Memory and Schema in the English Classroom (and beyond)
1. The challenges (London)
2. Curriculum in English
3. Paulin, Shamsie, and Anouilh: making links
4. Threshold concepts
5. Classroom level solutions
6. Building a curriculum

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Cultural Capital

Vocabulary

Fluency and confidence

Links and connections (between units *and* subjects)
Cultural Capital

I wander thro' each charter'd street,
Near where the charter'd Thames does flow.
And mark in every face I meet
Marks of weakness, marks of woe.

In every cry of every Man,
In every Infants cry of fear,
In every voice: in every ban,
The mind-forg'd manacles I hear

How the Chimney-sweepers cry
Every blackning Church appalls,
And the hapless Soldiers sigh
Runs in blood down Palace walls

But most thro' midnight streets I hear
How the youthful Harlots curse
Blasts the new-born Infants tear
And blights with plagues the Marriage hearse
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The Death of a Chimney Sweep

Hall [the master], Mrs. Bishop [the baker’s wife], and the landlord of the public house were in the shop when he went in. They told him a boy was in the flue; he asked the master how long; he said an hour; witness said, “My good God! why don’t you break down the flue and run down to the bakehouse?” Got a poker, Hall followed him, and said he was too hasty: witness put his head up the chimney, and could hear the boy breathing hard; took the poker up stairs, and began to break open the flue; in a moment he had room to put his hand in, and cleared away the soot from his [Dowland’s] head; held it up, but seemed not to have life in it. He went down stairs and broke the flue below, and got at his feet: when the master saw that, he said, “Let me get at him, and I will get him down, as he is only sulky, and is taking a nap.” Mr. Smith then came and made a greater aperture above, and he and witness lifted him out.

- Ebbinghaus – specifically the learning time savings
- Domain specific memory development
  - Non-declarative memory
  - Declarative memory
- The power of relevant stories
Dickens

Character Studies

Crime and Punishment in the Victorian Era

Pip

Magwitch

Life in Victorian England

Childhood – then and now

Chimney Sweeps

The New Poor Law

Vocabulary/Syntax/Form

What came before?

Who were the Romantics, for example?

...was Dickens one?

What else did he write?

Why is/was East London so poor?

Why is life expectancy lower if you’re poor?

...and why is this still the case today?

What does the poverty divide look like in 2019?
Isn’t this narrowing the KS3 Curriculum to fit the needs of the GCSE specification?  

No.

• Immersion
• Practice
• Domain-specific knowledge
• Automaticity
THE RIOT ACT

KAMILA SHAMSIE
Women's Prize for Fiction 2018

HOME FIRE

Jean Anouilh
la petite vermillon
THE RIOT ACT

KAMILA SHAMSIE

Women's Prize for Fiction 2018

HOME

FIRE

Longlisted for the Man Booker Prize 2017

Jean Anouilh

Antigone

Sophocles

ANTIGONE

la petite vermillon

TOM PAULIN

The Riot Act
As English teachers planning an English curriculum, we need to consider the relationship between the influencer and the influenced and the way in which we view the agency of the author.

Is *influence* the right word?

‘If one says that X influenced Y it does seem that one is saying X did something to Y rather than that Y did something to X.’

Michael Baxandall

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**Jane Eyre**

**Wide Sargasso Sea**

**Merchant of Venice**

**Shylock is my Name**

**Hamlet**

**Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are dead**

**Robinson Crusoe**

**Foe**

- Transformative
- Troublesome
- Irreversible
- Integrative
- Bounded
- Discursive (2005)
- Reconstitutive (Smith 2008)
- Liminality (2006) a rite of passage
Troublesome Knowledge (Perkins 1999):

Ritual Knowledge
‘A routine and rather meaningless character…’
‘like part of a social or an individual ritual: how we answer when asked such-and-such, the routine that we execute to get a particular result’.

Inert Knowledge
‘sits in the mind’s attic, unpacked only when specifically called for by a quiz or a direct prompt but otherwise gathering dust’.

Alien Knowledge
‘comes from a perspective that conflicts with our own. Sometimes the learner does not even recognize the knowledge as foreign.’

Troublesome Language
Language as a way of representing complex concepts is a form of troublesome knowledge. For example - ‘art,’ ‘culture,’ and metaphorical language (a few of thousands of examples).
Threshold Concepts and English Curriculum Design

Long-term planning
*Threshold concepts take years – not months – to master*

Collaborative identification of concepts
*What are our concepts? Who are our experts?*

The impossibility of returning to pre-threshold thought
*How can we identify potential misunderstanding?*

Crucial repetition
*Threshold concepts require repetition and practice*
‘Understanding is remembering in disguise’

Dan Willingham

- Retrieval practice in every lesson (KS4 is too late!)
  - Dual coding
    - Lemov’s *core of the core*
  - No opt out/stretch it/right is right/cold calling
- Low stakes testing
- Modelled examples using I/We/You
  - Backwards fading
  - Worked example
  - Repeated reading
- Big questions after automaticity is reached

‘Completion examples reduce cognitive load because schemas can be acquired by studying the worked-out portion. Requiring the learner to finish the worked example ensures that she will process the example deeply.’ Clark et al ‘Efficiency in Learning’

These principles can be applied to ALL curriculum areas.
Figure 8.5. A Conceptual Model of Backwards Faded Completion Examples.

**Transitioning from Worked Examples to Problem Assignments**

- Worked in Lesson
- Worked by the Learner

- Step 1
- Step 2
- Step 3

Worked Example

 Completion Example 1

 Completion Example 2

 Assigned Problem

Lesson Start → Lesson End

‘Efficiency in Learning’ by Clark et al. – in Tom Needham’s blog: https://tomneedhamteach.wordpress.com/2018/12/03/

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‘Passion’ is nothing to be sneered at. Passion surfaces when expert subject knowledge is in place. Disdain for knowledge comes from insecure understanding.

Subject knowledge CPD complements the pedagogical approaches; we need cohesion between the two in our approaches to curriculum.
Developing thinking into ‘rich and sophisticated’ thinking

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Guernica - A.S. Knowland

So that the swastika and the eagle might spring from the blood-red soil, bombs were sown into the earth at Guernica, whose only harvest was a calculated slaughter. Lest freedom should wave between the grasses and the corn its proud emblem, or love be allowed to tread its native fields, Fascism was sent to destroy the innocent, and, goose-stepping to the exaggerated waving of the two-faced flag, to save Spain.

But though the soil be saturated with blood as a very efficient fertiliser, the furrow of the ghastly Fasces shall remain barren. The planted swastika, the eagle grafted on natural stock shall wither and remain sere; for no uniformed force shall marshall the sap thrilling to thrust buds into blossoms, or quicken the dead ends of the blighted branches; but the soil shall be set against an alien crop and the seed be blasted in the planting.

But strength lies in the strength of the roots. They shall not pass to ruin Spain!