

<https://www.tes.com/news/remote-learning-how-apply-rosenshines-principles>

Like most teachers, I had a lot of questions about setting work for my students when the first school closures happened.

Should I create booklets for them to work through? Set open-ended projects or research tasks about different topics? Give them a choice of different activities?

It was all miles away from how I usually teach in the classroom. I ditched such ways of working many years ago after finding them hugely inefficient and generally ineffective.

But without the class having me in the classroom, is there really any choice? Would I need to return to project-based learning?

My mind turned to the idea that has done most to guide my teaching in recent years: [Rosenshine's Principles of Instruction](#). Applying these 10 principles to my teaching has worked wonders for streamlining my practice and they have saved me countless hours in worrying about filling lessons with activities. They have encouraged me to work on my instruction.

## Remote learning after coronavirus school closures

But they were written with physical instruction in mind: a teacher stood in the classroom in front of their class.

Could they apply to remote learning?

When I took a fresh look at Rosenshine, I saw that there was enormous potential in using them as guiding principles for setting work remotely in a way that would have the greatest chance of helping pupils to learn at home.

### 1. Begin a lesson with a short review of previous learning

Watch a teacher start a lesson and you will inevitably hear the magic words: "Do you remember that last lesson we...?"

Beginning a lesson with a quick recap is second nature to us. We recognise the need to link what pupils are about to learn to what they already know.

We also realise that having the time to recall things from memory makes them more memorable in the future.

Starting a remote lesson with a review of previous learning should be simple enough. Ask students to look back through their notes, show them an image linked to the previous

lesson and ask them to write down what they can remember about it, or ask them to write a summary from memory.

## 2. Present material in small steps with student practice after each step, and require and monitor independent practice

We use these two principles, in part, to prevent overloading a student's working memory. They can't hold on to that much new information and still do something with it.

In the classroom, we get around this by carefully chunking a lesson and delivering a small amount at each time. There is a temptation with remote learning to give students a lot of information on a topic, or ask them to find a lot of information themselves on a topic, and then to do something with it (create a poster, write a report, answer an essay question).

This principle reminds me that I need to keep the same sort of structure for my lessons that I set remotely. They need a small amount of input and then a chance to do something with it before moving on.

I also need to make sure that there is only a small amount of new information being introduced because I need an opportunity to monitor how they are getting on. There is no point in students racing ahead if they are getting things badly wrong.

I need them to upload work back on to our Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) so I can look over it and plan what to do next. I don't necessarily need to *mark* it, but I do need to use what I see to inform future planning.

## 3. Ask a large number of questions and check the responses of all students. Check for student understanding and obtain a high success rate

I will put these three principles together as they set out to do much the same thing and they have a similar problem for us.

We ask a large number of questions to ensure that everyone is following our explanations and to make sure that students aren't starting a task still holding on to misconceptions. If we don't get a high success rate before they start practising, then any misconceptions they hold will end up embedded in their work.

The difficulty we have now is we can't, easily, check the responses of all students before they complete a task. What I can do, though, is use Google Forms to create self-marking quizzes that can be set up to provide feedback on incorrect answers. They can complete these quizzes before beginning a longer task to check they are ready.

I can also use the results of these quizzes to plan my future lessons and the next steps, exactly as I would in the classroom.

#### 4. Provide models and scaffolds for difficult tasks

In the classroom, I am forever modelling. I'll use my visualiser to write an example paragraph or quickly demonstrate a geographical skill on the board. I'll also provide scaffolds for students as and when they need them. I'll pick up a mini whiteboard and give them a few key words, a sentence starter or diagram. All of this can be done in a responsive way and without much advance planning.

Remotely, I need to make sure these are available on any resources I give them. I produce model paragraphs in advance and include scaffolding on the same slide or worksheet containing the task instructions to be used if required.

#### 5. Engage students in weekly and monthly reviews

This has always been one of my favourite of the Rosenshine Principles and the one I have often thought gets overlooked.

In our rush to get through the curriculum, we don't always take the time to pause and look back with a student at what they have learned so far. Doing so allows us to help them make connections between different parts of the topic and to identify personal goals for improvement and give advice on how to achieve it. What better time than now?

We aren't going to cover the curriculum in the normal way. We may as well ensure that what students are learning is learned really well rather than risking a lot of things being learned badly. So I'm planning in regular review lessons when they look back at what they have done so far; if possible with me giving them some personal input in one way or another.

In conclusion...

When we put it all together we get:

1. Start with some recap.
2. Introduce things slowly with practice after each part.
3. Check on how students are getting on and pick up on any misconceptions.
4. Give them models and scaffolds.
5. Review how they are doing.

And this is the reason I like these principles; they just make my job easier. This is going to mean retooling the lessons I have rather than starting again from the beginning. Those lessons were created for a reason, they work. And they can be made to work remotely.

As teachers, we are busier than ever. Supporting the children of key workers, supporting our colleagues, supporting our communities, and all while dealing with whatever else is happening in society around us.

What I have found in looking again at Rosenshine's principles is a way of creating lessons that will help students to learn and minimise the pressure on me. In these difficult times, this may be as close as we will get to a win-win.