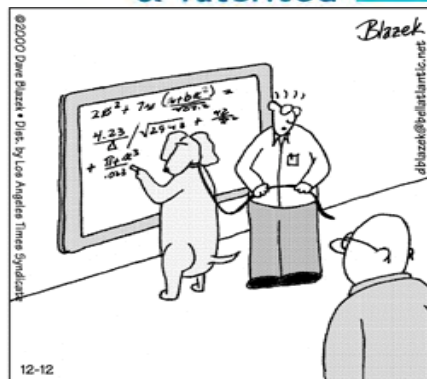


## Fostering creativity and curiosity in highly able boys

Ian Warwick  
Senior Director at London G&T

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12-12  
Take him off the leash? Oh no. Last time I did that he almost solved Fermat's Theorem.



- ✦ London Gifted & Talented is an organisation that was set up to stretch and challenge more able students and build the capacity of their educators to do the same
- ✦ Since 2003 we have directly worked with well over 3,000 schools and 11,000 teachers across all 33 London Boroughs
- ✦ In addition, more than 150,000 educators worldwide have used our free online resources on [www.londonqt.org](http://www.londonqt.org)
- ✦ In Europe we have worked with governments and schools in Finland, Romania, Holland, Germany, Hungary and the Ukraine
- ✦ We are now advising networks of schools globally

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## Research tells us that highly able boys like:

- |  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| ✦ variety                              | ✦ | alternative forms of recording                         |
| ✦ real discussion                      | ✦ | working beyond the syllabus                            |
| ✦ time-limited tasks                   | ✦ | teachers who enjoy learning themselves                 |
| ✦ to be treated as intellectual equals | ✦ | teachers who have sense of humour                      |
| ✦ chance to have fun                   | ✦ | choosing tasks   |
| ✦ working with different people        | ✦ | quizzes  |
| ✦ clear targets and how to get there   | ✦ | competitions   |
| ✦ practical work                       | ✦ | opportunities to work at their own pace                |
| ✦ thinking activities                  | ✦ | being allowed to have an off day                       |
| ✦ investigations, problem solving      | ✦ | learning from mistakes in a supportive environment     |
| ✦ group work                           | ✦ | being given something interesting to do if they finish |
| ✦ drama in ordinary lessons            | ✦ |  |
| ✦ teachers who break up activities     | ✦ |  |
|  | ✦ | freedom and flexibility                                |

**But then who doesn't?**

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## Activate learning for smart boys - teaching behaviours

- ✦ Informing - Take them 'behind the scenes' of your lesson
- ✦ Reminding - Keep reminding them what their priorities are
- ✦ Discussing - Actively encourage them to chew over, digest and question
- ✦ Explaining - Encourage them to meet all ideas with a 'could be' frame of mind, rather than an 'is' frame of mind
- ✦ Commentating - Always think and talk from the point of view that learning is learnable and grappling is more important than easy success.
- ✦ Evaluating - They should get used to being their own first marker
- ✦ Tracking - Encouraging them to compare past and present results can form the basis of a reflective discussion
- ✦ Framing - Clarify the learning intentions behind specific activities
- ✦ Arranging - Make use of displays to encourage independence
- ✦ Sharing – Teachers talk about their own learning careers and histories.

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## Creative thinking/production in learners who

- ✦ are fluent in producing and elaborating on ideas and flexible in thinking patterns
- ✦ make unusual associations between remote ideas but can produce multiple unexpected sometimes inappropriate responses
- ✦ tolerate ambiguity and uncertainty and sense inconsistencies and discontinuities
- ✦ juggle or redefine elements of a problem or task and readily guess and makes hypotheses
- ✦ are intellectually playful, interested in imagination and uninhibited in expression, sometimes radically so
- ✦ ask provocative questions, challenge parents, teachers and other authorities
- ✦ can show unusual degrees of originality, concentration and persistent hard work on projects that capture their interest and imagination

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## Divergence tests

- ✦ **A High Achiever...**  
**Remembers the answers. Is interested. Is attentive. Generates advanced ideas. Works hard to achieve. Answer the questions in detail. Grasps the meaning. Is receptive. Absorbs information. Is highly alert and observant. Is able.**



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## Divergence tests

- ✦ **A Gifted Learner... Poses unforeseen questions. Is curious. Is selectively mentally engaged. Generates complex, abstract ideas. Knows without working hard. Ponders with depth and multiple perspectives. Infers and connects concepts. Is intense. Manipulates information. Anticipates and relates**



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## Divergence tests

- ✦ **A Creative Thinker... Sees exceptions. Wonders. Daydreams and may seem off task. Overflows with ideas, many of which will never be developed. Plays with ideas and concepts. Injects new possibilities. Makes mental leaps. Is independent and unconventional. Improvises. Is intuitive. Is idiosyncratic.**



"Bummer of a birthmark, Hal."

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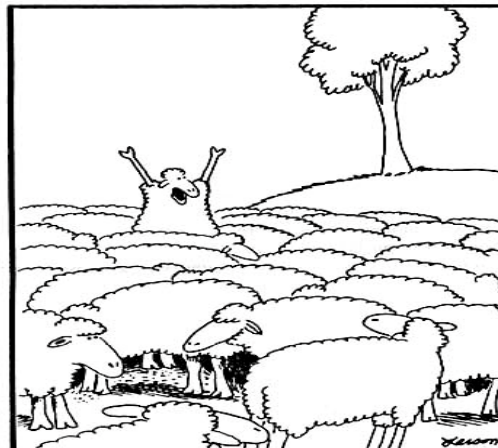
## Divergence tests

---

- ✦ **“(Brick). To use in smash-and-grab raids. To help hold a house together. To use in a game of Russian roulette if you want to keep fit at the same time (bricks at ten paces, turn and throw- no evasive action allowed.) To hold the eiderdown on a bed tie a brick at each corner. As a breaker of empty Coca-Cola bottles.**
- ✦ **(Blanket). To use on a bed. As a cover for illicit sex in the woods. As a tent. To make smoke signals with. As a sail for a boat, cart or sled. As a substitute for a towel. As a target for shooting practice for short-sighted people. As a thing to catch people jumping out of burning skyscrapers.**

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“If you treat people as they are, you will be instrumental in keeping them as they are. If you treat them as they could be, you will help them become what they ought to be.”  
Goethe

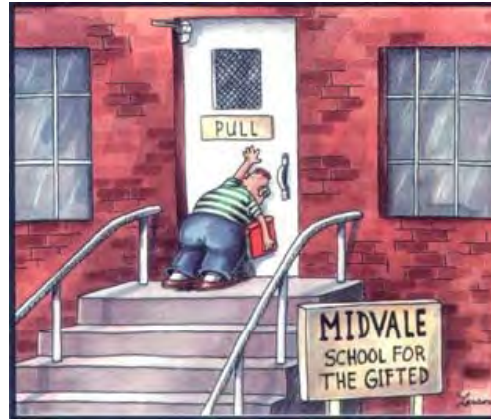


“Wai! Wai! Listen to me! ... We don't HAVE to be just sheep!”

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## ‘scrambled eggs, oh my baby how I love your legs..’

The words we have at our disposal don't just reveal our identity, they actually influence how we think, and even what we may become. ***Our reading and writing shape our ideas and alter how we voice our insights*** and are the core skills through which students are judged in school and higher education



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## Matrix to Analyse **Reading & Creative** Writing Skills

- ✦ Explore and Entertain (*through style, expression and mood*)
- ✦ Spontaneity and Revision (*through flair and purpose*)
- ✦ Structure and Succinctness (*through original arrangements*)
- ✦ Parody and Pastiche (*through exaggeration and imitation*)
- ✦ Language Experimentation (*through context and perspective*)
- ✦ Audience Engagement (*through narrative voice and style*)

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### Matrix to Explore **Critical** Reading & Writing Skills

---

- ✦ Inform, Explain, Describe (*through context and convention*)
- ✦ Analyse and Comment (*through exploring ideas and values*)
- ✦ Audience, Purpose and Form (*through intended outcomes*)
- ✦ Extended Textual Comparison (*through focused connections*)
- ✦ Evaluating Writers' Attitudes (*through authorial perspective*)
- ✦ Development of Style (*through language form*)

### Creative Writing (Global Matrix examples)

---

#### **Writing to Explore, Imagine, Entertain**

create imaginative effects through confident use of structure and expression

employ a range of different styles, adapting them to the intended audience

#### **Language Experimentation**

manipulate established forms to offer original effects and insights

challenge writing conventions in order to give vitality to new ideas and perspectives

## Creative Writing (Global Matrix examples)

---

### Structure and Succinct Texts

achieve conciseness with impact in imaginative texts  
 experiment with original ways of arranging material in  
 imaginative writing

### Writing without Conventions

develop material in ways such as non-chronological order,  
 designed to unsettle audiences  
 tackle unpredictable modes of expression such as a stream of  
 consciousness

## Make the learning totally explicit

---

- ✦ break down the art of reading and writing into core skills that have been mapped worldwide
- ✦ skills that are in turn broken down into 4 or 5 component techniques that are explained in detail
- ✦ each of these techniques then has several extracts from novels and clips from films to illustrate how each component works
- ✦ then analysed to enable the learner to explore their reactions and understand the tricks that writers use
- ✦ to then explore using these skills in their own creative writing



## Reading, Writing and Film

---

- So what makes a great piece of writing? What do great films have that draw us in? What techniques are being used to manipulate the audience/reader? How do we read these? How can we learn from them to improve our own writing? We know when we keep revisiting a novel, that our imagination has been gripped. We go back to watch a film to learn more about it and to read and understand what it is trying to show us.
- It is important for students to recognise that ***how something is created*** is far more significant than what it is about

## Tricks of the trade

---

- The aim of this resource is to give an insight into the processes of reading, writing and film making, the nuts and bolts, the craft. What are the tricks of the trade? What techniques does the writer use to get us to engage with their story? How does a film maker get us to suspend our disbelief?
- ***Only by making these skills and techniques visible*** can we learn from them
- The activities also make clear what we are talking about when we are asked to read, discuss and critically analyse a novel or film

## Addressing the craft

---

- ✦ Various skills and techniques are used to raise expectations in how we read fiction and how this translates into our writing **which have *virtually direct equivalents in film***
- ✦ We define and summarize these and ask questions that encourage a clearer approach to reading novels and films
- ✦ We look at each one in depth, giving outstanding examples from a variety of novels and films that illustrate the techniques being used and how they achieve their impact
- ✦ The aim is to show how to improve reading and writing skills through a better understanding of

## The 12 Core Writing Skills (that illustrate the matrices)

---

- ✦ Raising Expectations
- ✦ Values and Ideas
- ✦ Narration
- ✦ Detail
- ✦ Characters
- ✦ Literariness
- ✦ Genre
- ✦ Style
- ✦ Dialogue
- ✦ Imaginative Effects
- ✦ Structure
- ✦ Ending

## Core Skill 1 - 'Raising Expectations'

---

This first section looks at the imaginative leap that is necessary to take us from our real world, into the world of fiction. The key questions that are relevant to both novels and films are as follows;

- ✦ Why do we as readers give ourselves over to this new world?
- ✦ How do writers manage the uncertainty that we feel as we cross the threshold?
- ✦ How long will readers be willing to suspend their doubts and skepticism and what enables them to do this?

## Techniques Used In 'Raising Expectations'

---

Within each of these skills there are core techniques;

- ✦ Title
- ✦ Epigraph/Tagline
- ✦ Title Page/Sequence
- ✦ Opening Sentence/Sequence
- ✦ Framing/Trailer
- ✦ Prologue
- ✦ Setting the tone/Mise-en-scene

### Techniques Used In 'Raising Expectations'

---

- ✦ Prologue
- ✦ Shakespeare's Romeo + Juliet

### The Technique of Epigraphs/Taglines

---

- ✦ A resonant quotation usually excerpting lines to put before the writers own to give the reader a glimpse into intentions or inspiration
- ✦ They are little appetizers to the great entrée of a story/film
- ✦ They illuminate important aspects of it, and they get us headed in the right direction

### The Technique of Epigraphs/Taglines

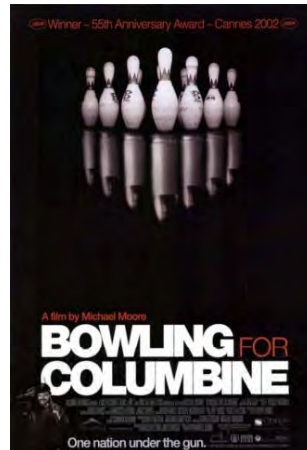
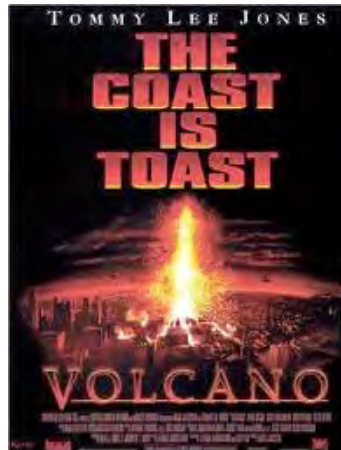
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- ✦ Tess of the D'Urbervilles  
"As flies to wanton boys are we to the gods,  
they kill us for their sport" (King Lear)
  
- ✦ Anna Karenina  
"Vengeance is mine; I will repay" (Deuteronomy  
32:35)
  
- ✦ Armageddon  
'Earth. It was fun while it lasted'
  
- ✦ Schindler's List  
'The list is life'

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### The Technique of Epigraphs/Taglines

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## The Technique of Opening Sentences/Sequences

---

- ✦ Another name for the hook
- ✦ The first sentences of a novel or the opening shots of a film don't just grab audiences, they also set the tone and launch the plot
- ✦ How are readers meant to engage with these techniques?
- ✦ What will the special shock voltage of a powerful opening, which can seize the reader immediately by the throat, have on what comes next

## The Technique of Opening Sentences/Sequences

---

- ✦ How do the first few minutes of a film impact on what the audience will expect the story to be about?
- ✦ What conventions are working to establish the intended or likely consequences?
- ✦ How is editing a crucial element in setting up pace?
- ✦ What questions are being raised in the writing and how are the answers delayed?

### The Technique of Opening Sentences/Sequences

---

- ✦ If On A Winter's Night  
"You are about to begin reading Italo Calvino's new novel, If on a winter's night a traveler."
- ✦ Brighton Rock  
"Hale knew, before he had been in Brighton three hours, that they meant to murder him."
- ✦ Joyeux Noel  
The opening sequence shows brainwashed school boys in France, England, and Germany reciting phrases they have been taught about the glories of their country the evil of their enemies and how God is on their side.

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### The Techniques of Setting the Tone / Mise-en-Scene

---

- ✦ Setting a visual theme in a film or novel by generating a sense of time and space, as well as setting a mood
- ✦ They sometimes also suggest a character's state of mind, with the reader being required to understand how the meaning is closely related to the emotional tone that is being created
- ✦ It can be as simple as a set piece description of a landscape or township that is the primary setting for the story

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### The Techniques of Setting the Tone / Mise-en-Scene

---

- ✦ How is the tone of a film set up for the audience?
- ✦ What establishes it in terms of composition, sets, props, costumes, sounds, and lighting?
- ✦ How do the various elements of design help to express and explore a film's vision?
- ✦ How is a sense of time and space, as well as setting the mood or a character's state of mind introduced effectively for the reader/audience?

### The Techniques of Setting the Tone / Mise-en-Scene

---

- ✦ Bleak House "London. Michaelmas term lately over, and the Lord Chancellor sitting in Lincoln's Inn Hall. Implacable November weather. As much mud in the streets as if the waters had but newly retired from the face of the earth, and it would not be wonderful to meet a Megalosaurus, forty feet long or so, waddling like an elephantine lizard up Holborn Hill. Smoke lowering down from chimney-pots, making a soft black drizzle, with flakes of soot in it as big as full-grown snowflakes--gone into mourning, one might imagine, for the death of the sun."



## The Techniques of Setting the Tone / Mise-en-Scene



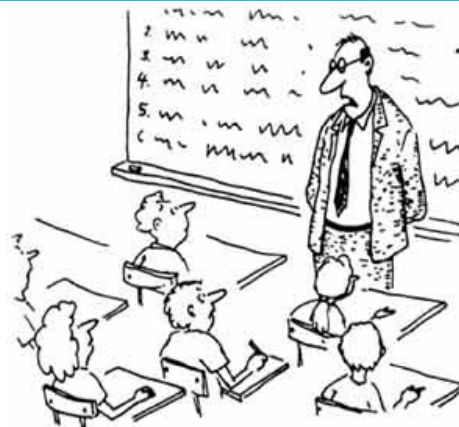
The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari  
(where a character's internal state of mind is represented through set design and blocking so that the sets involved serve to stress the film)



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## Learned helplessness

What do able but dependent students look like?



*"I expect you all to be independent, innovative, critical thinkers who will do exactly as I say!"*

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## A narrower view of independence

---

- ✦ Focused
- ✦ Determined/persistent
- ✦ Self-motivated
- ✦ Able to work on his own
- ✦ Completes homework
- ✦ Able to follow instructions
- ✦ Meets deadlines
- ✦ Meets targets
- ✦ Acts on advice
- ✦ Doesn't waste time

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## A broader view of independence includes all of these too...

---

<b>Strategic</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Independent</li> <li>▪ Reflective</li> <li>▪ Evaluative</li> <li>▪ Expert</li> <li>▪ Interested</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Precise</li> <li>▪ Responsible</li> <li>▪ Self-directed</li> <li>▪ Determined</li> <li>▪ Analytical</li> </ul>
<b>Sociable</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Interdependent</li> <li>▪ Intuitive</li> <li>▪ Empathetic</li> <li>▪ Collaborative</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Responsive</li> <li>▪ Active</li> <li>▪ Self-aware</li> <li>▪ Articulate</li> </ul>
<b>Speculative</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Inventive</li> <li>▪ Curious</li> <li>▪ Risk taking</li> <li>▪ Experimental</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Inquisitive</li> <li>▪ Observant</li> <li>▪ Questioning</li> <li>▪ Creative</li> </ul>

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## The importance of classroom challenge

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*'A teachers' job is to make work difficult.  
If you are not challenged, you do not make mistakes.  
If you do not make mistakes feedback is useless.'*

Hattie (2008)

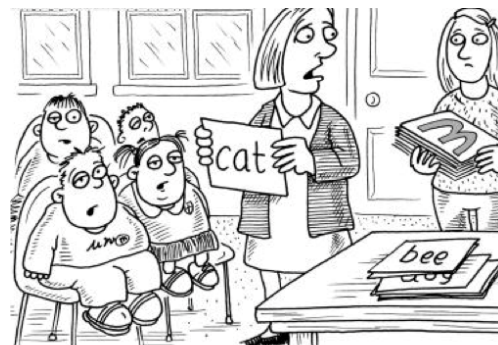
Classroom challenge is partly to do with how we enable our students *and ourselves* to make useful mistakes.

This may appear to be contradictory to what some say, but that's only because it is.

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What are some of the ways in which we tend to reduce or even subvert the challenge in learning, for all learners or for specific groups?



"No response. We'll have to use the corporate logo flashcards again."

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## Unhelpful approaches

---

- ✦ **'Knights in shining armour'** coming to the rescue way before there is any distress expressed
- ✦ **'Here's one I prepared earlier'** pre-cooking and pre-digesting resources and delivering knowledge without the difficulty
- ✦ **'Negators of challenge'** not trying to de-familiarise materials, over-scaffolding and over-simplifying
- ✦ **'God'** on tap as the expert, who has been there, done that and doesn't explain how they got there or back

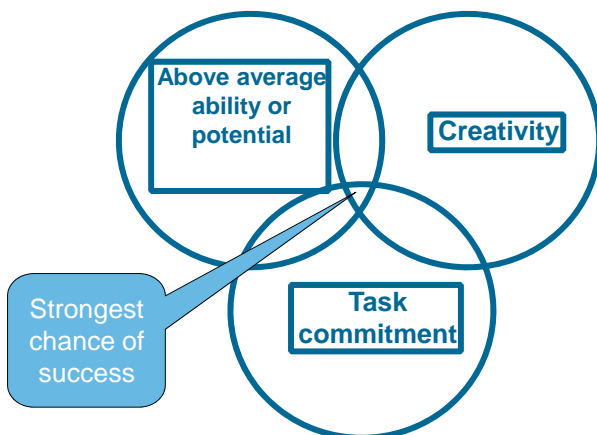
## Unhelpful approaches

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- ✦ **'Apologists'** accepting first sound bite responses too readily, not planning spaces to think and not grilling students
- ✦ **'Life support machines'** creating need and not encouraging independence, or planning for student choice
- ✦ **'Blue Peter presenters'** over-praising and dispensing badges of approval too readily and with sketchy evidence of merit
- ✦ **'Echo chambers'** happily paraphrasing each student's comments for the others who weren't listening and helpfully adding a little too

## Teaching the more able – content vs. skills?

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A prescriptive curriculum and a focus on targets and thresholds can encourage content-driven teaching

Content-driven approaches may not encourage the skills for high achievement

---

## Fostering intellectual curiosity



## 1. Present ideas as live

---

Stress inquiry and the sense of possibility and discovery by not focusing on what is already done, dusted and certain.

Model genuine curiosity yourself.

A good classroom ethos allows learners to feel that they have something to real to contribute to new learning and the big questions/debates



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## 2. Stress the big ideas and concepts

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What is the big idea behind the subject and how can it be offered to students in a form that they can involve themselves with and that doesn't short-circuit their own thinking?



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### 3. Present ideas as live

---

- ✦ How can we best present our subject as still relevant and dynamic and allow students to recapture that sense of discovery?
- ✦ Stress inquiry and the sense of possibility and discovery by not focusing on what is already done, dusted and certain.
- ✦ Model genuine curiosity yourself in your reactions to unforeseen events or questions.

### 4. Plan in ambiguity, complexity and doubt

---

Encourages students to realise that there is often not a right answer

## 5. Set up sticky situations

Are there children who are risk averse?

Are there children who always get everything right?



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## 6. Create interesting hooks

- ✦ What 'trailer type' activities will assist our students to develop affective engagement? What metaphors, images and personifications can support how we depict the content?
- ✦ Use interesting 'what if' questions with meaningful trailers to involve students emotionally and imaginatively to guide them.
- ✦ Externalize your own personal thinking and decision-making in a classroom, and learn



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## 7. Take the stabilizers off

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- ✦ How can we counteract the tendency of students to want everything spoon-fed and 'bite sized' and encourage them to develop their own chewing muscles? How do we delay gratification and encourage their 'seeking' responses by withholding the grand narrative.
- ✦ Encourage engagement with the unknown and away from steering responses into right answer tunnels.
- ✦ Reduce the habit of mere accurate retention and the attitude of dependency by promoting exploration, stepping beyond the horizon and taking risks yourself.

## 8. Share what makes you excited

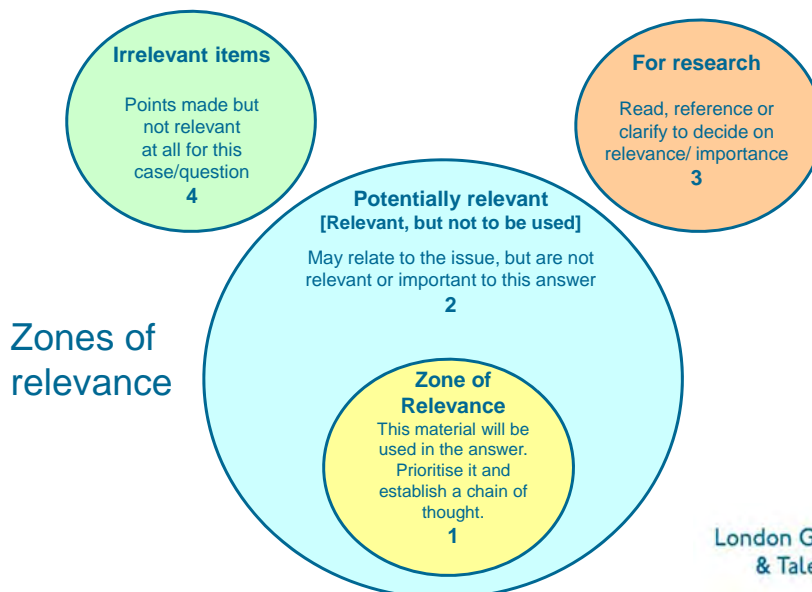
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- ✦ What is emotionally engaging about your subject? Why is it meaningful? How can it be seen in more human terms? How do you use personal anecdotes, stories and epiphanies in the classroom?
- ✦ Make it clear that there are moments where we get excited about our subject and that still happens.
- ✦ Explain to students what helped us to 'get' our subject, our own learning histories and where our sense of security and expertise comes from.

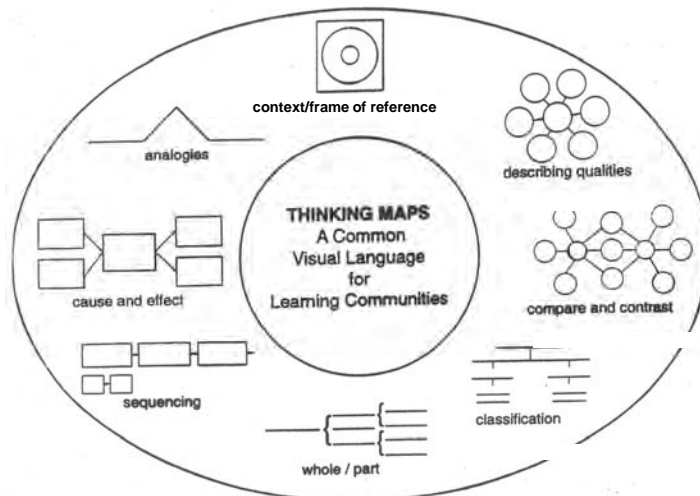
## High challenge task design - Rich tasks...

- ✦ Develop learning from a common core of knowledge or skills
- ✦ Encourage exploration of a topic
- ✦ Allow a range of start and end points
- ✦ Have an element of open-endedness
- ✦ Can be accessed by pupils of widely varying abilities
- ✦ Encourage and provide for higher level thinking in a supportive environment
- ✦ Encourage critical thinking
- ✦ Encourage creativity
- ✦ Have an element of choice (either in the task or in the response), allowing students to exercise self-direction
- ✦ Are interesting and motivating for the student
- ✦ Provide varying levels of challenge to all
- ✦ Provide opportunities for able pupils to show what they are capable of achieving

## Using thinking skills allows differentiation to occur



## Thinking Maps



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Seven ways to be smart	Bloom's Taxonomy : Six Thinking Levels					
	Knowing	Understanding	Applying	Analysing	Creating	Evaluating
<b>Kinaesthetic</b> I enjoy doing hands on activities, sports and dance	look at and, feel a group of objects and predict which will hit the ground first	design and create a parachute that will slow down the decent of the objects.	make a push pull meter, calibrate it, and use it to weigh different objects.	carry out an experiment on gravity and arrive at answers to the questions	design an experiment to look at streamlining	test the idea - compare it to others
<b>Musical</b> I enjoy making and listening to music	find a song that mentions the effects of gravity	write a gravity poem that brings together force, mass and acceleration	compose an advertising jingle on the benefits of gravity.	investigate and replicate the experiments of Galileo Galilei (1564-1642)	create a rap explaining the results of the Galileo's experiments.	write a critique of the rap.
<b>Interpersonal</b> I enjoy working with others	find a set of web links on gravity that the class would find useful.	create a group PowerPoint on why the apple doesn't fall the other way in Australia.	join others in a videoconference discussion on gravity and its effects	investigate a ball rolling down a slope and discuss, with others, the forces involved.	with others devise an experiment to test that objects fall at the same rate.	join an Internet discussion group on questions about gravity
<b>Intrapersonal</b> I enjoy working by myself	use the Internet to find my own information on gravity	write a brief précis on each site I found.	create a glossary of terms used in my work on gravity and forces	prepare a mindmap about your understanding	create a podcast describing the results of an experiment.	write a critique of the podcast

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