

## What is teaching to the top?

Making sure that students are being encouraged to meet the highest standards in their work and that they are supported in being able to do so.

## How can we do this?

Below is a list of some strategies that can help with making sure we are trying to teach to the top all the time.

- Offer high quality reading lists to students that will push them out of their current reading patterns and encourage them to read more widely
- Offering examples that go slightly above and beyond the expectations of the specifications
- Exploring how to create engaging and interesting introductions and conclusions
- Exploring how to analyse with flair in the examples we provide
- Using the visualiser to exemplify excellent student examples
- Focusing on the language we use in the classroom
- Exploring vocabulary and encouraging challenging vocabulary in the work students submit
- Don't do 'more of the same' – ensure tasks are challenging and stretch the most able
- Use higher level questioning to target students and to extend and challenge
- Set research homework that extends students understanding of the task/text etc.  
Use why? simply getting students to think about what they have said and why they have said it can be powerful
- Use how? To get students to investigate further what they think
- Use what? Again to probe further

- Bounce questioning from student to student and allow them opportunities to develop each other's ideas
- Use pose, pause, pounce & bounce questioning
- Use Live Modelling to exemplify excellence
- Use metacognition tasks
- Get students to create quizzes/papers using the resources in books or that you provide
- Don't be afraid to deviate from the lesson plan when an interesting learning point is made/can be developed
- Scaffold using extension tasks
- Don't allow louder students to dominate – often some of the more able are quieter and just need opportunities to shine
- Show highest / very high level examples to students and use the criteria with this to show them how to get to that level
- Explode quotes with students and then get them to create plans for essays around exploded quotes they have collated as a class
- Link to criteria/success criteria as this allows them to know how to get to an end point
- Get students to word the highest band criteria in their own words
- Be creative when planning
- Offer more opportunities for group work or group discussion before writing
- Ensure all valid contributions are recognised and praised; set the tone so students know it is okay to make mistakes
- Use rewards to encourage students
- Using EXT or CHALLENGE/SUPER CHALLENGE when displaying work can be a good way of indicating that there is a more difficult challenging task to be continuing with
- Differentiating the level of difficulty and selecting different questions for different students is another good way of stretching the most able
- When grouping students you can group in ability range to challenge the most able.

- When in groups at differentiated levels encourage debate by providing a series of open questions for the group to use as prompts for higher level thinking.
- Can you introduce higher level terms/definitions that not all will use but the most able may include
- Create opportunities for your more able to think outside the box. Offer success criteria but leave how they get to the success up to them. (offer more freedom of activity)
- Higher level questioning
- Remember that knowledge underpins everything, so ensure that the students are offered opportunities to know information and then they can apply in their own work
- High level of reassurance – often the students are anxious or the most openly anxious
- Feedback: both written and verbal which challenges and promotes higher level thinking (also, offering your subject knowledge at a higher level)
- Allowing freedom to lead and guide tasks or outcomes during a lesson E.g – posing a this is the outcome I'd like to see you decide how you will achieve this today (type question/resources)
- Offer a homework task which means the teaching a starter or create a learning activity for a lesson
- Creating an open environment in the class for discussion: this can be done by trying to take a slightly more hands off approach when teaching
- Give areas of responsibility within the class/groups/pairs to encourage stretch
- Offer extension tasks which challenge – not more of the same
- If you feel high achievers are demoralised or trying to stay 'under the radar' find a way of ensuring they know you have noticed them

- Ensure students are taken out of their comfort zone and have to think really hard about the work