

Interventions: Pre and over learning

The one teaching intervention that could most benefit a range of pupils, including EAL and SEN, is – according to Daniel Sobel – the use of pre-learning and over-learning. He discusses how these concepts can be introduced

I once conducted a very unscientific poll among the Inclusion Expert team, asking the question: “If you could choose one intervention to supplement teaching all over the country, which would it be?”

I was unsurprised when the answer came back. All those questioned agreed on one clear, simple idea – do pre and over-learning.

Pre teaching and over-learning exposes the student to words and ideas that are about to come up in the lesson and going over them again after the lesson. Clever and straight-forward.

However, getting it to really work for the student takes some consideration. The purpose of this article is to explain some of the reasoning behind how this works, the conditions for its best use.

Golden rules of good pedagogy of interventions:

- Based in the actual classroom and on the curriculum material.
- Measurable in terms of engagement with the curriculum and participation in the classroom.
- Doesn't distract from the curriculum but directly fosters a more positive engagement with the class material.
- Boosts self-esteem and motivation to learn the curriculum among peers in the classroom.

Pre and over-learning adhere to these golden intervention rules. Pre and over-learning seem to directly address the full range of SEN needs very well, from preparing dyslexic students in advance about how to make sense of the letters, to students with ADHD who will struggle less to follow what is going on in the class.

More significantly, though, is the practising of language acquisition and recall,

Nothing can replace effective quality first teaching but pre and over-learning are very clear examples of the application of these: establishing an effective learning environment, quality assessment, differentiated planning and effective deployment of support staff.

Over-learning

Over-learning is the continued training and education of a skill or a topic after the lesson.

Researchers found that even brief periods (up to 20 minutes) of over-learning after a task led to improved performance.

Pre-learning

All pre-learning activities are aimed at helping students to develop levels of curiosity and interest before they learn new material. Pre-learning can introduce vocabulary, ideas and so on to help students hit the ground running.

Pre-learning can set up the condition where the main lesson actually becomes a period of over-learning. This may be especially useful for learners with low prior knowledge, students with poor working memory, or those with any SEN.

In action...

- Measure, assess and evaluate: start by carefully assessing a baseline – how easily students pick up language and engage. Then trial pre and over-learning over three weeks and assess the impact.
- Do it in the classroom, rather than outside the classroom.
- Focus on skills and ideas rather than just keywords. Get students to draw or source a picture of the new word or relate it to a story. Abstract words are tough for anyone. Some students may benefit from creating their own visual dictionary.
- Use pre-learning as a hook for a new topic, and to motivate them to want to discover more. Motivation and engagement go together. Fun, excitement and mystery and linking to favourite icons and heroes can help.
- You may consider using technology: record sentences on devices that can be used during lesson time. Videos and audio can all help with language acquisition. If you are brave enough, get them to compose a song using the key words.

Initial pre-learning should ideally be done twice – once a couple of weeks in advance and again just prior to the lesson.

Over-learning should be done after the lesson and again every few weeks. Keep coming back to the learning

Conclusion

Pre and over-learning can be used for many types of student. I also recommend this intervention to schools as a means to narrow the gap.

article by Daniel Sobel | Published: 23 May 2018

<https://www.sec-ed.co.uk/best-practice/teaching-interventions-pre-and-over-learning/>