

# Teaching & Learning Newsletter

## SWA Ladder Focus: Clear Explanation

[\(Anthecology 2024 pp16-21\)](#)

The focus of the last newsletter was 'clear explanation'. Rosenshine's principal of clear explanation suggests that more effective teachers are able to overcome the limitations in working memory and break down concepts and procedures into small, manageable steps, 'chunking' work. Clear explanation can also include dual-coding (using words and images together), and by modelling big ideas, new knowledge or skills.

## SWA Ladder Focus: Assessment and Feedback

[\(Anthecology 2024 pp16-21\)](#)

For this newsletter we are returning to 'Assessment and Feedback'. A current focus of Teaching and Learning is tackling passive learning. As part of this process a number of departments are using 'live marking' to check for understanding, misconceptions, engagement and students showing pride in their work. This is a way of addressing passive learning behaviours and ensuring student engagement and progress.



## Key Learning...

- Passive learning can limit students' progress.
- Live marking is a useful way to engage learners and make sure that they remain attentive and on task.
- Live marking is an efficient and timely way of providing feedback for student improvement. It is a way to immediately address misconceptions, but also to praise students for what they have done well.

**Why is passive learning a concern?** Mccrea (2023) noted that 'what we attend to is ultimately what we learn', highlighting the importance of student engagement and attention. This is reinforced by Lemov, who noted, 'shaping student habits and attention leads to profound change in actions, cognition and learning.' There are a number of ways to reduce passivity in our classrooms, one method is live marking. Our time planning is important, but without a clear focus on improving attention in the lesson, we risk limiting the impact and progress of our students.[\(1\)](#)

**What is live marking?** It involves the teacher actively assessing work during the lesson, giving a mixture of immediate verbal, and/or symbol feedback to students. It can also be of a whole class nature, such as work marked live using a visualizer, should a common misconception be discovered while checking books. This is also a way of addressing the issue of passive learning. Students are aware that their work will be checked, but also that immediate feedback will be given that can lead to greater understanding and progress. Live marking can take place using a verbal conversation, a sticky note in the relevant place, a coloured highlighter to point out an area to re-look at, and/or a symbol with a key to show what is done well, and what to focus on.[\(2\)](#)

**Why use live marking?** Live marking is popular as a way to engage students, provide instant and actionable feedback, and reduce marking workload for teachers. It opens the door to a conversation about learning between teacher and student to build knowledge, skills and confidence. The [EEF](#) evidence shows 6 months of additional progress when feedback is time-efficient, purposeful, and is both written and verbal. During a lesson we have time allocated for students to apply learning, as the students work, teachers can use live marking to have the most impact, and focus on progression. The 'in the moment' nature of this technique allows us to adapt our teaching, it can become a *hinge moment* in the lesson as live marking has enabled us to accurately assess our students' real level of understanding and to immediately act upon it.

## Live Marking: History and Geography - tackling passivity, raising attainment

**History:** Staff use a green dot to show verbal feedback has been given, and a symbol to show what has been done well, or what needs improvement.

**Geography:** In Geography a code for what is done well, or needs improvement is written in red pen, including a 'C' to show a conversation has taken place. There is also a stamper used for pride or common errors.



## Recommended Reading

For more articles, podcasts, blogs and research click [here](#).