If knowledge is more than a mere collection of isolated facts, and if teachers have these facts neatly connected into a schema...then why hide them from students? Now that teacher explanation is being recognised for its premier role in teaching, the transmission of subject schema is a pedagogy whose time has come.

The original research by Allan Paivio on dual encoding has been replicated again and again since the 1970s. Simultaneous processing in the two channels means more information can be absorbed without causing any cognitive load. The message for teachers is clear: support your explanations with relevant conceptual images.

Providing students with a visual schema gives them a framework for speaking and listening. Simply seeing the connections that link the facts together prompts and structures their explanations. This forging of meaning strengthens students’ personal schema. It also serves as a practical rehearsal for any future writing on the topic.

The meaning created by the previous activity was, at the same time, strengthening the memory of the schema. Indeed, instead of being opposites, these often considered antagonists, are actually one and the same thing! Redrawing the visual schema will strengthen it still further. Repeat at increasing time intervals.