

Book title: Making Every Lesson Count

Author: Andy Tharby and Shaun Allison

Publication date: 11th June 2015

1. What is your overall impression of the book?

The book attempts to bridge the gap between research findings and the usefulness of these in the classroom. Each chapter is specified into one of the six core principles: challenge; explanation; modelling; practice; feedback and questioning.

Subcategorised between skills (for example: reading and writing) to give practical teaching strategies to use in every lesson. This is done through using evidence from research and the 'field of education', several relatable case studies and using Ofsted criteria and definitions to drive high quality teaching.

The book is highly readable with academia and research at the heart of these strategies. It uses slightly informal language to help any person, academic or not, to relate and interact with the text by being able to dip in and out of the book without feeling overwhelmed.

2. Who do you think would benefit most from reading the book? What will they learn?

The book is widely accessible to all teaching. The strategies are using between subjects however there are subject specific 'spin offs' - I am currently dipping into the *Making Every English Lesson Count* (MEELC). I struggle with modelling ideas and so I was able to see how to transfer the ideas from MEELC into my classroom and see if they work. I have attempted live modelling and within this class we completed a group discussion on how to answer an example style question based on symbolism and imagery.

This is not specifically a 'rule book' for teachers, but an easily accessible guide of strategies and suggestions to tweak to fit your class.

3. What did you think about the quality of the writing? Please consider the tone, structure and ideas. Does it suit the audience?

I think the book was highly readable suiting the audience of the book. It feels like the authors behind the book are talking to you as a person not just a generic academic/educational narrative voice. It is fluently written and the use of case studies makes it more relatable.

By splitting the book into the 6 key principles makes it easy to follow and less of a dense academic text. The language is standard English with academic language, however easy to understand the context in which it is being used and how to transfer your understanding from theory to practice. The chapter structure enables you to answer any pupil specific needs or your own areas for improvement.

Each chapter ends with a set of questions or sentence starters which are easily transferable to your own classroom.

4. Please discuss the research used to underpin the ideas. What evidence does the author use? Is it robust and up-to-date?

The author uses a case study at the start of every chapter or 'section' focusing on the issues surrounding the subject (for example: reading or writing). Throughout the chapter this case study is broken apart and analysed to suggest the best resources and strategies to help solve the issue.

Andy Tharby is a practising English teacher with an interest in enhancing 'ordinary' teaching practice through a wider evidence based engagement. Similarly, Shaun Allison has a degree in biology and PGCE. The case studies are supported through the authors' own experience within the education sector.

When considering if the research is robust and up to date you can look within the context of your own classroom. The issues and case studies raised within the book are ones we see every day, some we know how to and have tackled, others we are still struggling and so this case-study based guide helps you to understand the needs for your class and how to progress.

5. What did you learn from reading the book? What ideas/approaches/practice will you change or adopt as a result of reading this book?

I learnt that not all approaches work for all of your classes. Adapting the approach to suit the class will promote progress and attainment.

I have used the modelling approaches with my top set year 9 class and my set 4 year 10 class. It was interesting to see that my higher ability started with small quotes, increasing the difficulty and put a focus on their engagement with the text. Realistically using the MELC strategies, I should have told them to work with a bigger quote first and then zoomed in and attempted the smaller, if not one word quotes.

I now know to push my year 10 class to participate in group modelling sessions before attempting to answer questions (etc.) first. This way the class will have built up the confidence to attempt the next level up in difficulty, focusing in on the skills and techniques needed for their GCSE and putting them to the test.

6. Could you share a quote from the book that particularly resonated with you?

"Great [...] teachers must live and breathe their subject" – Andy Tharby, interview evaluation of *Making Every Lesson Count's* areas for improvement and reasoning behind subject specific spin offs.