



UNIVERSITY OF  
DERBY

# What is subject specific pedagogy in English? Why is it important?

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What is subject  
specific  
pedagogy...



...in  
teaching  
English?



Why  
does it  
matter?

# Pedagogical Content Knowledge, Shulman (1986: 9)



What is subject  
specific  
pedagogy...

‘...for the most regularly taught topics in one's subject area, the most useful forms of representation of those ideas, the **most powerful analogies, illustrations, examples, explanations, and demonstrations** - in a word, the ways of representing and formulating the subject **that make it comprehensible to others.**’

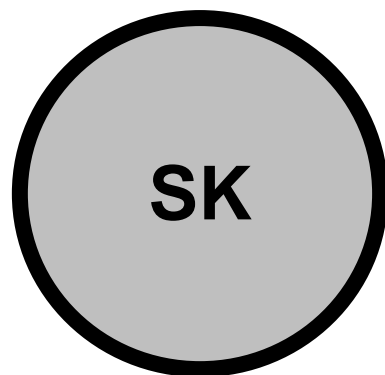
‘[It] also includes an understanding of **what makes the learning of specific concepts easy or difficult**: the conceptions and preconceptions that students of different ages and backgrounds bring with them to the learning.’

Shulman, L. (1986: 4-14)

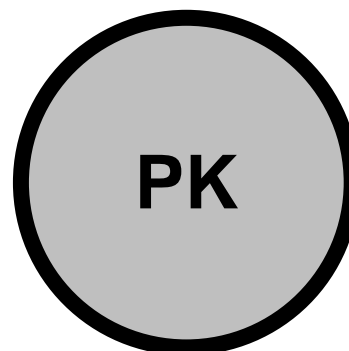
# Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK)



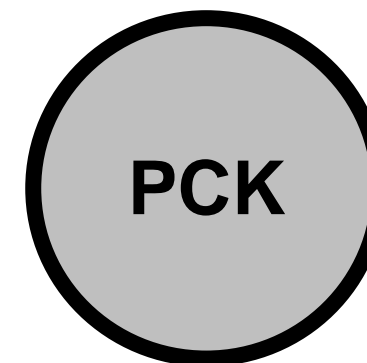
What is subject  
specific  
pedagogy...



What



How and Why  
Underpinned



Pedagogical  
Content  
Knowledge

Adapted from Shulman (1986: 10)

# What does an English teacher actually do? (1:2)



'An english teacher is responsible for ensuring that students learn **proper grammar, writing, and reading** comprehension.'

What is subject  
specific  
pedagogy...

They are responsible for **creating lesson plans** that will teach students the skills they need.

A few of the main duties of an english teacher are **answering student questions, grading student tests and essays, tracking student progress, and teaching students the importance of English.**



...in  
teaching  
English?

One of the most important skills that an english teacher will have is the ability to give **constructive criticism**. Another skill is communication as the english teacher will need to be able to **communicate effectively with students.**'

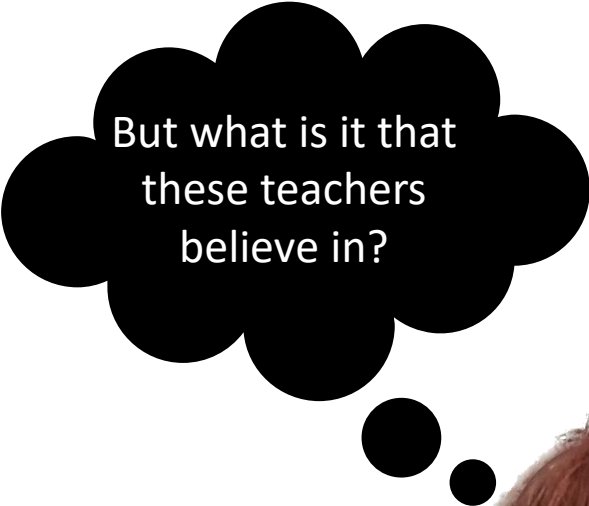


glassdoor

(Glassdoor, 2023)



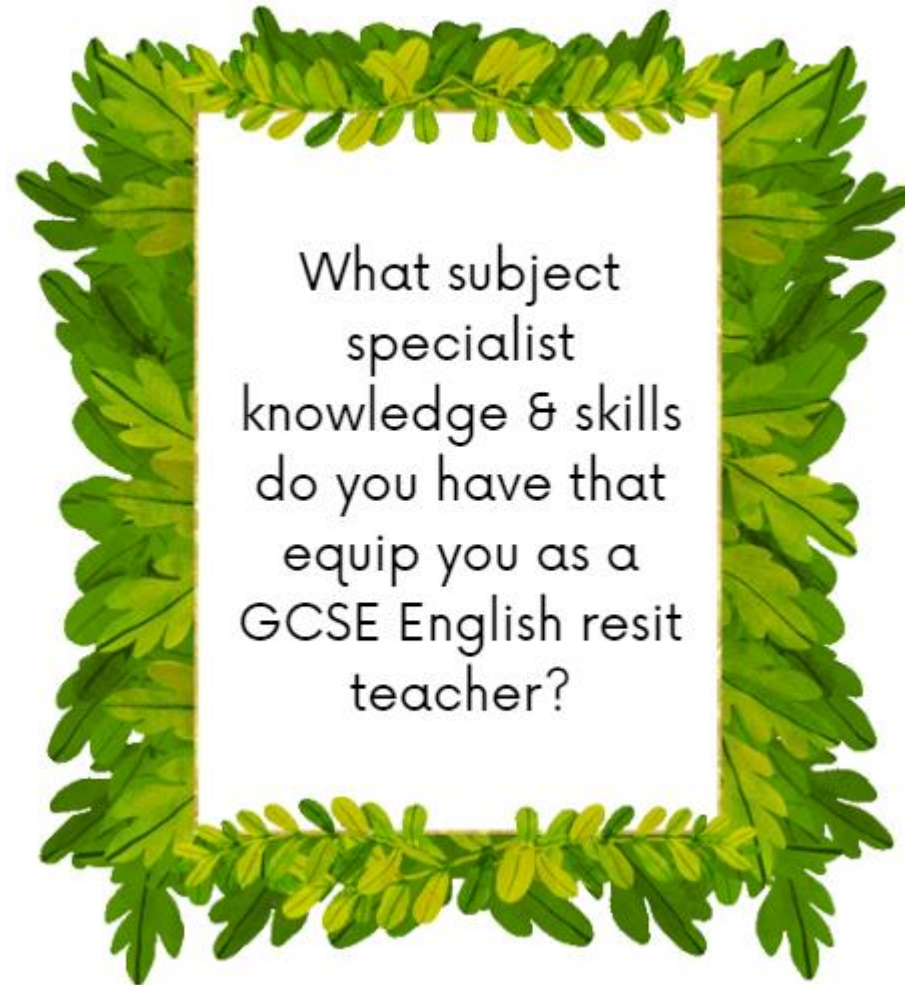
'Each subject discipline...is...taught by people who believe in it, are committed to it, and want to transmit these wonders to others.'



But what is it that these teachers believe in?



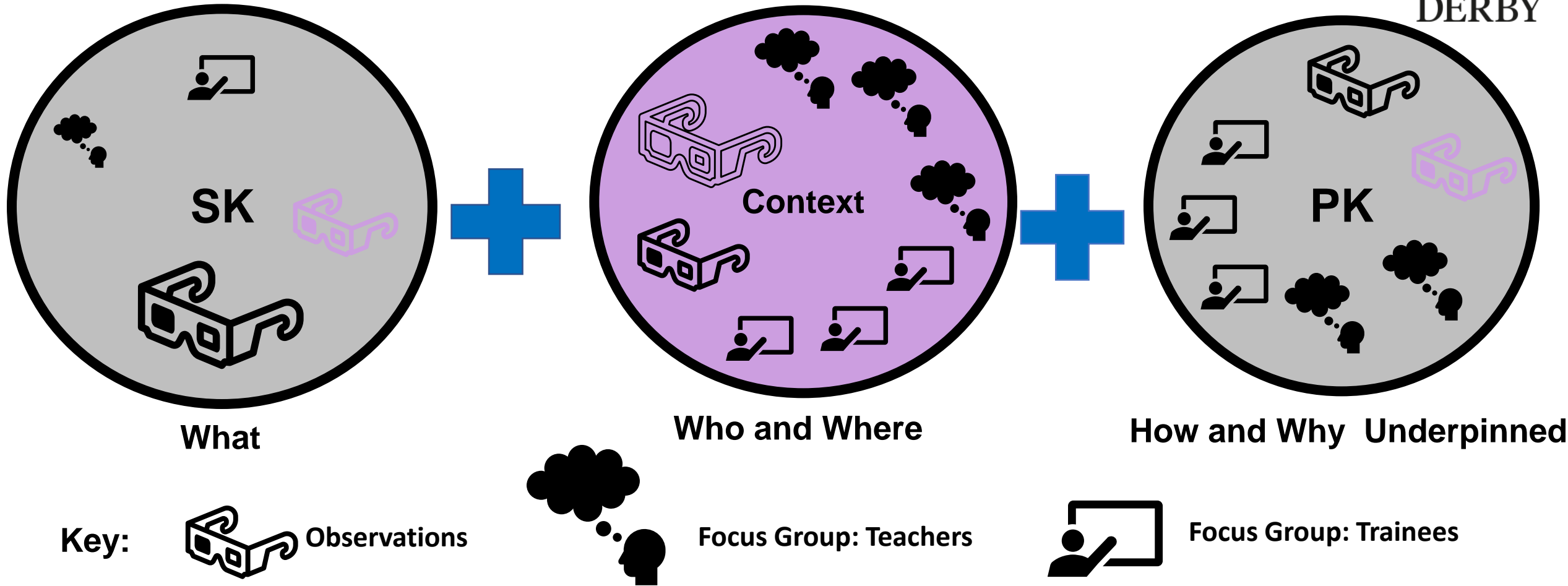
(Ed) Knight, B., Chater, M., Hawkes, N. and Waters, M., (2022: 49)



(Haselgrove, K., 2023)




# The Findings



(Haselgrove, K., 2023)

Lortie (1975) asserted that the trainee **‘begins with [the] student teachers’ own experiences of being taught at school**; thus, they commence their ITE programme with established ideas of how to teach.’



But these students aren't the same as you were...



Lortie, D. (1975) cited in Powell, D (2020:10)

# What does an English teacher actually do? (2:2)



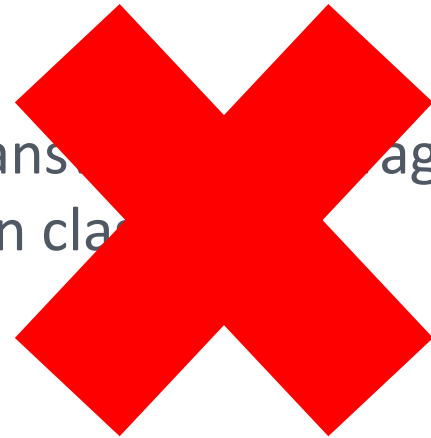
What is subject  
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**What responsibilities are common for English  
Teacher jobs?**



...in  
teaching  
English?

Example answer: encourage students to read  
out loud in class

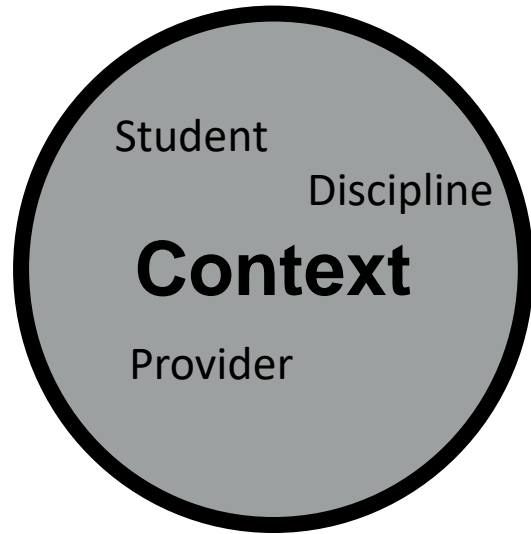


(Glassdoor, 2023)

Almost 6% of children and young people said they didn't have a book of their own at home – this equates to **413,068 children and young people** in the UK. (NLT, 2021)

**One in four** children hasn't reached the expected level of reading by the **age of 11**. Many of these children will struggle to keep up at secondary school. (DfE, 2022)

Studies have shown that **GCSE exam papers** require a reading age of **15 years and 7 months**, presenting a significant barrier to pupils without that expected reading age.

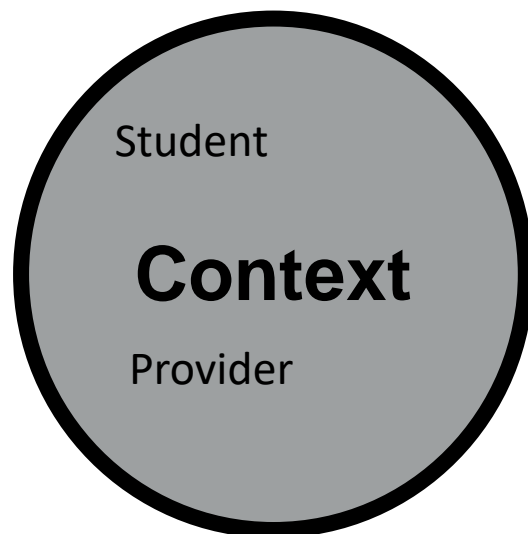


**Who and Where**

(National Literacy Trust, 2021; DfE, 2022;)



# Participants... Why haven't they passed yet?' project members



Who and Where



(Haselgrove, K., 2023)



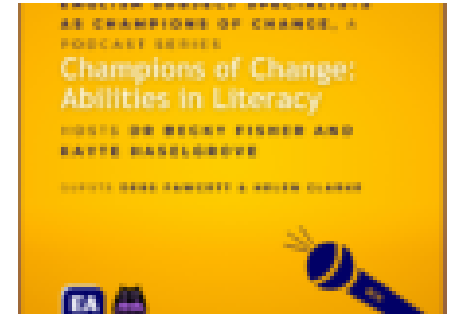
Literacy is the ability to **read, write, speak and listen** in a way that lets us communicate effectively and make sense of the world. (National Literacy Trust)



What is subject specific pedagogy...

### Podcast Series: Champions of Change, EduKayte and The English Association (2021)

1. Abilities in literacy
2. Having a Voice
3. Empathy
4. Context Schema and equality and diversity



...in teaching English?



(The National Literacy Trust; EduKayte and The English Association, 2021)



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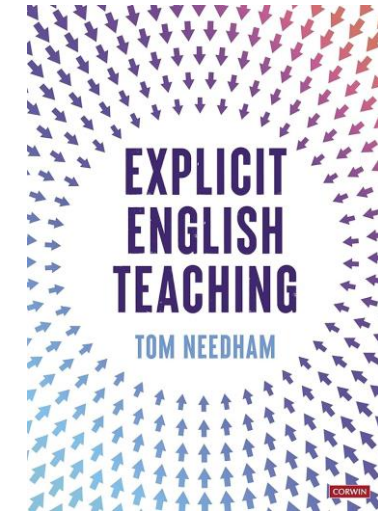
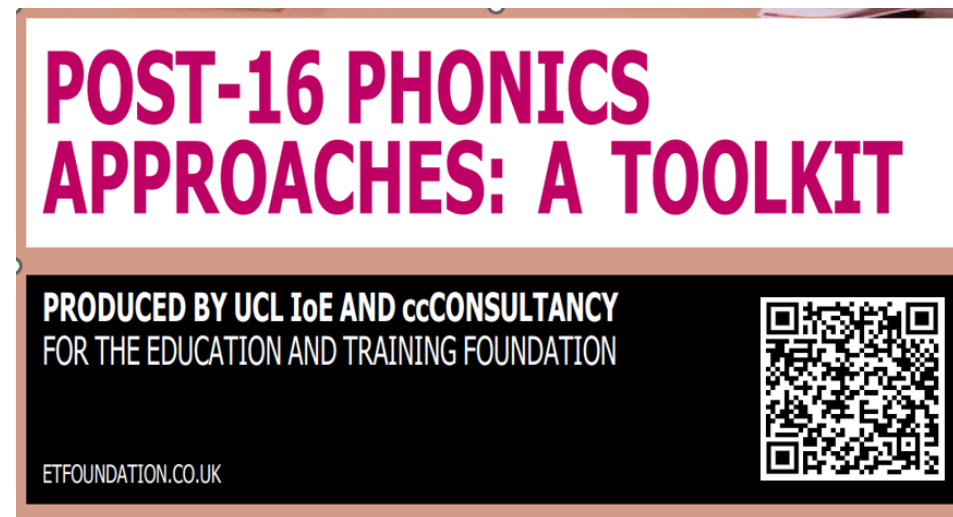
# Teaching our content and ‘making it comprehensible to others’



Pages 1-17



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(Shulman, L. 1986; Williams & Marshall, 2006; ETF, 2019; Needham, 2023)

# Teaching our content and ‘making it comprehensible to others’



‘Guild Knowledge’ - one aspect to be good at English is to have **the confidence to share your opinion** about something you are reading or listening to and providing evidence from the text to justify your position.

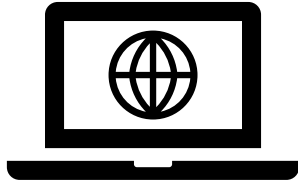


Those of us who think we are good at English find it easy to share our opinion on how a text moves or affects us - **we are in the group of knowers, or the guild, already.**

Our job as English teachers is to bring learners inside that group and **help them to feel that their responses are as valid as anyone else's.** These skills and confidences can then be applied to everyday situations.

(Shulman, L. 1986; Williams & Marshall, 2006)

# Teaching our content and ‘making it comprehensible to others’



## POST-16 PHONICS APPROACHES: A TOOLKIT

PRODUCED BY UCL IoE AND ccCONSULTANCY  
FOR THE EDUCATION AND TRAINING FOUNDATION



ETFOUNDATION.CO.UK

“

Whether we struggle to read ‘boat’ or struggle to spell ‘haemorrhage’, we’re all somewhere on the same literacy continuum.

Tricia Millar, 2019

”

“

Don’t teach phonics, use phonics to enhance your teaching of reading and writing.

Sam Duncan and Tricia Millar, 2019

”

(Shulman, L. 1986; ETF. 2019)

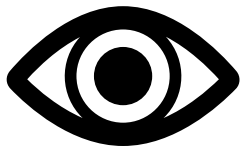
# Teaching our content and ‘making it comprehensible to others’

## Activity: Word stretching

Word stretching activity: write each grapheme /d/e/n/t/i/s/t/ on a separate small sticky note. Give a set to each learner or pair of learners. Ask them to build the word ‘den’.

Change den to **dent**; change dent to **dents**; change dents to **dentist** – think about the sounds as you’re moving the sticky notes around. It works best if learners are saying the sounds as they’re working. Have them write each word after they’ve built it. How would they write ‘**dentists**’?

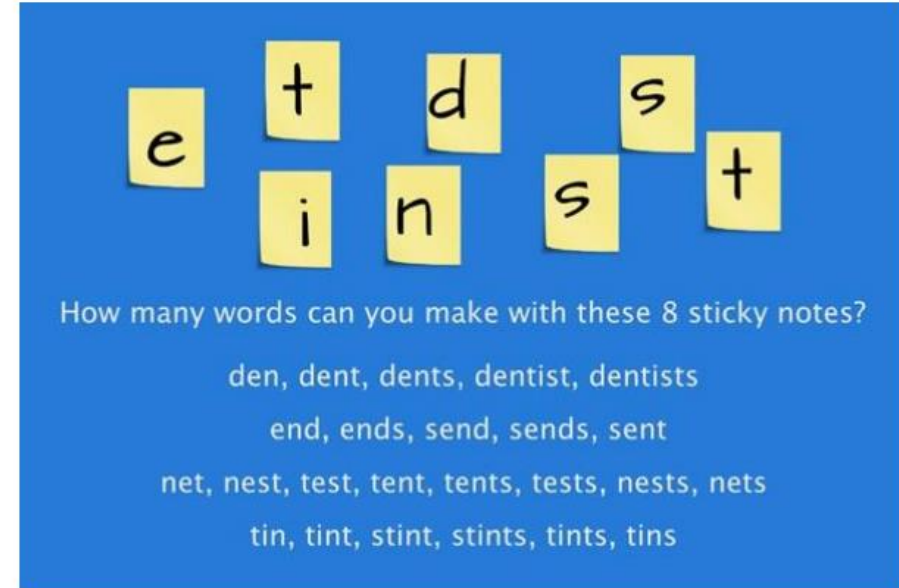
You can do this type of activity very early on with emergent readers and writers using graphemes and phonemes to build familiar words.



Graphemes



Phonemes



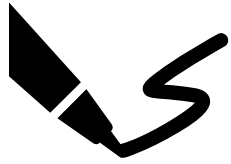
How many words can you make with these 8 sticky notes?

den, dent, dents, dentist, dentists  
end, ends, send, sends, sent  
net, nest, test, tent, tents, tests, nests, nets  
tin, tint, stint, stints, tints, tins

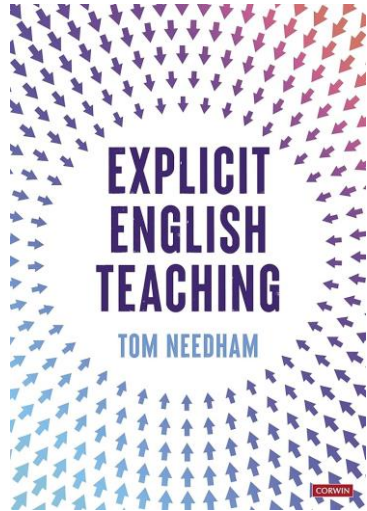
(Shulman, L. 1986; ETF, 2019: p48)



# Teaching our content and ‘making it comprehensible to others’



Page 142-154



## The Case for Deliberate Practice

‘Expert writing involves the control of **cognitive, perceptual and motor processes**, each of which has become relatively effortless, most likely through extended and deliberate practice.’

Narrative is likely to be excellent, but writing for analysis will be brand new (or less practiced).

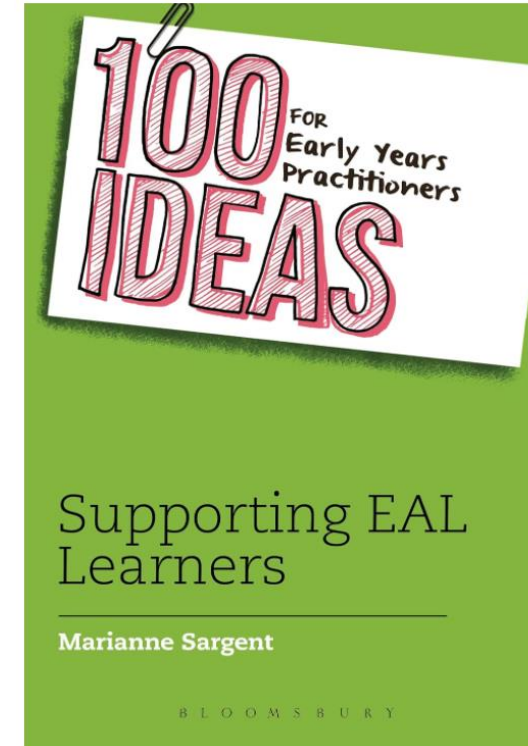
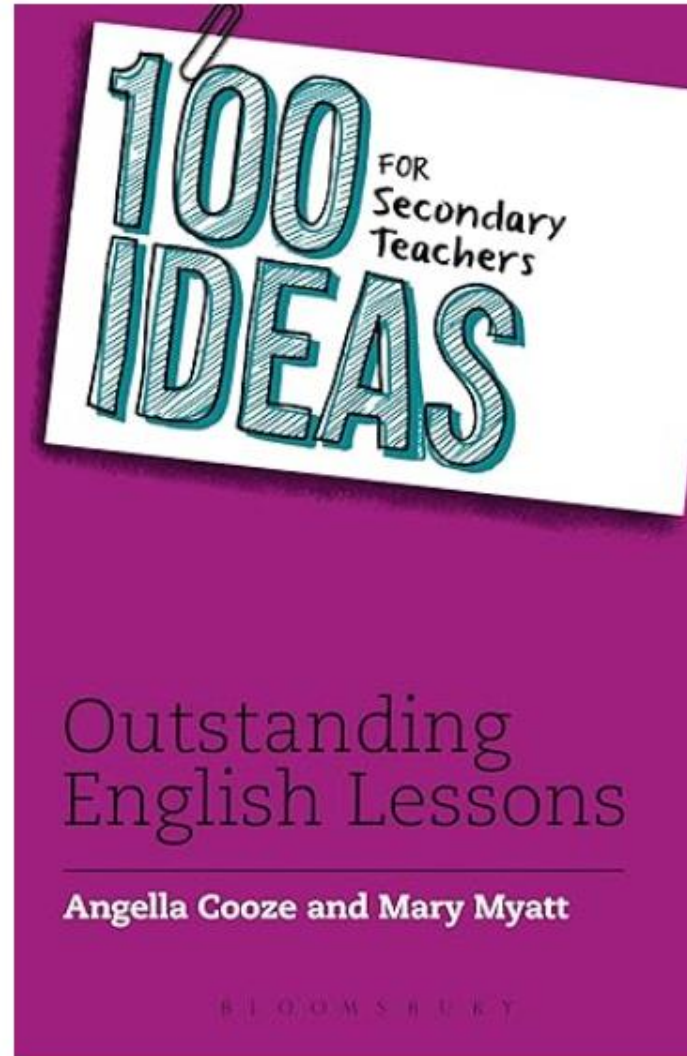
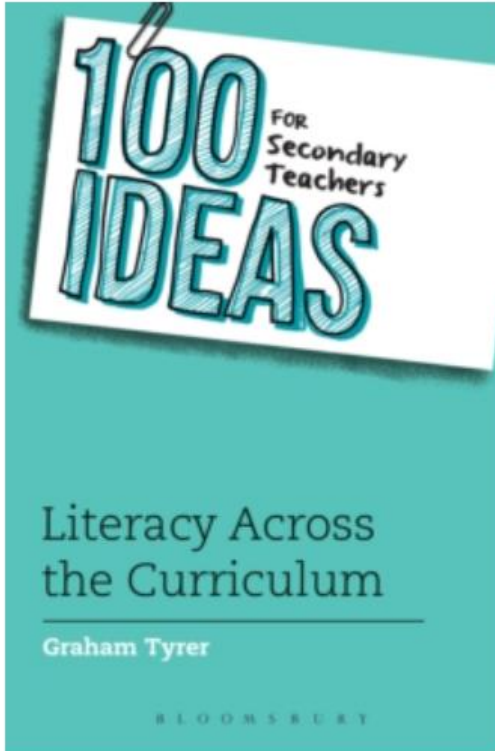
Instruction should therefore be at sentence and paragraph level.

Effective practice is often something done many times by the students and the teacher.

(Shulman, L. 1986; Needham, 2023: p142)



# Ideas for starters





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...in  
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