

For discussion as we arrive:



What challenges do students face when they write an essay in an exam?

Which of these do you think is the most costly in terms of preventing them from producing a strong response?



Historical Association
The voice for history

HA Annual Conference
17 & 18 May 2019
Crowne Plaza Hotel, Chester

SINK OR SWIM:

how can we help students who are swamped by the new GCSE?

Sponsored by



Pearson



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My context



OCR

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Schools
History Project



Aims



Practical methods to help students achieve better in extended written assessments and exams

Realistic and pragmatic approaches

Evidence-informed 'best bets'

Methodology can be used for any task

The challenges facing our students (just in History!)

Quantity of content
Range of time periods
Substantive knowledge
Technical vocabulary for a wide
range of contexts
Exam skills



Remember 'invisible differentiation'

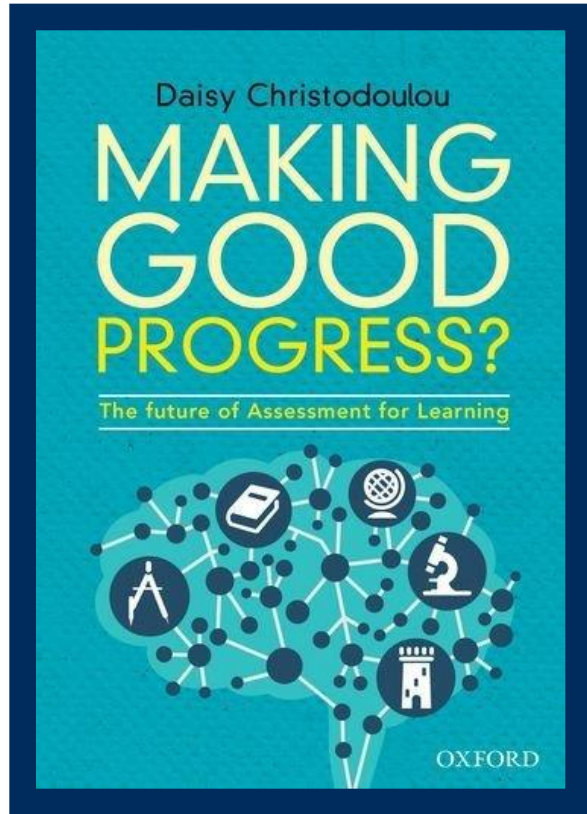
<https://missdcoxblog.wordpress.com/2018/02/16/invisible-differentiation/>



How can we help students stay afloat when we're not there...

...in an exam of things waiting to drag them under?

Daisy Christodoulou

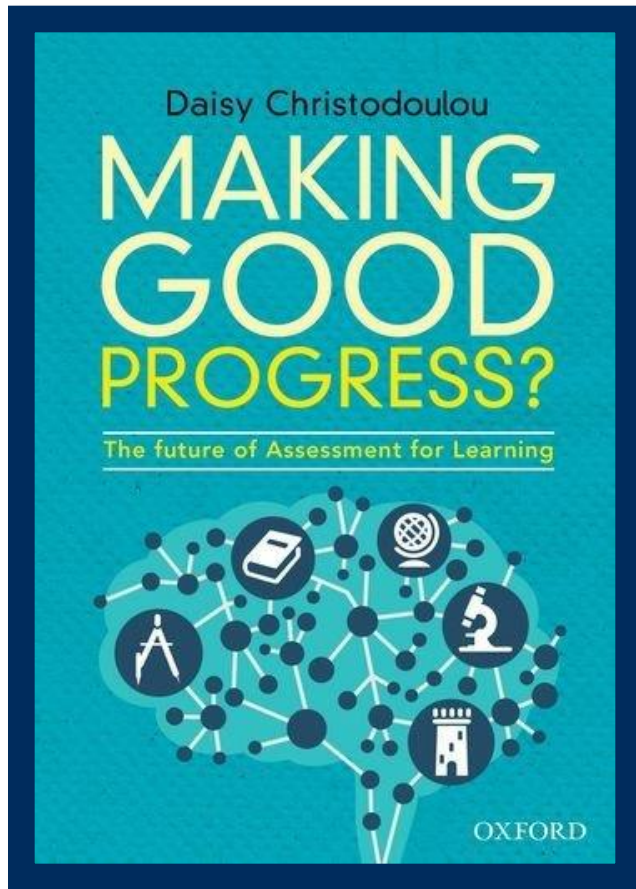


Sharp thinking about summative vs formative assessment

Not just multiple choice questions!

We need to be really conscious of this for the students who are struggling the most.

Daisy Christodoulou



Most exam rehearsal takes the shape of practice questions or even whole papers

These are summative tasks, designed to differentiate between Grade 0-9 students, aged 16, at the **end** of a minimum of 2 years of GCSE study.

How can we use deliberate practice to help them avoid the monsters?



1. Isolate, expose and *teach* the historical thinking behind the construction of a written answer
2. Use **deliberate practice** rather than **naïve practice** to work on specific elements of the task before attempting the whole thing – you're doing this already!

A classic summative task: what are the different elements that need to be combined to succeed in answering this?



‘The arrival of war in 1939 brought huge changes to the lives of ordinary Germans’
How far do you agree with this statement? (18)




‘The arrival of war in 1939 brought huge changes to the lives of ordinary Germans’ *How far do you agree with this statement? (18 marks)*

- ✓ **Understanding of ‘ordinary Germans.’**
- ✓ Understanding of ‘**in 1939**’ as opposed to a date range – “Is this one of those ones Miss told me about that I can’t write before/after that date? Do I literally just write about anything that happened in 1939?”
- ✓ **Knowledge** of how experiences of ordinary Germans over time, before and after the war. Careful selection to not write/describe, but rather support claims.
- ✓ Ability to organise this question into a **structured response**.
- ✓ Ability to explore **both/multiple viewpoints**.
- ✓ Ability to come to a supported and reasoned judgement – ideally to **hold a line of argument** throughout somehow
- ✓ **Vocabulary and communication skill** to communicate all this to an examiner.

They are plunged into
the water when they
read the question.

What happens next...?



...are they
too used to
the life ring...

...or can they swim on their own?

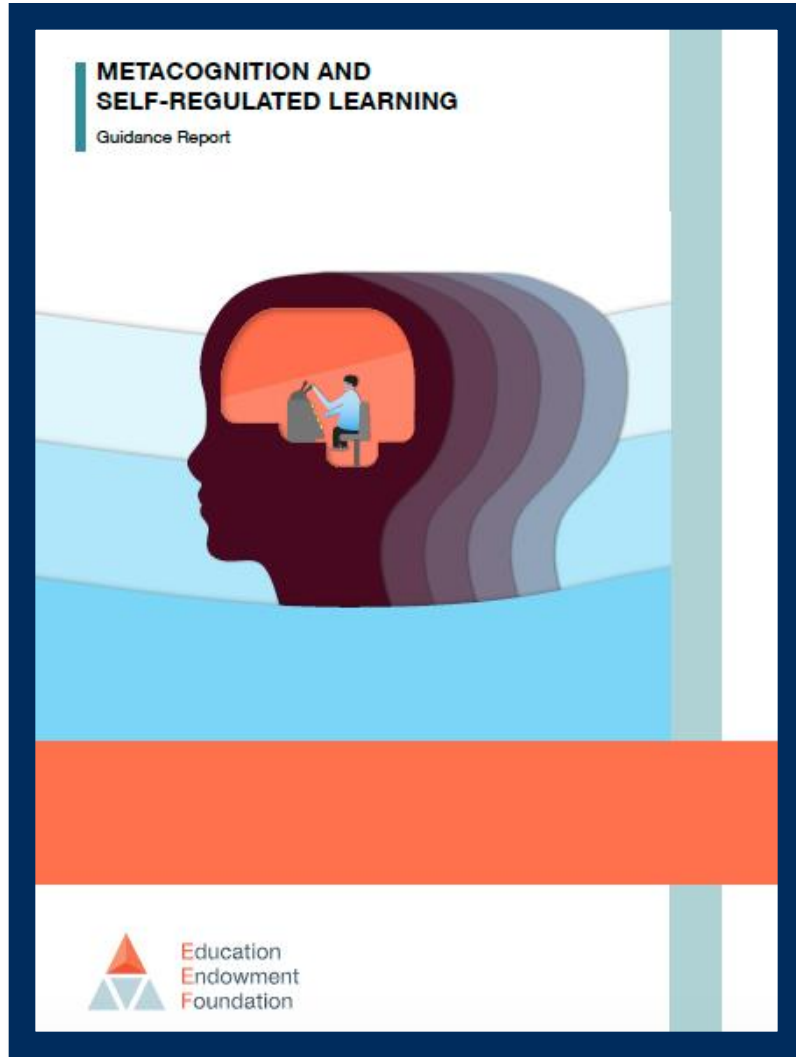


Self-regulated learning:

1. Cognition

2. Metacognition

3. Motivation



The EEF Metacognition Guidance Report is worth a read to get an understanding – it takes a lot of time to begin understanding properly
4 years and counting for me...

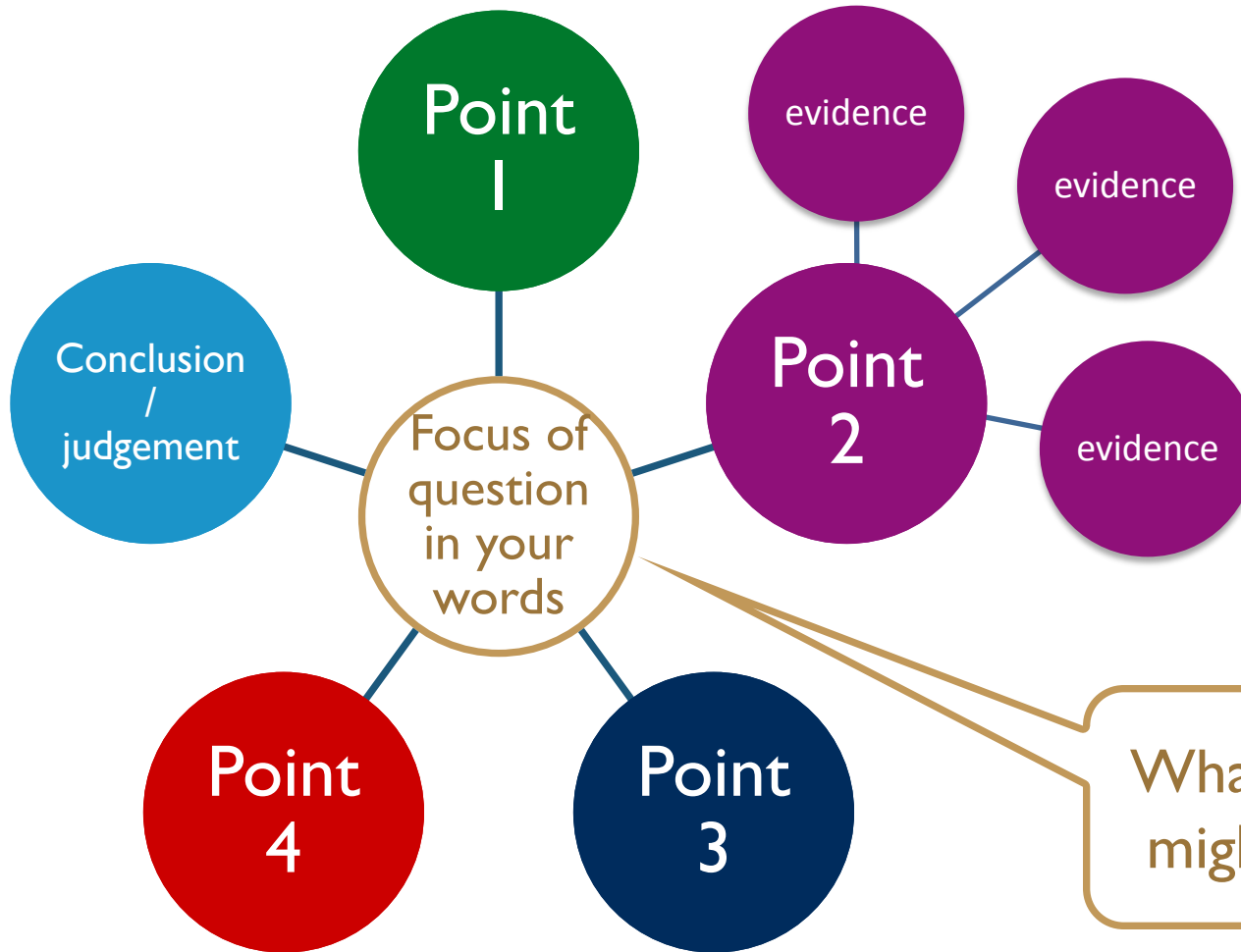
Alex Quigley

(@HuntingEnglish) et al

A powerful question:

“What mistakes
might I make?”

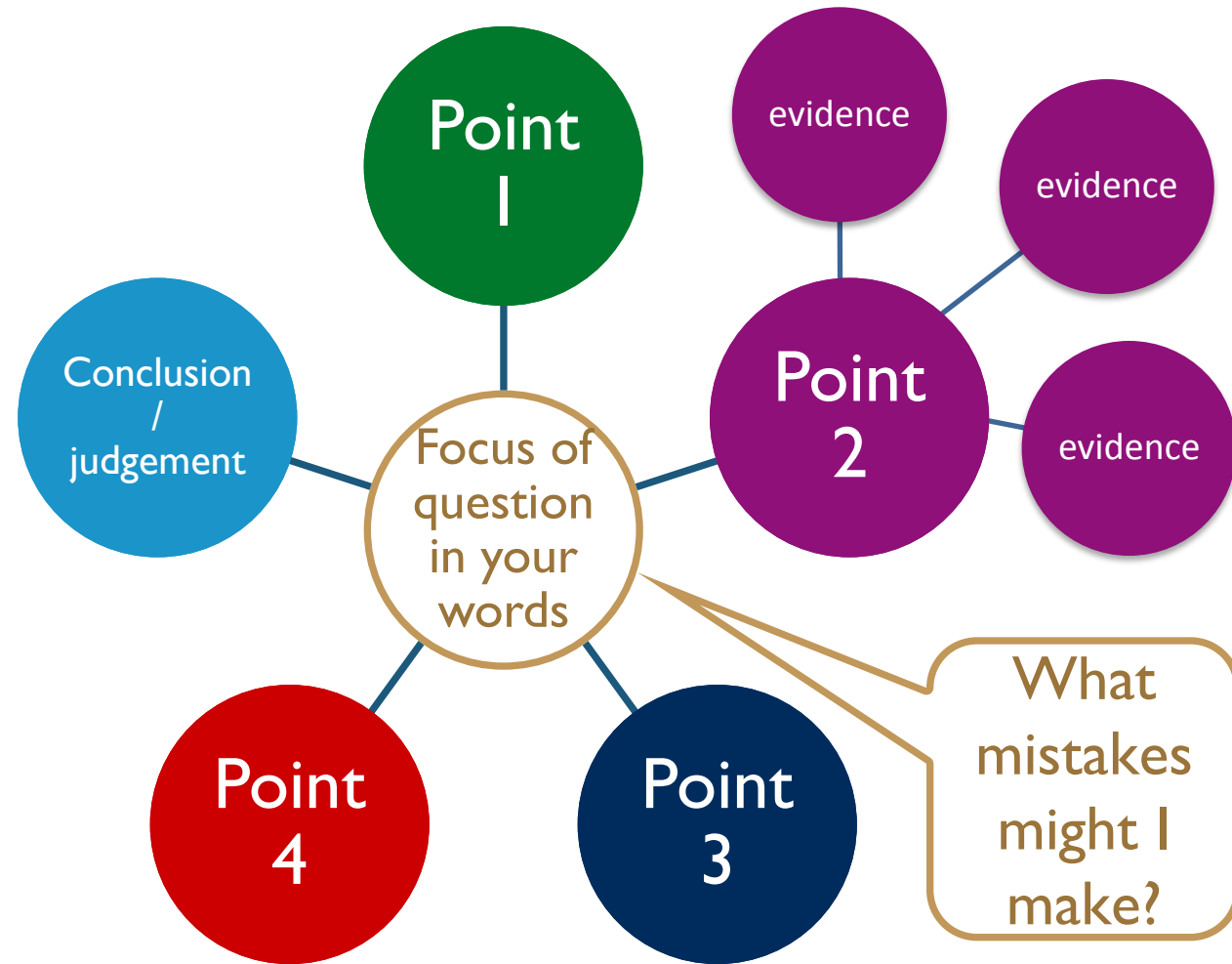
Theory into practice: spiderplans



Note:
this is a thinking process!
Start from blank paper each time

What mistakes might I make?

The 1960s were the most significant decade of the 20th Century for ordinary people in America. How far do you agree?



Task: Spiderplan a 4 -paragraph answer to this question

What possible structures could we use?
Which one best answers the question?

A	B	C	D
1.	1.	1.	1.
2.	2.	2.	2.
3.	3.	3.	3.
4.	4.	4.	4.

25 mark site study essay question

1	Activating prior knowledge
2	Explicit strategy instruction
3	Modelling of learned strategy
4	Memorisation of strategy
5	Guided practice
6	Independent practice
7	Structured reflection

Colour code refers to the level of teacher involvement

This metacognitive process is used throughout a series of lessons (and indeed the whole two year course) and builds the students' metacognitive thinking...

BONUS – A-level!

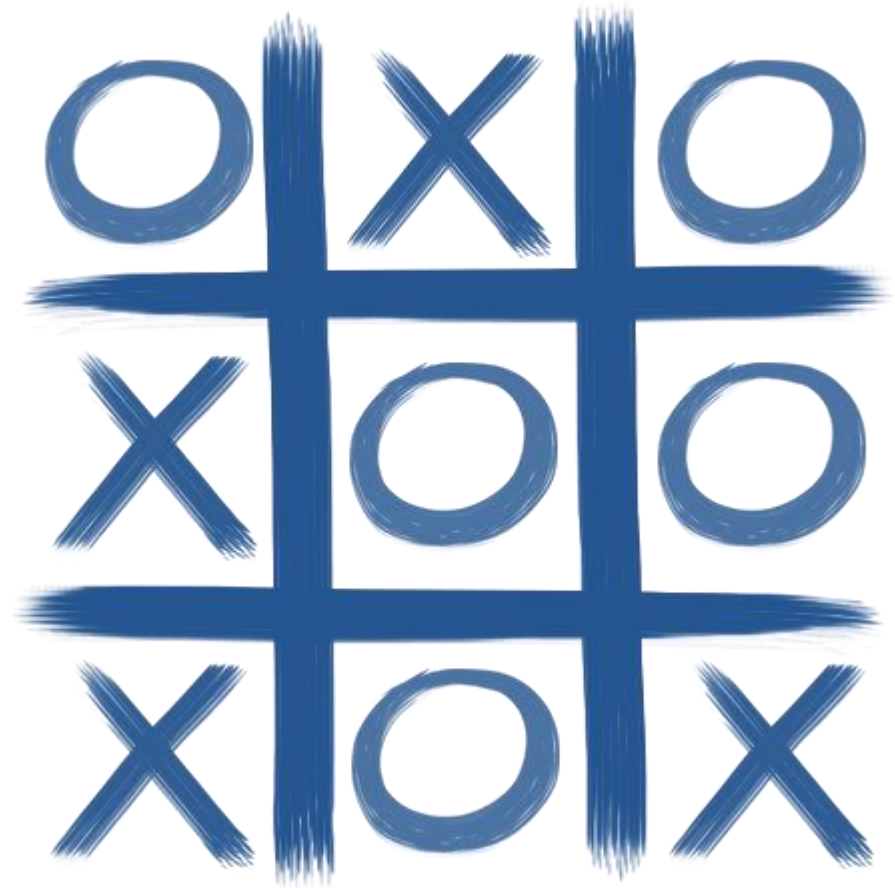
The solution: Noughts and Crosses essay plan

The A-level challenge:

- ✓ Thematic study – over 130 year period.
- ✓ Has to offer a synthesis of the evidence.
- ✓ Clear line of argument

Sample Q:

“To what extent did the position of women improve 1865-1992?”
[American Civil Rights course]



Recommendations:

Develop distinctly different visual planning organisers for different types of exam question.

DONT PRINT – ever!
Ensure they always practice from a blank sheet of paper, using the process of drawing to structure the thinking

Think carefully about all the knowledge, skills and processes required by a huge summative task. Teach these by weaving them into ordinary lessons

Make this a visual, diagrammatic process that builds a piece of the thinking at each stage

Show your working whenever you can: **expose the thought processes** when you discuss essay structures with them.

Encourage students to ask themselves **“What mistakes might I make?”** and discuss these each time you think about a question or plan a response as a class.