

Paradigm Trust Pedagogy Newsletter #19

Friday 15th February 2019

Dear Colleagues,

This week I revisited Doug Lemov's '**Art of the Sentence**'. The idea is simple - that pupils should be taught explicitly how to construct complex sentences. Read more on the TLAC blog ([here](#)).

It is often the assumption that imparting knowledge (getting pupils 'to know stuff') is enough. In reality, however, a major way in which knowledge is assessed is through writing. This is why writing needs to be taught across all disciplines.

Geoff Barton compares these two examples:

' At the start of the play Macbeth is a villain...' (Pupil A)

'Although he starts the play as a villain...'' (Pupil B)

The difference between these two sentences is not just vocabulary, it is also sentence structure. The connective 'although' allows Pupil B to express an idea with greater complexity and elegance. It may be the case that Pupil B is the product of a bookish background, or of a teacher who has taught him/her how to do it (Geoff Barton - *Don't Call It Literacy* - p121).

In simple terms, teaching sentence structure matters. It must be taught explicitly (like we do subject specific vocabulary) across all disciplines, so pupils learn to write like historians, scientists, geographers, and so on. This is where Paradigm's exemplars come into great use ([science example](#))

I wanted to share this article ([What can you practise in English lessons?](#)) by David Didau, who writes about the value of getting pupils to practise excellent sentences. I found it really interesting, I hope you do to.

Kind Regards,

Fran Goodship