



INQUIRY WORKSHOP 3 · RECORDED 29 AUGUST 2026

Student Struggle to Solutions

Building subject essential skills frameworks. Write down what your mind does, so students can do it without you.

Why this exists

"They don't know to take the steps that are obvious to us."

Every teacher has a skill they teach, reteach, explain and re-explain every year. Students still get stuck, and a quiet thought arrives: *they should have known that*. Ioana Badicioiu does not argue with it. Maybe, at some point, they should have. "However, our job as teachers is to fill in those gaps as much as we can."

On 29 August 2026, Ioana — who has taught English literature and language acquisition in six countries, most recently at UWC India — and Brian Jackson, a design teacher, ran a live EDodo workshop on exactly those gaps. Teachers of design, TOK, and business and finance broke down their own skills, out loud.

This companion holds what the 31-minute recording covers, in order, so you can keep the ideas without re-watching. The printable tool — the Framework for a Framework — is the second document in this pack.

The blind spot is not a flaw. It is a list of steps you have not written down yet.

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The expert's blind spot

Ioana opened with one instruction: think of a skill you constantly teach. A skill inside a DP internal assessment, an MYP criterion or strand, an ATL cluster — the one you find yourself explaining and re-explaining all the time. Hold on to it. The chat filled up fast: a designer's choices, concrete to pictorial to abstract in Singapore Maths, finding a pattern, scalability.

Then the diagnosis. When you ask students to do a task, they do not know to take the steps that are obvious to you. Teachers make mental moves so automatic that they feel natural. So the session asks one question: *what are the moves?* What do you actually do, step by step, to complete this task?

And for the *"they should have known that"* reflex: "When students arrive in our classrooms, we need to forget what they should know or what they shouldn't know. And as much as possible, we need to give them a hand."

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Take the paragraph apart: a worked example

Ioana chose an example every subject knows: the analytical paragraph, or PEEL — "some of our students' nightmare, especially in middle school." Her class was studying Langston Hughes's poem *"I, Too"*. The lesson ran in three parts.

- 1. A model first.** Ioana wrote a model paragraph for them.
- 2. Take the model apart.** *Find the first sentence of the paragraph and copy it here.* What does it do? What is its role? Students worked out each sentence's job before anyone gave it a name, using a framework Ioana built before the lesson.
- 3. Now write your own.** *Same question. Choose a different word or image from the poem. Use the model and your answers above as your guide.* Suggested starting points: *"darker brother", "tomorrow", "I, too, am America", "nobody'll dare"*.

Every stage carries a guiding statement or question. So no student sits there thinking *Miss, what do I do now?* The page already says.

Move	What the student sees
Point	Make a clear statement that answers the question. Name the language choice and what it does. <i>Hint: writer + verb of analysis + language choice + the idea. Do not tell the story.</i>
Context	Introduce the moment in the poem where your evidence comes from. One sentence only. <i>Hint: a bridge to your evidence, without quoting yet.</i>
Evidence	Give the specific word, phrase or paraphrase that proves your Point. <i>Hint: quote a single powerful word or short phrase; paraphrase an idea spread across several lines.</i>
Explanation	Unpack your word. Think of the connotation. What could the alternative word be? Aim for at least three or four sentences. Check: <i>have I said why the writer makes this choice?</i>
Link	Connect your analysis back to the question.

Delete the poem, keep the framework. When the class moves on, Ioana deletes the support that belongs to *"I, Too"*. What is left "becomes a framework that I can use for every single time I teach an analytical paragraph." One build. Used every year.



Frameworks are mental habits

Where did the five moves come from? Ioana asked herself: "If I write a paragraph, what is the thinking process step by step that I do, and how do I turn that into a guiding question or a thinking prompt for my student?"

Frameworks are our mental habits. Each question maps a move into the thinking sequence.

A framework is a sequence of guiding questions you ask about your own automatic process. Your moves become the answers, and each move becomes a prompt for students. Teachers "just run through" these skills because they are automatic. Students have not had the years. So take one question back to your own skill: **what do I actually do, in order, to complete this task — and how do I turn each step into a prompt that lets a student do it independently?**

Two rules from the session

1. The assumption has to disappear. "At whatever stage in the process, be it DP2, the assumption has to disappear." If the step is *write a topic sentence*, what prompt lets a student do it without you assuming they know how? "If we assume they know, we are failing them in the same way they have been failed by the multiple teachers and people that assume they know."

2. Be clear with yourself first. "If I can't write down what my mind does in order to achieve this skill, then I won't be able to teach it." Ioana called this "a very important thing, and sometimes scary." Teachers know their subject, but might not know exactly how they do it. *Teaching it is different than knowing*. So ask the honest question: do I know what I'm doing?

Stuck at the start, or stuck in the middle?

A comment in the chat named the symptom: the student is not getting the list done. Ioana split *stuck* in two. **Stuck at the start:** completely lost from the very beginning, with no idea how to start the thinking. **Stuck in the middle:** the thinking starts, then stalls somewhere inside it — the bottleneck. Either way, the support is already on the page. "The framework tells him, oh, this is the next step."

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Your turn: three frameworks the room started

The brief: write the first three to five moves for your own skill, and the guiding prompt that lets a student make each one alone. Ioana set a timer ("my students love my timers"). Three teachers built out loud.

Design: the designer had a choice

Brian's hardest job, he said, is "getting my students to realise that designers have choices, and they make them on purpose." His first question: *What species of wood did the designer choose?* It looks simple. It is not. The species changes what the maker can do, and how the chair will look, feel, even sound. "You're already doing so much thinking," Ioana said, "that I'm pretty sure your students would not go that far just by thinking of this question."

His second question: *What effect has that choice had on the aesthetics?*

Ioana's catch. "Because we use *effect* and *aesthetics*, we're assuming that this has been taught and the students know these words." Brian agreed. The blind spot does not only hide in missing steps. It hides in single words.

TOK: from a handkerchief to the world

A TOK teacher in India had named scalability: moving a small, local example into a global context. The exchange opened on a question of that kind: *Where else in the world do people use the same type of knowledge?*

His example was real. A student told the class about a handkerchief an elder gave her on a train in Japan, to explain kindness in Japanese culture. The teacher wanted her to carry it out into a global context. She could not. "We had to prod and prod and prod and prod to get that out. That scalability is sometimes very difficult to bring out in students."

Ioana's reflection went to his sequence of questions: how does a student get from question one to question four? "In our mind, we've already moved there because it's so natural. It is so automatic for us." The steps between question one and question four are the blind spot.

Business and finance: baby steps

A business and finance teacher in Oman teaches students whose first language is Arabic and who are learning English. They arrive knowing nothing about business. "So I really take very small and baby steps with them." Her question in the chat was *Where would you get the startup money?* Asked for the follow-up, she laid out the framework she already uses for sources of finance.

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| 1. You need money. | Where will you get the money for your business? |
| 2. Why? | Why would someone give you money? |
| | How much? 2,000? 5,000? 6,000? (On a sticky note.) |
| 3. How? | How do you get that money? |
| 4. Only then: | the different types of finance, and where each one comes from. |

By the time the types of finance arrive, students know nobody hands over money without a reason and a process. Then they open up. She called it "like an enlightenment": *"Miss, we didn't know that we could get money from so many places."*

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When AI does the thinking

The same teacher raised a problem nobody in the room was surprised by. Ask her students *can you think of a business idea?* and "they will not think. They will open their laptops, they'll open their tabs," and type *generate five business ideas for me*. She cannot ban it: technology and innovation is one of her school's goals. And she knows what comes back: "the robotic five businesses... There's no uniqueness." Her verdict: "It's making them lazy, actually."

"I think a lot of educators these days are facing this problem," Ioana said. Her answer came in three moves.

1. Agree the rules on day one. It starts at the very beginning of the course, with an essential agreement: the rules of the classroom, down to what sits on the desk. In Ioana's room, "the computer only comes on the desk when I tell them, because I have prepared something for them to do on the computer." Because *the thinking has to be theirs*.

2. Rewrite the prompt into thinking questions. *Give me five business ideas* is a big topic with no way in. Ioana suggested three questions that make students rely on their own knowledge of the world, and offered two starters — "and I'm not even a business teacher":

- *Where is my heart? What sort of business would I want to run, and why?*
- *What problems do you see in the world, and what solutions might your business propose?*

"If we want our students to think, then we need to provide them with thinking questions, with support questions that allow them to start from something small."

3. Engineer the thinking first, then let AI build the page. Even the way students use AI has to be engineered, Ioana said, "but we need to go through that thinking process first." She showed a framework that takes students from reading a comic strip to building an argument. It starts with the question, not the text: *annotate the question before you touch the text*. She could have written *read this comic strip and answer this question, you have fifteen minutes, go* — and students could have gone online and asked AI to answer it for them. Instead: "I used my own thinking skills. I gave AI a very serious thinking prompt, and then AI built this for me."

I didn't write this, but I engineered this. It's in my voice, and it's my selection.

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Built live: analysing a financial statement

Then Ioana turned to the business teacher's own skill. "How do you analyse a financial statement? What is the first thing you do? You have the statement here on the page. What do you do?"

ANALYSING A FINANCIAL STATEMENT

built live, 29 August 2026

1. Highlight the important numbers.
2. Write down the formulas for the ratios the question asks for.
3. Check you have the data for each formula.
 - Assets divided by liabilities? Do I have the total assets?
Do I have the total liabilities?
4. Calculate.

The hard part: placing each number correctly in the formula.
That step gets broken down again.

Then the question that matters most: *which step is the most challenging?* The teacher knew at once. She hands out the formulas. The trouble comes after students pull the numbers from the statements: "they cannot place the numbers correctly." They do not understand where the total liabilities are coming from.

"Notice how you already have foreseen the difficulties," Ioana said. Under that step go guiding questions that help students avoid the mistakes and fill in the gaps, down to the smallest thinking skill. Her own frameworks work the same way. *Annotate the question* is a step, "but do I assume they know how to annotate the question? No. I write down the questions that I ask as a teacher when I annotate the question."

Do it once, and "every single time you teach analysing a financial statement, you have the lesson ready" — "engineered for students to do the thinking whilst their laptops are still in the bag."

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What a framework buys you in the room

Without a framework	With one
You explain the thinking again, to each student who asks.	The page explains it. You spend the time with groups and individuals.
All you can see is <i>stuck</i> .	You can see <i>which question</i> each student is stuck on — and note what to reteach.
The room stalls, and you cannot tell where.	Everyone is stuck at step four. "Let's stop the lesson. Let's reteach the skills that you need for step four."
The same explanation, rebuilt every year.	One framework, refined every year from student feedback.

The thinking is on the page, so your time goes somewhere else. "You have more time in the classroom to help the students with the thinking rather than explain the thinking, because the thinking you've already put on a page."

Ioana has built frameworks for her own literature assessment components — the HL essay and the IO — and tested each one with students. It "reduces so much of the teaching time," and "it's something that I can refine all the time from the feedback that I get from different groups of students."

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The architecture of thinking

Ioana closed on the one thing to keep: pay attention to your own mental habits, your thinking sequences, step by step. It is not easy. A teacher can jump from a basic concept to a highly complex one and make the connections automatically. Those micro-steps are the easiest to miss, and the easiest to assume students make too. Her questions to take away:

- Why do I do that? How do I get there?
- What do I assume about my students?
- Could I put it down, step by step, for myself?

"I think this is where the honest teaching comes from." Break a skill down for yourself, and you can truly guide students in their inquiry. "What we're building is the architecture of thinking for them."

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*"The assumption has to disappear. If we assume they know,
we are failing them."*

— Ioana Badicioiu, 29 August 2026

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Your move this week

One skill. One class. Not the whole curriculum.

- **Pick one skill.** The one you reteach every year.
- **Write your own moves, in order.** Do the task yourself, slowly. Write down every step, including the ones that feel too obvious to mention. Those are the ones.
- **Turn each move into a prompt.** A question the student asks themselves, or an action they take. Circle any word you are assuming they already own.
- **Try it with one class.** Walk the room. Note the step where each student stalls. If the whole room stalls at the same step, stop and reteach it.

Before a student sees it, run Ioana and Brian's test for any framework:

If a student has this framework, does it give them the answer — or the map to find their own answer?

The printable tool for all of this — the Framework for a Framework, with the PEEL framework filled in and a blank template to copy — is the second document in this pack.

Three places to keep going

edodo.app/workshops/workshop-essential-skills-frameworks

edodo.app/download/inquiry-starter-kit

edodo.app/courses

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