

Learning Principle 3 – Silent Study



What is it?

“Deep thinking can only take place in an environment that enables introspection. Silence, therefore, is a gift and certainly not a punishment.” (Jamie Thom – A Quiet Education, 2020)

Silent study is exactly that, students working in absolute silence, and this normally needs to include the teacher too! Avoid the itch to break the silence (Sherrington, 2014). At Kineton we can use silent study in a variety of ways:

1. **No noise** - To ensure the class is silent if there is low level disruption or even quiet chatter taking place. The use of silent study means all students know exactly what the expectation is, working quietly and in silence.
2. **Productivity** - To increase productivity (in short bursts), students will often write a lot more in an extended piece of writing with the use of silent study which will limit any potential distractions. However, this only works in short bursts compared to significant parts of the lesson.
3. **Deeper thinking** - Silence encourages deeper thought and for one to challenge their own ideas / misconceptions or to try to knit and weave together different pieces of learning to understand the bigger picture. Silence encourages deeper thinking about oneself as a learner.

How can it be used to challenge students?

Across most examinations students tend to struggle with longer answer questions, usually around 6 marks and above. Silent study (especially towards the end of the lesson once the knowledge has been taught) will allow students to be able to focus on how to answer these longer and often more complex questions. Equally in order to answer an extended question students will need to write more than a few lines, so a short burst of silent study may see the students thinking deeply and writing quite a bit in a relatively short period of time.

How can we support students with SEMH (Social, Emotional & Mental Health needs)?

Students with SEMH often won't like noisy classrooms. It can be quite bewildering for students with SEMH needs to be in a noisy classroom compounded by echoes and other noises in the corridor. For these students a quieter room or at least a less vocal working partner / group may be more beneficial most of the time. Silent study can help to embed this culture of quieter learning in a classroom, of which students with SEMH will then subsequently feel more confident working and staying in.

Can Music help? Although not silence – Yes! Music played in the classroom can *actually* help children achieve silent study. A member of staff's Inquiry Question at Kineton has found listening to Music particularly in coursework based subjects to be helpful, when used appropriately.



Best weblink to know more:

<https://teacherhead.com/2014/03/24/pedagogy-postcard-4-working-in-silence/>