

TEACH LIKE A GEM

AT A GLANCE

WHAT IS TEACH LIKE A GEM

At GEMS Education, world-class teaching requires all staff to understand the mechanisms of the mind – how we think, learn, and remember. Teach Like a GEM defines and supports excellence in classroom practice across all GEMS schools. It is grounded in the work of leading educational thinkers, drawing heavily on Daniel Willingham's research on cognitive science, Barak Rosenshine's Principles of Instruction, Doug Lemov's Teach Like a Champion techniques, and the pioneering work of Jim Knight in instructional coaching.

Teach Like a GEM includes three components:

TEACH LIKE A GEM PLAYBOOK

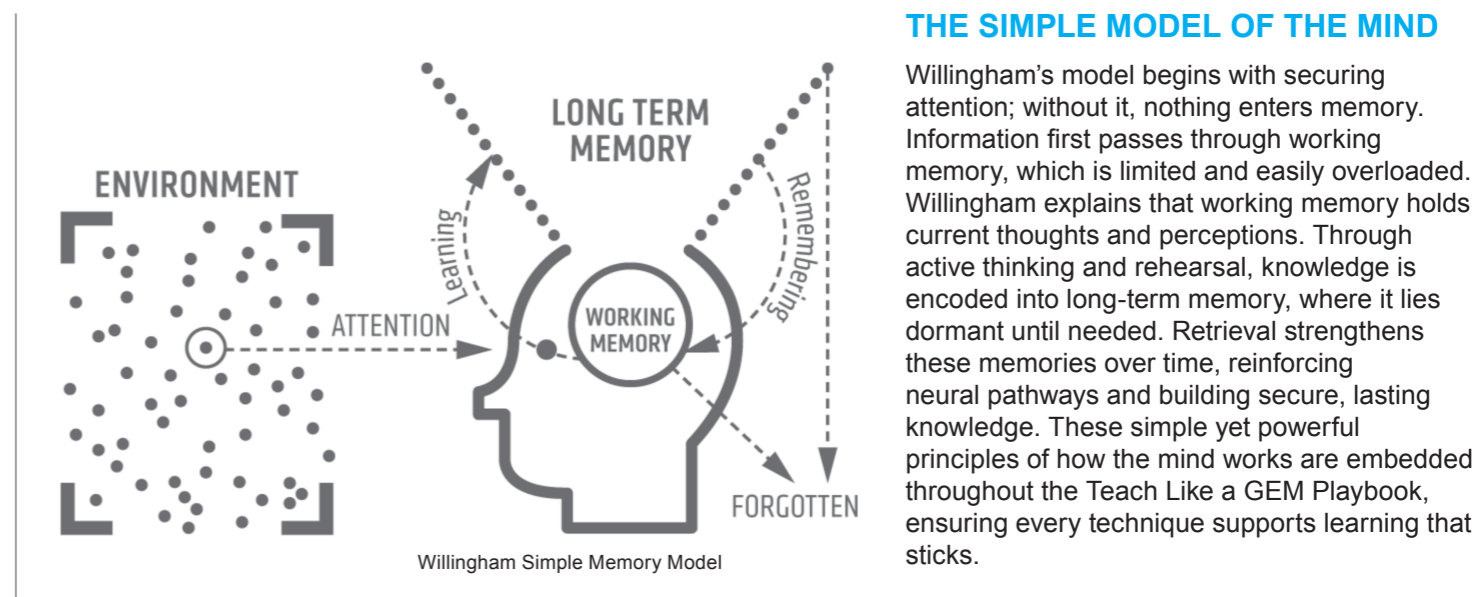
A practical guide outlining high-impact, evidence-informed teaching techniques that drive great lessons, promote deep learning, and help knowledge stick for the long term.

INSTRUCTIONAL COACHING

A structured approach to professional development, where teachers receive personalised, ongoing support to refine their practice and master techniques from the Playbook.

PATHWAY TO MASTERY

A developmental tool with clear descriptors for the stages of mastery that will be applied across each TLAG technique, supporting teachers to reflect on their impact and set professional growth goals.



THE SIMPLE MODEL OF THE MIND

Willingham's model begins with securing attention; without it, nothing enters memory. Information first passes through working memory, which is limited and easily overloaded. Willingham explains that working memory holds current thoughts and perceptions. Through active thinking and rehearsal, knowledge is encoded into long-term memory, where it lies dormant until needed. Retrieval strengthens these memories over time, reinforcing neural pathways and building secure, lasting knowledge. These simple yet powerful principles of how the mind works are embedded throughout the Teach Like a GEM Playbook, ensuring every technique supports learning that sticks.

TECHNIQUES

The Teach Like a GEM Playbook currently features 17 techniques, some of which have been adapted from Doug Lemov's Teach Like a Champion. Each technique is paired with a unique icon, enabling both teachers and students to quickly recognise and refer to it. The aim is to create a shared language in the classroom, where simply naming the technique or pointing to the icon cues immediate implementation, freeing up cognitive load and saving valuable learning time.

GEMS Essentials: Structuring Learning for Impact

- Do Now (retrieval practice)
- Learning Outcomes
- To Know
- I Do, We Do, You Do (guided practice)
- Affirmative Checking
- Exit Ticket

GEMS Talk: Fostering a Culture of Discourse

- Turn and Talk
- Show Call
- Show Me
- Everybody Writes
- Cold Call
- Right is Right
- Stretch It
- Habits of Discussion

GEMS Culture: Optimising Learning Opportunities

- What To Do (directions)
- Whole Class Reset
- Teacher Radar

GEMS X STEPLAB

GEMS has partnered with Steplab to power the Teach Like a GEM model. With GEMS' bespoke PD curriculum on the platform, teachers can unpack each technique step by step. Steplab's coaching tools, in-classroom videos, and analytics support ongoing growth, with all instructional coaching tracked in one place, helping teachers fine-tune their practice to boost clarity, spark engagement, and make learning stick.

Teach Like a GEM promotes purposeful repetition of teaching techniques that strengthen habit formation, builds automaticity in teaching and learning, and creates space for creativity.

Codification of Techniques

Learning

Predictable and Structured Environment
Clear routines and consistent lesson structures

Reduction of Extraneous Cognitive Load
Less mental effort spent on figuring out 'how' to engage with classroom procedures or adapt to teaching styles

Focus on the Content ('What') of Learning
Channel working memory towards processing and understanding new material

Development of Well-Organised Schemas
Build mental frameworks that efficiently organise and store knowledge, making it easier to retrieve information

Retention of Knowledge Over Time
Retain information for extended periods and apply it across different contexts with confidence

Improved Academic Outcomes
Better comprehension, higher performance in assessments, and sustained academic progress

Teaching

Consistency Across Contexts
Apply familiar methods seamlessly across lessons and subjects

Reduction of Cognitive Load
Free up mental capacity during planning, delivery, and reflection

Space to Create and Innovate
Direct energy towards creative, innovative, and adaptive aspects of teaching

Structured Self-Reflection
Focused and effective evaluation of teaching practices

Aligned CPD and Coaching
Shared focus for professional development and instructional coaching discussions

Strengthened Instructional Schemas
Internalise strategies and apply them confidently, effortlessly, and habitually