

What it looks like in practice

Eight routines teachers described on social media.

ROUTINE, AS TEACHERS DESCRIBE IT	WHAT YOU WOULD NOTICE	WHAT THE EVIDENCE SAYS
Short board check, then independent work Set four or five minutes of independent work. Do one mini-whiteboard check before answers or a progress discussion. Keep the check shorter than two minutes. "I have adapted my lesson a little so that I have a set time for independent work (4/5 minutes) and I do a MWB check before showing answers or discussing progress." @Maths_Devon	A clock on the independent burst. Boards up once, then books. UK secondary maths. The same thread argues that a board up is not understanding.	EEF guidance (2nd ed., 13 Nov 2025): teach learners to plan, monitor and evaluate in the subject. The replies in this thread disagree about whether the check is real.

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Graph-paper wallets as mini whiteboards Put a graph insert in a plastic wallet. Every learner draws on the same axes. Scan the wallets in initial teaching and in a check. "I've been doing some graph work and these plastic wallets with graph inserts used as MWB have proved invaluable in initial teaching and in checking for understanding." @MrTaylorMaths2	The same grid in every hand. Working, not a single boxed answer.	A standardised format shows the method, which a single number on a board does not. That is a teacher report, not a trial. EEF recommendation 2 is explicit strategy teaching in the subject, not a mandate to hold boards up.
Boards up as a magical check ● objection Treat a whole-class board-up of an answer as proof that 30 learners understand. "I'm not against whiteboards but their current standing as a magical tool that allows you to assess understanding is massively exaggerated." @Friendly_Maths	Answers on boards, copying easier than thinking, and a lead practitioner circulating over books instead. UK secondary maths.	A held-up answer is performance in the moment. Chi, Bassok, Lewis, Reimann and Glaser (1989) found that learners who monitored their own misunderstanding while studying examples later needed the examples less. A board-up of a final number does not show that monitoring.

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Faded examples stay in the schema Keep faded examples as scaffolding even when a new paper arrives. Hand over one step at a time, do not bin the worked example. "I will still be using eg faded examples which are part of my scaffolding schema & this won't change that" @MathsWithMsB	A full example, then a greyed step, then a blank. UK classroom teacher, not a vendor worksheet.	Atkinson, Renkl and Merrill (2003): fading worked steps plus self-explanation prompts beat fading alone on near and far transfer. Renkl and Atkinson (2003): backward fading beat example-problem pairs on near transfer. If the example stays a permanent crutch, the fade did not happen (@ninja_maths, outside the UK).
Hints versus prompts on a fade On a backward-fade sequence, mark struck-through steps as hints and questions as prompts, so the prompt is what makes the learner explain the missing step. "I am really interested in this distinction between hints and prompts in backward fading from @taylorda01 and how to encourage student thinking and self explanation." @MissSDoherty	A CPD board with hints and prompts labelled. Deputy head, primary maths, sharing with colleagues.	EEF 2025 recommendation 5: least help first (prompt, clue, then model). Chi et al. (1989): self-explanations while studying examples are the monitoring. The board is one teacher's account of Dave Taylor's TDaPE session, not a trial of that board.

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Step-and-check (US) Learners complete one operation. Boards go up. The teacher scans and reteaches before the next step. Errors are caught before they compound. "Students complete one step. Boards go up. The teacher scans and adjusts before moving on. Errors are caught early, before they compound." @MrJFinch	Boards up mid-problem, not at the answer. US fifth grade.	This is the method-right, answer-wrong catch, labelled United States. Chi et al. (1989): accurate monitoring of misunderstanding is what separated the learners who later solved without the example. Not a UK classroom diary.
Pair find-the-error (US) After a test, pair one learner who got the item right with one who did not. They decide who is right and name the mistake. "One of you got #3 right & one got it right. Work together to figure out who got it right and what mistake the other person made." @MillerMathTeach	A named item, two papers, a conversation about the error. US junior high, Room 109.	Mevarech and Kramarski (1997, IMPROVE): seventh-grade mathematics with metacognitive questions plus peer interaction outperformed controls. That is IMPROVE, not this pairing card. The card is a school's own account.

ROUTINE, AS TEACHERS DESCRIBE IT

WHAT YOU WOULD NOTICE

WHAT THE EVIDENCE SAYS

Number talks that eat the practice

● objection

Grouped desks, number talks and explain-your-thinking as the daily structure, then send a child home unfinished.

""number talks" & "explain your thinking" ad nauseum and then send a kid home w "I didn't finish I was talking too much?"

@tetheredtoed1

A long share. Unfinished independent work. US elementary. UK posts almost never made this complaint about maths talk.

The live US objection is minutes stolen from practice, not that talk is only for advanced learners. EEF metacognition guidance: strategies are taught in the subject, on curriculum tasks, not as a carpet performance of talk.

The EEF +8 months figure is the Toolkit mean (355 studies, May 2025). Chi et al. These routines are teachers' own accounts, not trial evidence.