

The Show-Me Routine

Five steps, taught like any routine. The power is everyone answering every question, with nowhere comfortable to hide.

1. Question up, boards down

Pose the question with boards flat. Thinking happens before writing.

In class: No pens until I say write. Ten seconds of thinking first.

2. Everyone writes

Short answers, big letters. Unsure learners write their best guess: a wrong answer is data, a blank is a hiding place.

In class: If you are stuck, write the bit you do know and a question mark.

3. Show me, on three

All boards up together, held still under the chin. Simultaneity stops copying.

In class: One, two, three, show. Hold them steady.

4. Scan and pick

Read the room in seconds: count the error patterns, choose two boards worth discussing.

In class: Lots of $\frac{3}{4}$ and a few $\frac{4}{3}$: both go on the big board. Which is right, and what trapped the other?

5. Respond now

The next minute follows the data: move on, fix the common slip, or reteach.

In class: Two-thirds slipped on the units. Boards down, watch this, then we go again with a twin.

Question Types That Earn Boards

Whiteboards repay questions with short, comparable answers. Four reliable formats.

The next step

Not the whole problem: just the move.
Exposes method, fast to scan.

Say: "Do not solve it. Write only what you would do first."

The diagnostic choice

A or B where each wrong option names a misconception.

Say: "Is it A or B? One letter, big. Now: someone defend A..."

The quick representation

A sketch, diagram, number line or symbol:
thinking made visible without sentences.

Say: "Draw the circuit. Just the symbols, ten seconds."

The confidence check

Answer plus a margin note: sure or shaky.
Tells you who to visit.

Say: "Write your answer, then S for sure or W for wobbly in the corner."

Management That Keeps Boards Working

Mini whiteboards die from friction, not from doubt. The routines below remove the friction.

Kit and habits

- Boards, pens and cloths live in one place with a 30-second handout routine.
- Dead pens are swapped silently from a known pot, no announcements.
- Doodling rule is explicit: boards blank until the question lands.

The routine

- Show-me is simultaneous, every time: no early flashes, no slow reveals.
- Wrong answers get discussed by pattern, not by name.
- Boards go up at least three times per lesson once embedded: frequency is the point.

The data habit

- You scan ALL boards before choosing any to discuss.
- What the scan shows changes the next five minutes, visibly.
- Learners who showed W (wobbly) get a visit during practice.

Boards by Subject

The same routine, dressed for different rooms. One strong use per subject beats ten occasional ones.

Maths

Next-step checks and error-spotting beat full solutions: you are sampling method.

In class: Here is a wrong answer. Write the line where it went wrong.

English

Word-level and sentence-level choices: comparable, quick, discussable.

In class: Upgrade the verb in this sentence. Boards up: best three go on the wall.

Science

Predictions before demonstrations, symbols and diagrams during.

In class: Predict: heavier or lighter after burning? Commit on boards before we weigh it.

Languages and humanities

Quick translations, dates-to-events, source judgements with one-word verdicts.

In class: Reliable or not, R or N, then defend your letter.

Mini Whiteboards: A 5-Minute Evidence Briefing

Why a thirty-year-old piece of plastic keeps outperforming newer tech in the checking game.

■ They mass-produce feedback information

Feedback's effect rides on the information exchanged ($d = 0.48$ overall). Boards generate thirty data points in ten seconds, in both directions: learners see the fix, you see the spread.

■ They maximise opportunities to respond

High response rates are a hallmark of effective management and predict engagement. Every-learner-answers beats hands-up arithmetic by an order of magnitude.

■ They change the next five minutes

The board scan is live formative assessment: the lesson adapts while the misconception is still warm, not next week in the marking.

■ The honest caveat

No randomised trial isolates the whiteboard itself; the evidence supports the practices boards enable (responses, feedback, checking). A board used for one rhetorical question per lesson carries none of it.

Evidence base

Wisniewski, B., Zierer, K. and Hattie, J. (2020). The power of feedback revisited: a meta-analysis of educational feedback research. *Frontiers in Psychology*.

Gage, N.A., Scott, T. and Hirn, R. (2018). The relationship between teachers' implementation of classroom management practices and student behavior in elementary school. *Behavioral Disorders*.

Black, P. and Wiliam, D. (1998). Assessment and classroom learning. *Assessment in Education: Principles, Policy and Practice*.