are. Reinforce verbally – to double-up on ways students can engage.

Take-away 4. Use some kind of tracking tool- that show you when students have done the work e.g. google forms, live shared documents or even a simple register checklist – so students know you notice if they've done the work.

3. Check for Understanding

Check for Understanding

- Cold calling - live; in chat
- Pre-call; batch cold call
- Wait questions with chat or sheets
- MCQs plus chat to explain
- Re-explain and re-check



It's so important to strengthen all practice around checking for understanding and cold-calling so that all students feel involved and engaged and so that there is maximum two-way feedback about key aspects of the material – telling the teacher as much as possible about which students are struggling and why. Re-teaching the key misconceptions is super important but you need to find out where they're struggling first.

Take-away 5: There are lots of types of Cold Calling. The variety of methods adds to the dynamics of a lesson and gives lots of different ways of students feeling connected

- Verbal, using names on the screen
- In the chat – inviting named students to add to the chat stream
- Pre-Call: e.g. “We’re going to watch this clip and then, Michael, I’d like you to summarise”
- Batched: e.g. “So, we’ve read that passage. What’s the key message? Let’s hear from Jess, then Mo, then Daisy”

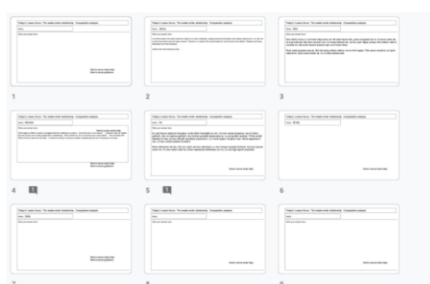
Take-away 6: MCQ for answer; chat to explain. Get all students to give their multiple choice answer (best done with good detractors that flag misconceptions) and then invite them all or named students to explain their answer in chat. This gives a good balance of whole-class correctness feedback and more subtle information about depth of understanding.

Take-away 7: Wait Questions: Get students to prepare answers in the chat (or on google forms) but not to send or submit until asked. This allows all students to think for themselves without seeing others’ answers until after they are all sent.

4. Synchronous Lessons

Synchronous: Live

- Emphasise Personal Engagement
- Check for understanding -
 - (including thumbs up!).
- Chat: names, positive narration
- Shared documents to track
- Everybody writes.



The Teach Like a Champion team suggest that key focus in live, synchronous lessons is the personal engagement – using the time to check for understanding and build confidence, sustaining the relationships that secure commitment to the learning.

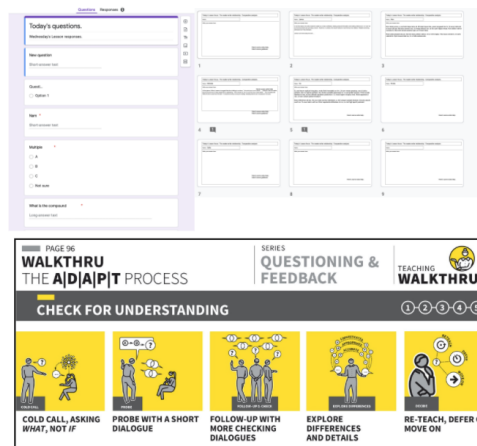
Take-away 8: Positive Narration is key. It's so important to keep reinforcing positive learning behaviours. *Michael, Jess, thanks for those full answers in the chat; Daisy, thanks for being ready to answer.* Even a request for 'thumbs up' on screen or in the chat in response to 'Can you all see the Slide 7 in your notes' – creates a sense of people being with you, engaged.

Take-Away 9: Establish a process for Everybody Writes so that you can set short responsive tasks where all students write an answer that they can then share. This could be via shared slides or simply in student's own documents that they then paste into the chat stream or form. This creates a sense of students feeling involved and that their work is noticed.

5. Asynchronous lessons

Asynchronous: offline

- Aim for depth and rigour
- Talk as-live
- Signal pause points - to consolidate, stress agency
- Task lists repeated
- Use shared docs for tasks
- Check and show-call good work during next live lesson.



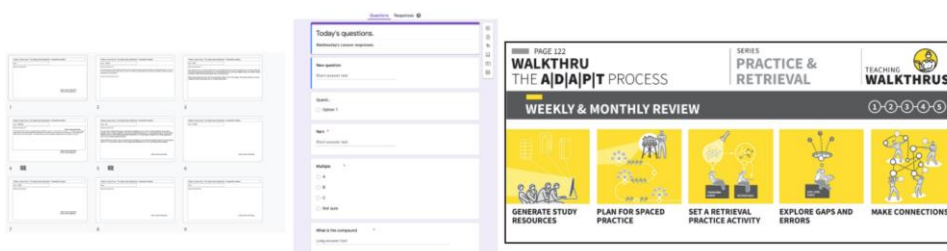
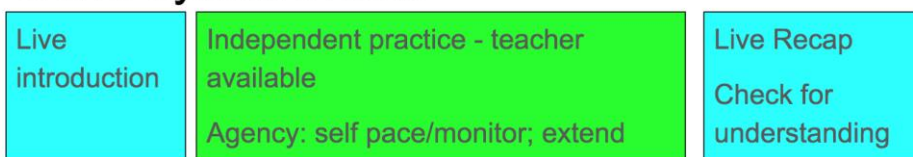
Treat the asynchronous or offline learning as the key driver for depth and rigour -where tasks are more extended and demanding than they can be live; allowing students time to complete tasks in depth and, of course, catch up if they cannot participate with synchronous lessons for any reason.

Take-away 10: Highlight pause points – in any video presentation which you know students will watch later. If you guide students when to pause and replay they learn to use the videos in a more interactive manner linked to the related tasks. This builds their agency; they learn to take control.

Take-away 11: Remind students of the key tasks using simple lists in the slides, in the videos or shared documents so that students know what to do and self-evaluate their progress through the material.

6. Semi-synchronous lessons

Semi-synchronous



This is popular hybrid approach I know a lot of teachers use so it was good to see this explored here explicitly. The idea is to begin with a live intro; then set students to work independently whilst being available for support in the background and then to return to a live recap after a set period of time – say 30 minutes.

Take-away 12. This blended approach may represent the optimal use of time, combining the features of sync and a-sync lessons. It helps to build relationships and engagement (live contributions) and student agency (offline task completion) and buys time for teachers to address individual issues during the independent asynchronous phase of a lesson. It can also help to fold in the students with less access to live lessons for reasons beyond their control.