



Welcome

Welcome to our penultimate Teaching and Learning Newsletter of the year. I do hope that you are finding them useful and, as always, please do contact me here at school if you have any questions or points that you would like to raise. The focus of this newsletter is on supporting boys' achievement and I am grateful to Rachel Dell for writing the article below to help guide our thinking on this issue.

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Assistant Headteacher

Supporting our Boys

There has been a worrying trend over the last 15 years that girls are outperforming boys. At GCSE, 2016 saw an 8.9% gap between the achievement of girls and boys, a pattern repeated in further and higher education also. Gary Wilson (please see website below) has been working on raising boys' achievement for many years and has identified a number of barriers to boys' achievement including a lack of independence prior to starting school, difficulties in structuring written work and a lack of opportunities for reflection.

Peer pressure is often cited as one of the biggest reasons for boys orientating away from education and as such Wilson argues that it is vital for boys to be able to achieve away from the 'prying eyes of their peers'. This could be in the form of helping younger students at school, or siblings at home with home learning, reading or organising their own projects for example. By giving boys a positive focus for their natural leadership ability, it can be a means of allowing boys to succeed and challenge gender stereotyping. A common misconception is that boys love competition: In fact, boys who win, love competition. It seems more accurate to say that boys love challenge, an idea which is being embodied across the school with changes to students' working practice such as flipped and independent learning. This also creates an opportunity for perhaps the biggest motivator: Rewards. We like to receive praise, yet on average boys will hear more negative comments compared to words of encouragement. Wilson argues that setting short-term goals that are recognised and rewarded, are a successful strategy for raising boys' engagement with work and subsequent achievement. Some further practical ideas for supporting your son include:

- Be active in their education
- Develop their independence – don't do everything for them
- Get good male role models

You can visit his website for more information

<https://www.garywilsonraisingboysachievement.com/>

From Your Year Leader

It was lovely to see the majority of you on at parents evening. It was nice to put some names to faces. Overall the year 7's have settled and seem happy at St Edward's and we are sure this will continue.

As a school we are continually reflecting on how best to support all of our students, whatever their needs and abilities. A healthy mind and body is essential to the growth and development of a student's personal and academic ability. A healthy lifestyle can have a big impact on a child's education. Regular exercise will release endorphins that make you feel good about yourself and therefore be happier in life. Boys in particular will find that exercise will help them focus in lessons, as excess energy has been burnt off.

Working in education highlights some key areas where some students struggle to focus. Again particularly boys.

Do's

- Have a healthy breakfast (porridge, low sugar cereal, fruit)
- Check they have everything they need for the following day
- Stay hydrated throughout the day
- Use the free extra-curricular clubs to help further development
- Make it a competitive. (some students love winning and being competitive especially boys)
- Fresh air
- Check their home-learning diaries to make sure they are not falling behind
- Ask questions about what they have done

Don'ts

- High sugar caffeine drinks and breakfasts (monster, red bull, coffee). Students don't need coffee to start the day. Tea is a better alternative
- A settled start to the day. Have a routine where they can slowly get up and prepare for the day
- Phones are the main distraction. Keep phones in the kitchen overnight and in the morning until they leave
- Don't let them have their phone while they do home learning (this will always distract them)
- Dinner – a balanced diet is essential. Having dinner 2-3 hours before bed will help with sleep

Nick Howes—Year Leader

PE

In this half term all of years 7, 8 and 9 will be moving over into summer activities. This will mean that the teaching focus will move towards Athletics, Rounders and Tennis. The areas that will be taught within these sports will be the rules and regulations, and key skills/ techniques that enable the students to be able to complete the activity. Once confidence is gained in the key skills they will be challenged to perform more advanced skills and perform them within a competitive situation. Within the competitive situation, there will be discussion and developing knowledge of tactics and how to implement these within the game.

To run alongside the curriculum changes we will also be changing our after school extra-curricular programme. The clubs after school will match the curriculum changes, meaning that there will be an Athletics, Softball and Rounders clubs, with the tennis courts open to use Monday through to Friday.

These clubs are open for all to attend, and the timetable will be going up on the website and around school soon.

Drama

This half term the texts and themes across KS3 have been carefully selected to help engage boys, nurture a love for the subject and close the attainment gap. Students will be asked to research their chosen theme and/or to learn their lines for their scripted performance for their home learning tasks.

Medieval Mystery plays. We will be creating and performing scenes from the New Testament around the school site, in the style of the traveling Mystery Plays. Students will learn about the challenges of performing outside. The main assessment period will be between 7-16th May.

Art

Students have been exploring the work of Matisse and his technique of colourful paper cut-outs. They have consolidated their knowledge of colour and developed their mixing and painting skills. Some groups have started the next project on the theme of Japanese Art. Students will be exploring the artistic traditions of Japan. They will be designing and making kites and will research the tradition of Kite-fighting that still takes place in Japan.

Music

Students will be focusing on music from around the world. This will include Brazilian Samba music in which each class will form a *Bateria* and learn a range of well known Latin rhythms ready to create their own class composition.

To help support and engage boys in the above topics, the majority of classroom time will be learning by doing, and working with others to concrete knowledge and embed ideas. The practical work will involve working on drum kits and percussion, keyboards, as well as music technology to record and edit compositions.

Subject	Topic and Title	Main Assessment Task
Textiles	Personalised Tester Project	Design and making of final product
Graphics	Fuse Tester Project	Design and manufacture of a fuse tester product and packaging
Resistant Materials	Animal Mobile Phone	Design and making of final product
Food and Nutrition	Food ingredients	Organisation and working together
Maths	Angles, perimeter, area and volume. Ratio and Proportion and sequences.	End of unit assessment
Religious Education	The Parables of Jesus	End of unit assessment
History	Power of the king in Medieval England	How did the relationship between king and people change in Medieval England?
Geography	Extreme Climate	Examination based on this and previous topic
Science	Gas exchange in humans Pure and impure substances	Written tests completed in class for all topics listed using past KS3 science questions.
MFL	French – My school German – My hobbies	Listening and writing - peer & teacher assessed
PSHE	Budgeting, making choices for the future	
English	Conflict/WW1 texts	READING Unit assessment – AQA style paper 2 section A

Additional Home Learning Activities

If the Home Learning does not take the full time allocated, students should try one of the activities below

Improve the quality of their written work by:

- Completing all Graft/feedback activities
- Adding to/developing core information by researching it and writing it into their books
- Correct spelling errors and punctuation

Consolidate/learn a topic by:

- Creating a spider diagram/mind map of key information
- Summarising key information into a single paragraph
- Creating a key word list with definitions
- Creating some revision/cue cards
- Writing some questions with answers to capture key information
- Writing an extended answer on the topic being studied
- Turn the key information into a model or drawing

Take the learning further by:

- Researching a related person, event, idea on the internet (e.g. BBC Bitesize) or in the library that is relevant to your topic
- Watching a documentary/programme on Youtube or other platforms
- Listening to a podcast/audio download or using the new GCSE Pod
- Talking to a class friend/family member about the topic to discuss key ideas

The problem with our Monkey Brain



During the week in which 'Living a Health Life' was the theme, all students from Years 7 to 11 were introduced to ways in which they can look after their nervous systems. They learned the neuroscience behind making impulsive decisions, their emotions, anxiety and how these can impact on learning and the enjoyment of healthy positive relationships. Most importantly they were given a toolkit that can be used to 'Tame the Monkey Brain.' Tutors will be working with students to put some of these techniques into practice and, for years 10 and 11, to use specific ones that help them address exam anxiety

Located in the temporal lobe of the brain, **the amygdala** helps trigger the fight-or-flight response.

Buzzle.com

The Impact of the Monkey Brain

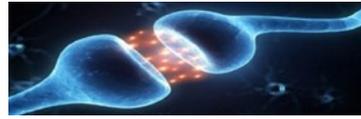
- ▶ Impossible to slow down and enjoy the present.
- ▶ Negativity affects our mood—making us unhappy, angry, restless, and anxious.
- ▶ It hampers our ability to concentrate.
- ▶ It has a negative impact on our behaviour
- ▶ It interferes with our ability to have positive interactions with others.

Know that you can tame it

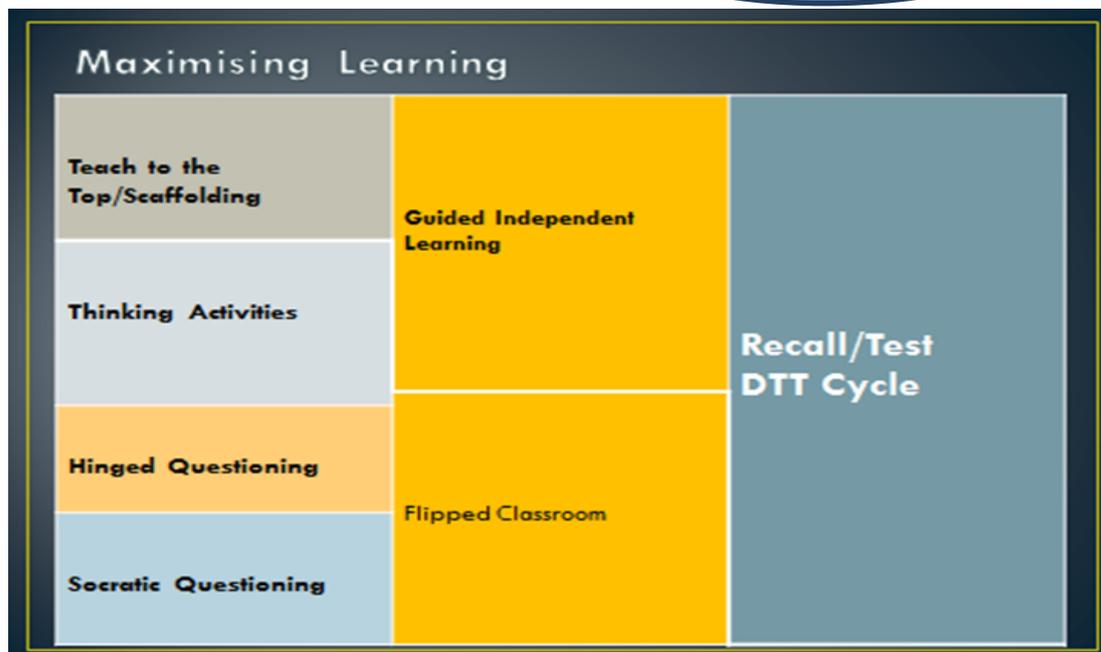
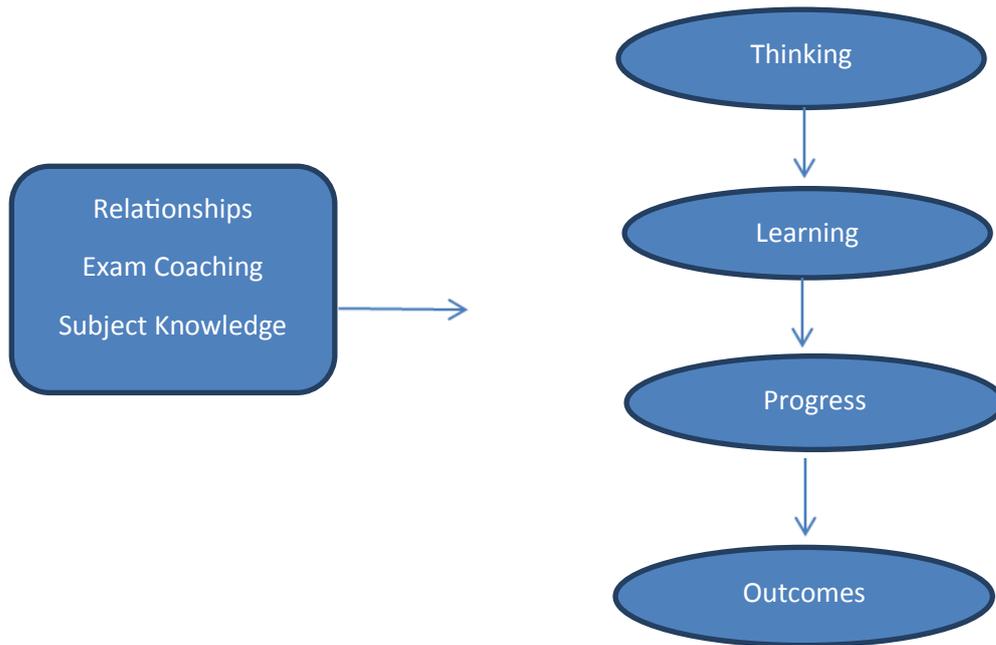
How to tame your Monkey Mind

- Talk to Your Monkey Mind
- Establish a Journaling Practice
- Meditate
- Practice the A-B-C Technique
- Stop Assigning Meaning
- Recite a Mantra
- Play a Game of Fives
- Engage Your Mind
- Try Piko-Piko Breathing

Teaching and Learning



From September 2017, staff have been taking part in a 2 year plan that involves receiving training in and implementing strategies across all key stages to encourage highly effective independent learning in students. The aim is to encourage a love of learning whilst equipping students with a toolkit to maximise their learning and improve their personal outcomes. It is based on the Psychology of Learning where laying down neural pathways is essential so that students can 'master rather than acquire' knowledge and improve their recall.



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