



Developing the curriculum for real

John Tomsett



‘Teachers and head teachers are showing that children flourish when given the gift of knowledge.’

Nick Gibb, ‘The importance of a knowledge-rich curriculum’, July 2021



Gilbert Ryle, 1945

Effective possession of a piece of knowledge-that involves knowing how to use that knowledge, when required, for the solution of other theoretical or practical problems. There is a distinction between the museum-possession and the workshop-possession of knowledge. A silly person can be stocked with information, yet never know how to answer particular questions.

'If you haven't encouraged pupils to engage in the process of acquiring knowledge, which is a very difficult process, then all you get is memorisation and reproduction in tests...The current interest in the curriculum overlooks this point. It's so concerned with saying, "Have we got the knowledge?" that it forgets to ask, "How is the knowledge being acquired?"'





Tom Bennett OBE 

@tombennett71



Apparently [@johntomsett](#) just said 'People are what matters'. WHERE'S HIS EVIDENCE oh God I'm having a breakdown [#ntenred](#)

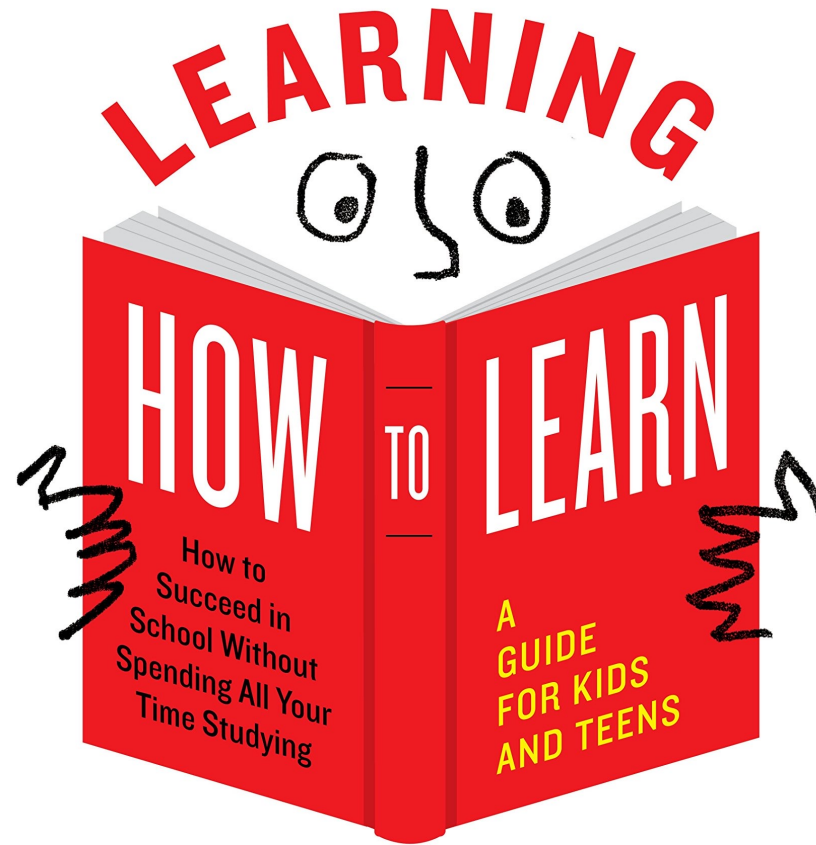
9:42 AM · May 3, 2014

8 Retweets **10** Likes

Sweller's 'Cognitive Load Theory'?



From the bestselling author of *A Mind for Numbers* and
the creators of the popular online course Learning How to Learn



BARBARA OAKLEY, PhD, AND
TERRENCE SEJNOWSKI, PhD,
WITH ALISTAIR McCONVILLE

SEND Huh

Curriculum conversations
with SEND leaders

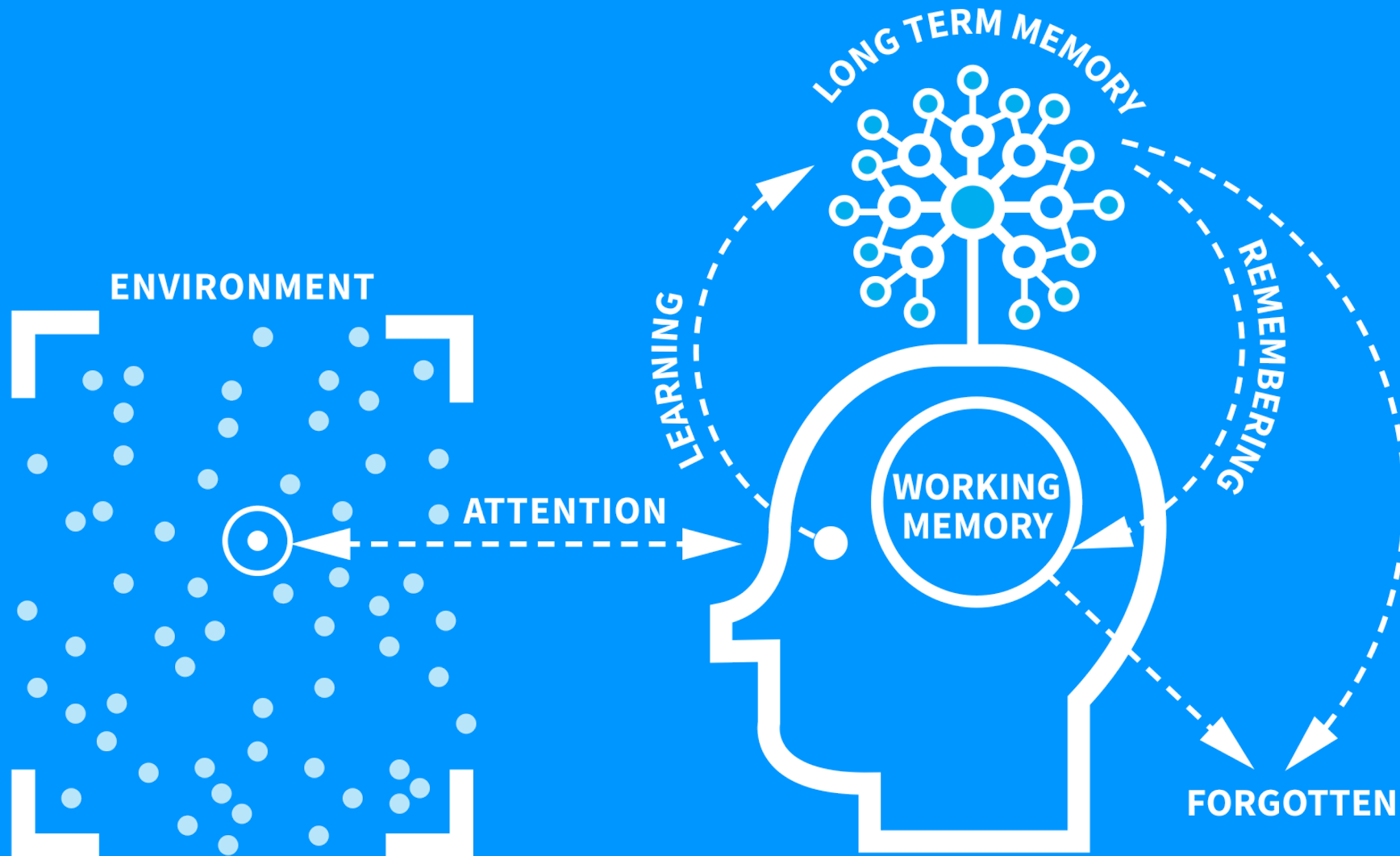
Mary Myatt and John Tomsett



‘You need a model of learning. It gives you the questions to ask when a child is not learning.’

Anita Devi





The 'enacted' curriculum

'Neither the intended curriculum nor the implemented curriculum is the real curriculum. A great intended curriculum badly taught is likely to be a much worse experience for young people than a bad intended curriculum well taught. Pedagogy trumps curriculum. Or, to be more precise, because the real curriculum – sometimes called the “enacted” or “achieved” curriculum – is the lived daily experience of young people in classrooms, curriculum *is* pedagogy.'

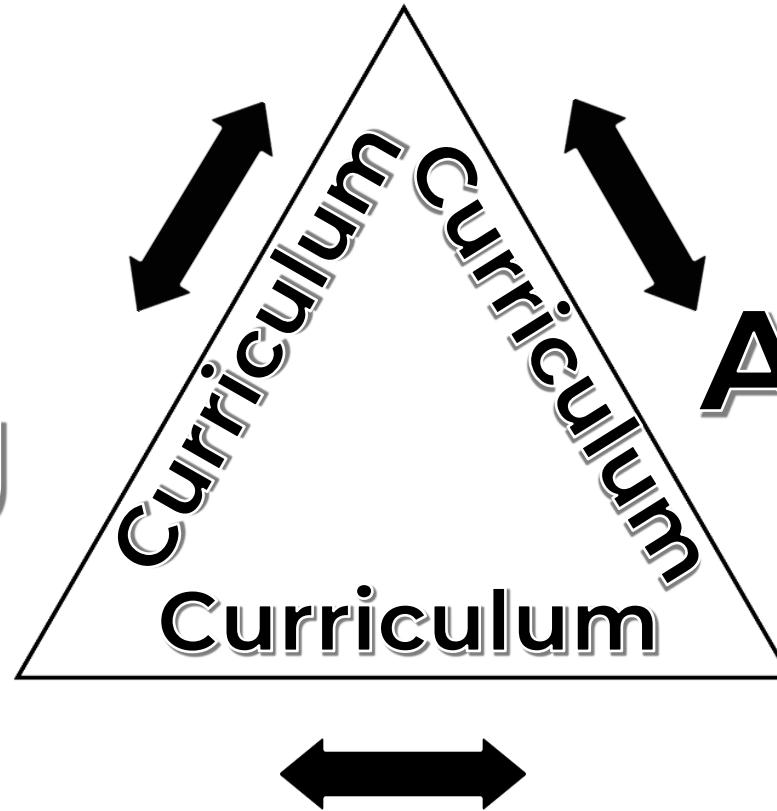
Dylan Wiliam in 'Principled Curriculum Design'

Content

What should my pupils learn?

Adaptive teaching

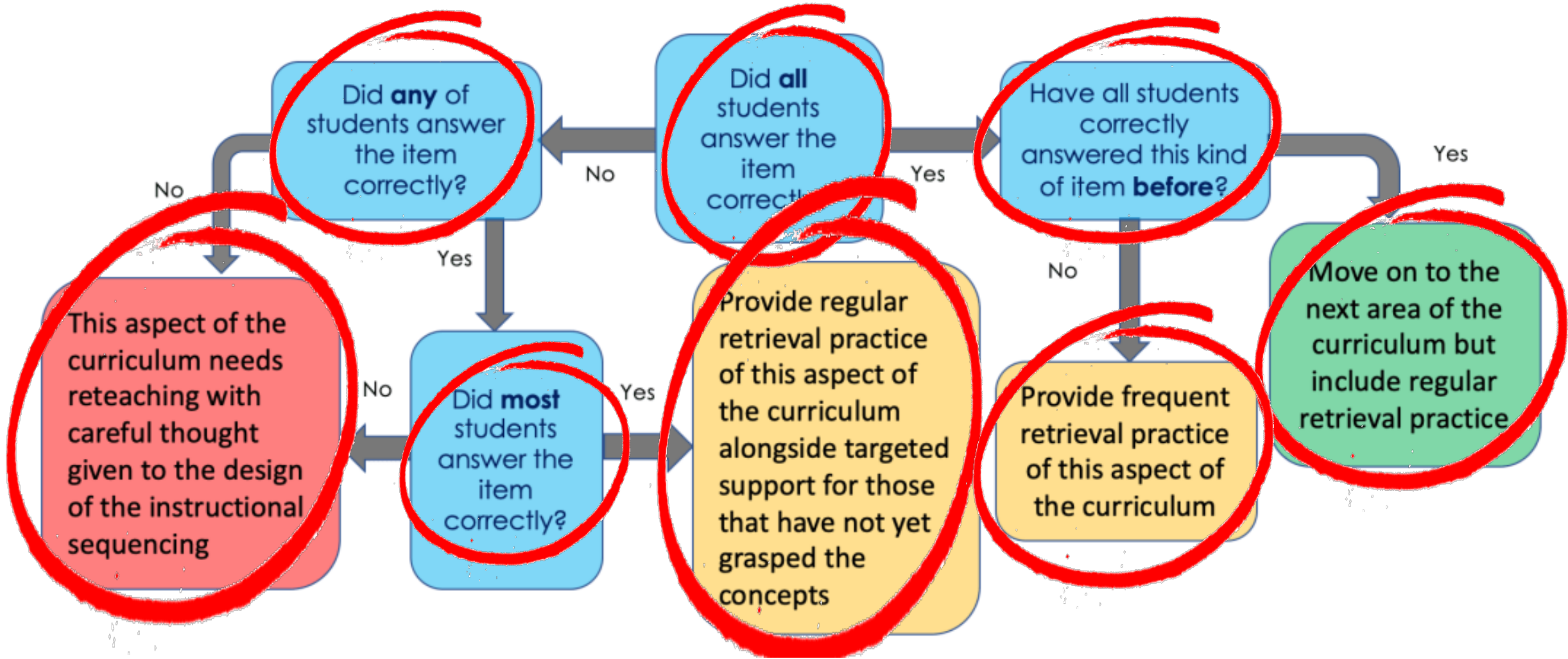
How do I teach this subject specific content so that my pupils learn it?



Assessment

How am I assessing whether my pupils have learnt what I have taught them?

David Didau, September 2021



<https://learningspy.co.uk/assessment/why-using-the-curriculum-as-a-progression-model-is-harder-than-you-think/>

To what extent does this analysis resonate for you?



In fact nothing is said that
has not been said before.

Terence

Aphorisms, principles, and ideas

- 1. Learning** is a permanent change to a child's long-term memory. (Daniel Willingham et al.)
- 2. Retrieval** of what has been learnt is essential to making the change in long-term memory permanent. (Kate Jones et al.)
- 3. Teaching a class of 30** so that they all learn what you intend is a hugely complex business. (Lee Shulman)

Aphorisms, principles, and ideas

4. **“Opportunity cost”** is the most important principle for people working and learning in schools. (Dylan Wiliam)
5. **“Less but better”**. (Dieter Rahms)
6. **“(Consistently) Good is good enough”**. (David Carter)
7. **Never assume you have communicated clearly** – check, check and check again that pupils understand what you want them to do. (Experience)

Aphorisms, principles, and ideas

8. In all things abide by the design principle of **“simplicity”** – make it as simple as possible to do complex things. (Jeffrey Kluger)
9. In a time poor environment for both teachers and pupils, whatever we do must have **as much impact as possible** upon progressing pupils’ learning. (Experience)
10. Curriculum is the complex interplay between **content-adaptive pedagogy-assessment**. If any one of these three curriculum pillars is out of kilter, the curriculum falls over like a badly made three-legged stool. (Becky Allen)

Aphorisms, principles, and ideas

11. In England, **the National Curriculum** is the minimum entitlement for children. (Mary Myatt)
12. The primary curriculum is, fundamentally, an **interconnected curriculum**. (Emma Turner)
13. **Pedagogy trumps curriculum** content – it is the enacted curriculum that matters. (William)
14. **Learning intentions** is the clearest term for expressing what you want pupils to know, understand and be able to do. (William)

Aphorisms, principles, and ideas

15. Begin by establishing, and then building upon, **what the pupils already know**. (Ausubel via Sarah Cottingham)
16. For each topic, decide what pupils **NEED** to know and what it would be **NEAT** for them to know. (William)
- 17. The main purpose of assessment is to use the data to help improve learning.** From the conclusions you are able to draw from the data, plan the next steps of your teaching and the pupils' learning. (Becky Allen & William)

Aphorisms, principles, and ideas

18. We assume pupils will remember things, so we need some form of **synoptic assessment**. (William)

19. We must have a rudimentary understanding of how learning happens if we are to design teaching which helps pupils learn. (Barbara Oakley)

Aphorisms, principles, and ideas

20. Knowledge vs skills is a false dichotomy – teachers and pupils need both. Teachers need both knowledge of subject/subject specific pedagogy and generic teaching skills if they are going to teach in a way that children learn. Children need a physical representation of curriculum content to learn from and to be taught the learning skills to be able to make the content their own and apply it to new contexts. (Tom Sherrington et al.)

Aphorisms, principles, and ideas

21. Go higher – no matter how high your expectations are of your pupils, they will always be able to do more than you think they can. (Experience)

22. You have to teach in a way that convinces pupils to become part of a community of learners; the important question is “How, do we encourage children to acquire the knowledge?” not “Have they got the knowledge?”. (Michael Young)

23. Good behaviour is an essential prerequisite to effective teaching. (Tom Bennett)

Aphorisms, principles, and ideas

24. Seneca said, **“There is no learning without remembering”**. And then there is Willingham’s truism, **“Memory is the residue of thought”**. Therefore, getting pupils to think hard for as long as they can in every lesson is the main element of helping children learn.

25. Inclusive teaching – that is teaching where every pupil *has* to engage with what is being taught and think hard about it – is the aim. No pupil can be allowed to opt out of the learning going on in your classroom. (William)

Aphorisms, principles, and ideas

26. If you are unsure about what to include in your curriculum content, ask yourself **the William Morris test**: only include it if it is either useful or beautiful. (Myatt)

27. Children need to encounter something in three different contexts if they are going to secure the learning – that is, if they are going to make permanent change to their long-term memory. (Graham Nuthall)

Aphorisms, principles, and ideas

28. Anticipating the misconceptions in children's understanding and knowing how to address those misconceptions effectively is an important element of curriculum planning.

29. 'Curriculum development must rest on teacher development.' (Lawrence Stenhouse)

30. 'Teaching and learning should bring joy.' (Rita Pierson)

What aphorisms,
principles, ideas drive
your curriculum
planning?

Planning a unit on Magnets for Year 3

1. Let's plan how to teach a unit on Magnets in Year 3 which is rich, challenging and ambitious, in a way that makes things as simple as possible without making the process and the teaching & learning simplistic, and that is *interesting*. (API 8 & 30)
2. Refer closely to the NC throughout. (11)

Planning a unit on Magnets for Year 3

3. Begin by deciding what you want all pupils to know, understand and be able to do with regard to magnets by the end of the unit. Decide what pupils NEED to know about magnets and what it would be NEAT if they knew, but not essential. If it were a five lesson unit, plan the NEED to know over 3.5 lessons. For the second half of lesson four, assess whether the pupils have understood the NEED to know. Give yourself three routes, post NEED to know formative assessment:

Planning a unit on Magnets for Year 3

- I. If all the pupils have securely understood what you have taught them, teach the NEAT to know in the final lesson(s).
- II. If a significant number of pupils haven't understood what you have taught them, then reteach the NEED to know in the final lesson(s).
- III. If only a small number of pupil (2-4 in a class of 30) haven't understood what you have taught them, teach the NEAT to know in the final lesson(s) in a way that allows you to reteach the NEED to know to the 2-4 pupils who haven't yet understood what you have taught them.

Planning a unit on Magnets for Year 3

A fourth way forward might be to defer the reteaching of the NEED to know, especially if you have built some slack into the way you have designed the next unit of work. (10, 11, 13, 14, 16 & 21)

Planning a unit on Magnets for Year 3

4. Decide how many lessons you need to teach the specified content. (4, 9 & 10)
5. Be clear about where this unit of work fits in with what else has gone before and what is to come across the whole primary curriculum, and not just in the science curriculum, and then decide how explicit you are going to make those connections to your pupils. (12)

Planning a unit on Magnets for Year 3

6. Design an activity which will determine what it is the children already know about magnets. (13 & 15)
7. Decide what resources you might need for the pupils to learn: what resources you will use will depend upon what they already know/understand/can do subtracted from what you want them to K/U/CD. (5, 10, 13, 15, 22 & 26)

Planning a unit on Magnets for Year 3

8. Decide the most cost-efficient, easy-to-access way of packaging up the knowledge-content you want the pupils to learn – is it a PPT slide deck, a booklet, a text book, a video? (5, 6, 10, 13 & 20)
9. Decide how you are going to explain the knowledge you want them to know about magnets. (13, 19, 20 & 22)

Planning a unit on Magnets for Year 3

10. Identify possible misconceptions in the pupils' understanding of magnets and plan ways to address those misconceptions effectively. (28)
11. Decide what questions you are going to ask, and what activities you are going to design, to get every single pupil thinking about what you are going to teach them about magnets. (13, 22, 24 & 25)

Planning a unit on Magnets for Year 3

12. Decide what style of in-the-classroom formative assessments you are going to use to determine whether every single pupil has learnt what you intended them to learn. These assessments should not require teachers doing any work post-lesson. (16, 17 & 24)

Planning a unit on Magnets for Year 3

13. Design a synoptic assessment which gives you a clear picture as to how much more your pupils know, understand and can do. In this case, as it is a science unit, include some practical, as well as other evidence like double-page spreads, MCQs, writing, and what they can tell you about magnets. (18)

Planning a unit on Magnets for Year 3

14. Design retrieval activities which you will use at certain points in the future to check whether the pupils have learnt the knowledge on magnets, in terms of a change to their long-term memory. (2, 22 & 27)

You Retweeted



L Walker
@L_Walker_

Working with @johntomsett and @GillCGeorgiou I have redesigned our KS3 RE curriculum to make it knowledge rich and as ambitious as possible. It is driven by key texts and need vs neat to know content. Comments and feedback are more than welcome @TeamRE_UK
docs.google.com/document/d/1LM...

Learning Objective	Knowledge	Understanding	Skills
KS3 RE Unit 1: The Roman Empire	... Roman Empire ...	... Roman Empire ...	... Roman Empire ...

Learning Objective	Knowledge	Understanding	Skills
KS3 RE Unit 2: The Middle Ages	... Middle Ages ...	... Middle Ages ...	... Middle Ages ...

KS3 RE Unit 3: The Tudor and Stuart Eras

Learning Objective	Knowledge	Understanding	Skills
KS3 RE Unit 4: The Enlightenment	... Enlightenment ...	... Enlightenment ...	... Enlightenment ...

Learning Objective	Knowledge	Understanding	Skills
KS3 RE Unit 5: The Industrial Revolution	... Industrial Revolution ...	... Industrial Revolution ...	... Industrial Revolution ...
KS3 RE Unit 6: The Victorian Era	... Victorian Era ...	... Victorian Era ...	... Victorian Era ...
KS3 RE Unit 7: The Edwardian and Interwar Periods	... Edwardian and Interwar Periods ...	... Edwardian and Interwar Periods ...	... Edwardian and Interwar Periods ...
KS3 RE Unit 8: The Second World War	... Second World War ...	... Second World War ...	... Second World War ...
KS3 RE Unit 9: The Post-War Period	... Post-War Period ...	... Post-War Period ...	... Post-War Period ...

Learning Objective	Knowledge	Understanding	Skills
KS3 RE Unit 10: The Cold War	... Cold War ...	... Cold War ...	... Cold War ...
KS3 RE Unit 11: The 1960s and 1970s	... 1960s and 1970s ...	... 1960s and 1970s ...	... 1960s and 1970s ...
KS3 RE Unit 12: The 1980s and 1990s	... 1980s and 1990s ...	... 1980s and 1990s ...	... 1980s and 1990s ...
KS3 RE Unit 13: The 2000s and 2010s	... 2000s and 2010s ...	... 2000s and 2010s ...	... 2000s and 2010s ...

Learning Objective	Knowledge	Understanding	Skills
KS3 RE Unit 14: The 2010s and 2020s	... 2010s and 2020s ...	... 2010s and 2020s ...	... 2010s and 2020s ...

Learning Objective	Knowledge	Understanding	Skills
KS3 RE Unit 15: The Future	... Future ...	... Future ...	... Future ...

SPECIFIC UNIT LAYOUT – What will be taught in each unit?

Below are guides for how each unit will be set out detailing what the theme of the lessons will be. This will be flexible and teachers responsible for the creation of each unit will be able to adjust this provided the "need to know" content is still covered throughout the unit.

Year 7													
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
1. Worldviews Explored	What do we mean by worldviews and their categories? Theos Animation Lenses	What are my worldviews? AND Mini-assessment	NEAT VS NEED Why could worldviews cause issues? OR Re-teach	What is a religion and how is this different from a worldview?	What categories of religion are there? AND Mini-assessment	NEAT VS NEED Religion vs cults OR Re-teach	What is spirituality and how does it link to religion and worldviews?	End of unit assessment OR How do these interact with each other?					
2. Drawing from Special Texts	Why are special texts important and how can we analyse them?	Creation – Genesis 1 & 2: Your interpretation	Creation – Genesis 1 & 2: Different Christian interpretations	Creation – Genesis 1 & 2: Other Worldview's Interpretations AND Mini-assessment	NEAT VS NEED Alternative Interpretations (Feminist/LGBTQ+) OR Re-teach	Rama and Sita: Story and your interpretations	Rama and Sita: Yogic interpretations	Rama and Sita: Feminist interpretations	Life of Pi: Your Interpretations	Life of Pi: Religious vs Secular Interpretations	End of Unit Assessment OR Do special texts have a place in 21 st Century Britain?		
3. Acting Upon Beliefs	Retrieval: Creation How could the story cause people to act?	Creation – Environmental sustainability	Creation – Animal Rights AND Mini-assessment	NEAT VS NEED Extinction Rebellion – Vicars & Christian Climate Action OR Re-teach	Actions in Dharmic Worldviews: Dharma – Exploration of what Dharma is within Hinduism	Dharma – Varnas and Ashramas: impact upon actions	Dharma – conflict within Dharmas AND Mini-assessment	NEAT VS NEED Dharma in Buddhism comparison OR Re-teach	Orthodox Judaism	Orthodox Judaism	End of unit assessment OR How can beliefs lead people to act in a questionable fashion?		
4. Making a Difference	Why should we be making a difference and how can worldviews inspire this?	Making a Difference because of Worldviews: Charity – Langar & Christian Aid	Case Study: Jesus	Case Study: Jesus AND Mini-assessment	NEAT VS NEED Did Jesus really make a difference or was he just an ordinary man? OR Re-teach	Case Study: Malala Yousafzai	Case Study: Malala Yousafzai	End of Unit Assessment OR How can we make a difference without a worldview?					

In the light of this morning, how might you refine your schemes of learning, if at all!?

'If you're heading into a storm, why cut the power to your boat's engines?' (29)



Developing the curriculum for real

John Tomsett

@johntomsett

jtomsett@hotmail.com

www.johntomsett.com