CRGS TEACHING AND LEARNING NEWSLETTER
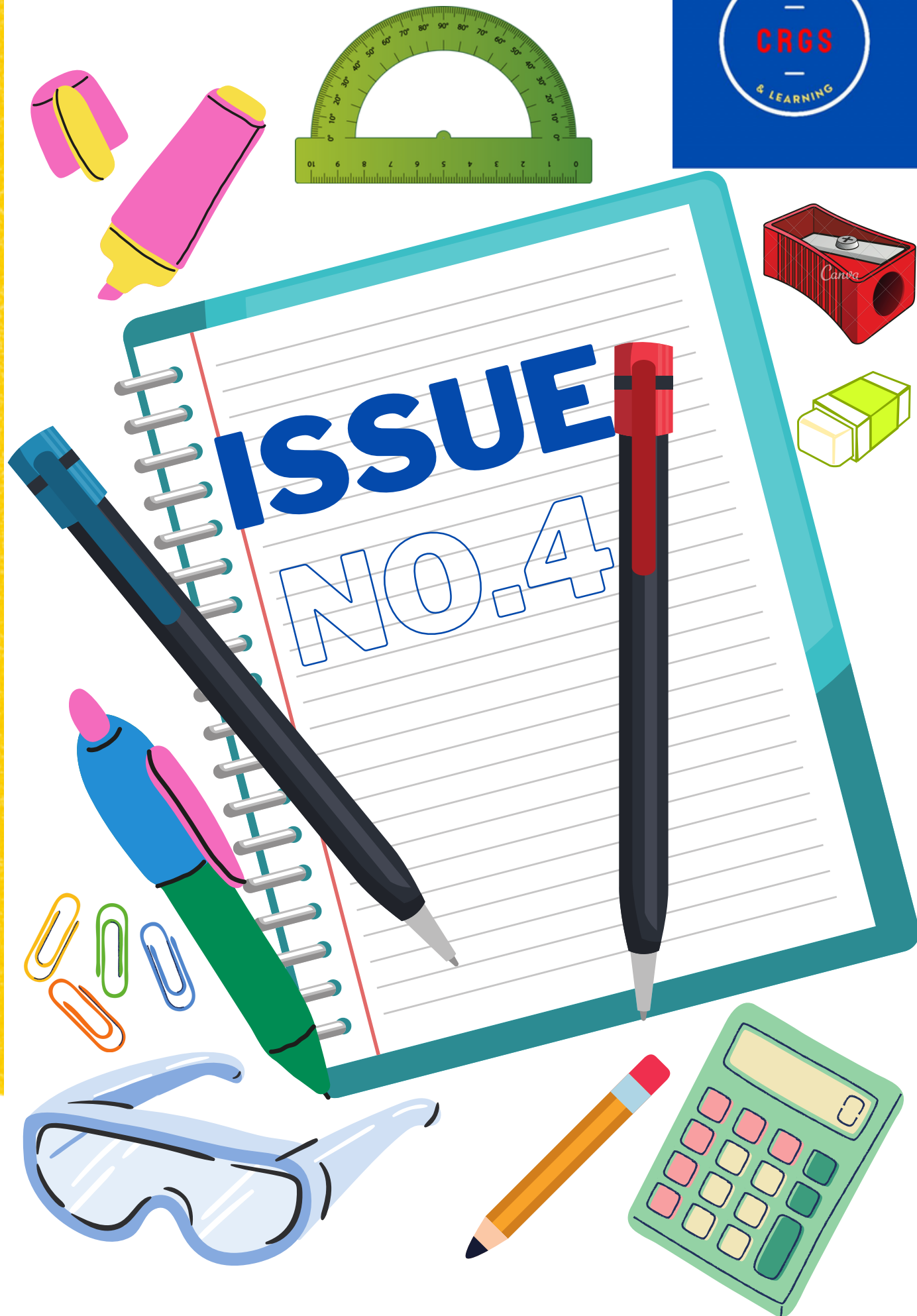
ISSUE NO.4

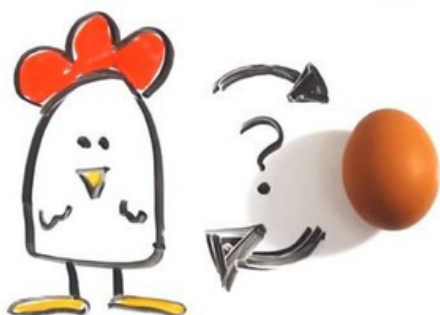# CELEBRATING TEACHING AND LEARNING AT CRGS

THE SIX MAIN INGREDIENTS FOR DEVELOPING T AND L

1. BEHAVIOUR AND RELATIONSHIPS

What comes first behaviour then relationships or relationships then behaviour?
It's like that time old debate on whether the chicken or the egg came first.

At CRGS we know why relationships are important in creating a learning environment and take personal responsibility for building and maintaining relationships with learners, parents and each other. In this way it has become evident in lessons such as Maths and History at our school that adults can model the behaviour they would like to see- you only need to think back to Sarah Mann's video in our previous newsletter.

Helpful relationships are simply the positive connections between people that foster positive social interactions and establish an environment of trust and support. In a trusting and supportive environment people can disagree and offer their own opinions which may pose a challenge.

It is important to remember that behaviour doesn't come instantly and it is something that is built over time. Also consider that every learner is different so your approach will be different for each of them. If we are to always act 'in the best interests' of the child our response should reflect that different children and young people need different things and these could change over time.

2. CURRICULUM PLANNING

At CRGS, as at every school, curriculum time is limited. Careful thought has been given to the intent of each subject ensuring the knowledge and skills that are taught will serve students well whether they continue with the subject after KS3 or not. There is clarity on the content all students learn and a fantastic range of learning resources. But what really makes the difference is the way people adapt their approach to meet the needs of their class ensuring all students progress rapidly.

Not only this but when you look in student books you can see that knowledge and skills become progressively more challenging as students make their way from Year 7 to Year 13. Increasingly, departments are using alternative means to ensure that content that can't be delivered in core lessons can still be accessed by students through platforms such as Microsoft Teams. This is clearly evident in the work of Business Studies, Politics and Economics at 6th Form for example.

Fantastic opportunities are taken to bring the curriculum to life so thank you to everyone who's organised and given their time to run school trips, sporting fixtures and a host of other events. They really help make the CRGS difference.
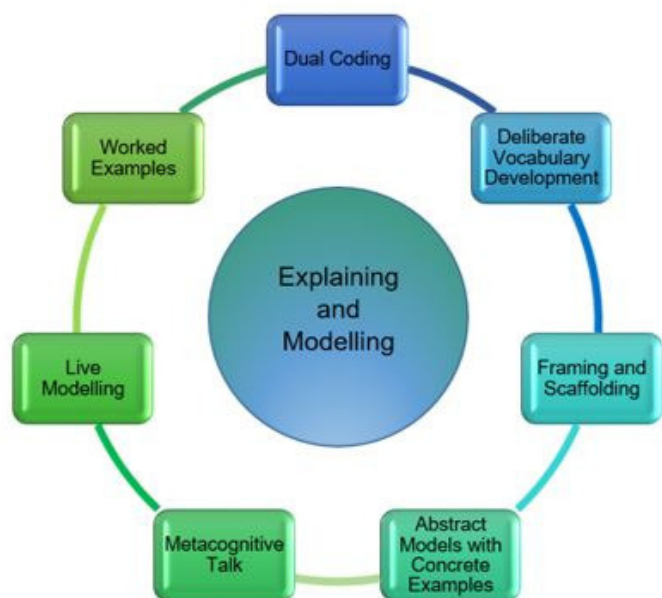
3. EXPLAINING AND MODELLING

At CRGS we recognise that to impart knowledge we must make abstract and complex ideas come alive in our student's minds. We believe that students are undergoing a "cognitive apprenticeship" and we strive to make them think like an expert.

We celebrate the range of techniques used in the classroom and we have discovered lots of amazing examples across all departments.
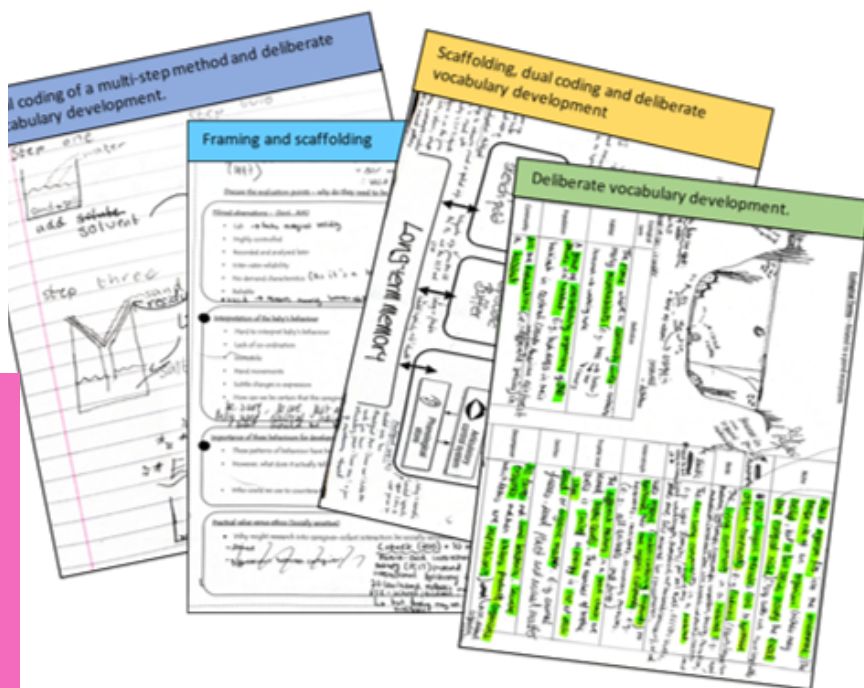
4. QUESTIONING AND FEEDBACK

Effective questioning in the classroom can have a huge impact on the information students absorb and process. At CRGS, we use a variety of questioning techniques to further enhance student thinking.

High quality feedback is a fundamental aspect of supporting pupils in making progress. Feedback has often been viewed as written but this is not the only form of feedback. Verbal feedback can often be more effective as it is more immediate. The critical element to all feedback is that students should be able to do something with it.
At CRGS we believe that there are a wide range of feedback methods that can be employed effectively to ensure students make progress in their learning. We have discovered a wide range of effective questioning and feedback strategies being used across departments, with the Latin/Classics department providing feedback grids, Religious Studies using probing questioning, Science using Show-Me boards and departments such as Business Studies and History use a 'blossoming' technique, encouraging students to build on one another's knowledge.

RECOMMENDED READ

THE TEACHER TOOLKIT
GUIDE TO QUESTIONING
?
Turning theory into practice
ROSS MORRISON McGILL
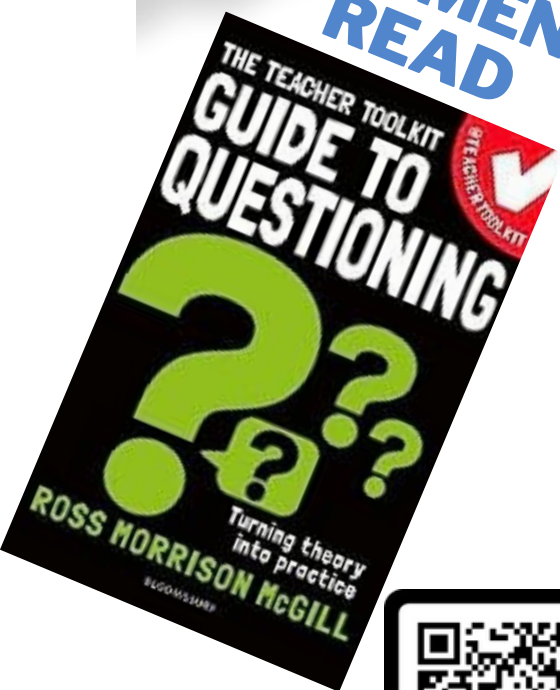
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5. PRACTICE AND RETRIEVAL

Retrieval practice boosts learning by pulling information out of students' heads, rather than cramming information into students' heads.

David Brown in "Making it Stick" argues that learning is a three-step process – initial encoding of information is held in the short term memory before being consolidated into a cohesive representation of knowledge in long-term memory. Consolidation reorganises and stabilises memory traces, giving them meaning and makes connections to past experiences and to other knowledge already stored in long-term memory.

At CRGS, retrieval practice takes many forms, such as quizzing, knowledge organisers, memory games, retrieval pyramids, rehearsal and performance, and peer supported retrieval.

6. STUDENT INDEPENDENCE

Many students love to get creative, work with others, discuss ideas or prove to themselves that they understand (or otherwise!) what their teacher has just been trying to teach them. It's a crucial part of the learning process and there are so many examples at CRGS of pupils having fantastic opportunities to apply their knowledge and skills.

From carefully planned extended oracy in an English lesson and independent practice in maths lessons to the amazing designs in art and DT there are many, many examples of students taking the lead and constructing ideas and concepts, helping them to remember learning in their long-term memories.

Teaching and Learning at CRGS

- Curriculum Planning
- Developing Student Independence
- Behaviour and Relationships
- Explaining and Modelling
- Practice and Retrieval
- Questioning and Feedback

CRGS TEACHING & LEARNING