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teach SECONDARY

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INTERVIEW

STEPH MCGOVERN:



"I was your classic swot"

BEST FOOT FORWARD

Ensure your NQTs can thrive

Why slowing down is key to catching up

LAURA BATES

"School sexism isn't a tick-box exercise"

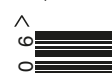
WHAT SCHOOLS SHOULD ASSESS
- BUT DON'T

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FROM THE EDITOR

“Welcome...”



The wall displays are prepped, the stationery's where it should be, the plans have been neatly filed away and the freedom of that summer staycation is fast becoming a fuzzy memory.

As September looms ahead once more, the profession is gearing itself up for ... well, what exactly? Schools will reopen to admit their students, yes, but not in the way they did back in that now impossibly distant autumn of 2019. Whether you've continued to be a diligent mask-wearer in public spaces or not these past couple of months, no one working in schools will be able to put the pandemic to back of their mind for any length of time.

Whether it's the dreaded 'ping' that means having to stay at home, or that sinking feeling when it dawns on you yet again just how much learning has been lost, reminders of it will be everywhere – and likely will be for some time to come.

The behaviour and attitudes of your new Y7s are likely to be very different from any before them (p19). New colleagues joining your school are going to need all the support they can get (p106) – and that's to say nothing of the relentless pressure on everyone, students and teachers alike, to *catch up*, though it might be worth potentially pushing back a bit against the latter (p42).

With the months ahead unlikely to be short of challenge, now is the ideal time to hit the soft reset button and dig into the business of teaching with a renewed sense of purpose and vigour. You could try approaching assessment from a completely new angle (p46), rethink the order in which those junior colleagues are traditionally encouraged to develop their skills (p82) or take stock of which resources you actually need, and those you might be using more as a crutch or distraction (p37).

The only certainty anyone can have is that the year ahead is going to be far from easy. But as the past few months of teaching remotely, implementing ever-changing guidance at speed and holding everything together have shown, no one should ever underestimate just how resilient, fiercely capable and impressive you teachers can be.

Enjoy the issue,

Callum Fauser
callum.fauser@theteachco.com

On board this issue:



David Lowbridge-Ellis leads on school improvement across Matrix Academy Trust



Laura Bates is a journalist, feminist writer and campaigner



Steve Brace is head of education at the Royal Geographical Society



Hannah Moloney is a SENCo and SEND Researcher



Dr Gary Keogh is a secondary teacher and PSHE programme coordinator



Bhamika Bhudia is a teacher of English

KEEP IN TOUCH!

Sign up for the weekly TS newsletter at teachwire.net/newsletter

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What if we used assessment to motivate?



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The joys of tackling the 'puberty lesson', the importance of consistent consequences, the support your NQTs really need and the hallmarks of student resilience



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The newsletter

Grab a coffee and spend five minutes exploring the lighter side of CPD...

The UNINFORMED teacher's guide to...

THE GREAT LONDINI

Fed up with the laissez-faire content policies of social media platforms that allow users to bully and harass others? So is The Great Londini – a 'hacktivist' collective fronted by a slightly sinister masked figure known only as Leo, who have taken it upon themselves to reveal the identities of egregious online trolls and provide reassurance to their victims.

As Leo recently explained to BBC Trending, This V for Vendetta-aping vigilantism began when a friend's teenage son, who lived with autism, took his own life after being harassed on social media. Leo and some tech-savvy colleagues succeeded in identifying the perpetrators and helped the friend 'get some closure'.

Active across Twitter (@LondiniThe) Insta (@the.great.londini) and repeatedly banned from TikTok (@thegreatlondini.com, at least for now), they're engaged in what seems like a noble cause, but one we doubt that any digital safeguarding lead is likely to approve of...



DO SAY

"Comfort the afflicted"

DON'T SAY

"It's free speech. Deal with it."

BEAT THE BUDGET



What are we talking about?

Climate Action Plan for Schools and College

What's the targeted age range?

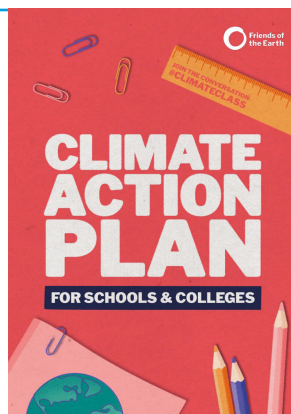
11- to 18-year-olds

What's on offer?

A 14-page document containing 50 climate-friendly changes that institutions can make in various areas, such as transport, site management and food sourcing.

How might teachers use the resource?

Many of the suggested ideas and proposals (including visits, surveys and checklists)



are presented as extra-curricular activities that students and teachers can undertake together.

Where are they available?

bit.ly/ts106-climate

DON'T QUOTE ME...

"Williamson appears not to have been directly involved in any of the key meetings ahead of the original decision to close schools in March 2020"

'Schools and coronavirus' report issued by the Institute of Government

Think of a number...

28.5

Proportion of 2021 GCSE entries graded 7/A or above

Source: Ofqual

£8,105

Net expenditure per pupil in the LA of Islington, the highest in the country; the lowest spending LA is Rutland, at £1,489 per pupil

Source: Promethean

5,057

The number of permanent exclusions made in 2019/20

Source: DfE

ONE FOR THE WALL

"Don't just teach your children to read. Teach them to question what they read."

George Carlin



£570m short?

The Institute for Fiscal Studies has found that colleges and sixth forms will require an additional £570 million in funding, on top of the amounts already allocated in 2020, if they are to stave off further reductions in spending per student.

In a briefing note titled 'Further education and sixth form spending in England', IFS researchers Luke Sibbets and Imran Tahir observe that the proportion of 16- and 17-year-olds in full-time education rose to an all-time high of 85% in 2020, in part driven by a spike in that year's GCSE results and limited opportunities for workplace training, owing to the pandemic.

The number of young people entering apprenticeships fell by 15,000 between over the same period, with only 3% of 16- and 17-year-olds opting for apprenticeships in 2020 – the lowest proportion in decades.

According to Imran Tahir, "The additional funding in 2020 only takes funding back to 2018 levels, leaving in place the vast majority of the cuts to funding per student over the previous decade. These institutions now also face a plethora of additional challenges created by fast rises in student numbers and the need to help pupils catch up on lost learning. The government will need to allocate at least an extra £570 million in funding for the 2022–23 academic year as compared with 2020–21 just to keep per-pupil spending at existing levels."

Read the full document via bit.ly/ts106-ifs

SAVE THE DATE

KEYNOTES AND CORRESPONDENCE

Forget the media-friendly soundbites – what else was in those speeches and letters you missed?

THE HEADLINE:

Schools Minister defends the importance of a knowledge-rich curriculum

WHO? Nick Gibb, Minister for School Standards

WHERE? Social Market Foundation panel event

WHEN? 21st July 2021



"My belief, and my argument today, is that we will only deliver on the promises that all politicians make, of ensuring that every child receives a first-class education, if we ensure that all our children are taught in schools with an extensive knowledge-rich curriculum by well-trained and supported teachers;

In schools where strong discipline means pupils are taught in a safe and caring environment, with high expectations and where success is rewarded and celebrated; in schools that develop character and resilience; in schools that encompass the arts, languages, music and the humanities as well as science and maths.

In schools that give every child the knowledge they are entitled to as part of their cultural inheritance.

If every school delivers these key objectives, only then will we succeed in reducing the gap between children who come from backgrounds where the importance of education can sometimes take a back seat to the trials of day-to-day living and those whose families have the time and ability to add to the education that their children receive at school."

THE HEADLINE:

Industry bodies condemn 'fire safety lottery' in schools

WHO? 25 leaders of bodies operating within the education, firefighting, architecture and engineering sectors

WHAT? Open letter to Education Secretary, Gavin Williamson

WHEN? 17th August 2021



"There has been much recent debate around sprinklers in schools, following the government's technical review of Building Bulletin 100 in 2019 and a series of devastating fires at schools across England in the intervening period.

Your Department and officials have repeatedly emphasised that the current policy is that sprinklers must be fitted where they are deemed necessary to keep pupils and staff safe. We would, therefore, expect the vast majority of new schools to have been fitted with sprinklers.

Yet according to the Government's own data, obtained via Freedom of Information, just 8.5% of new schools built since 2015 are sprinkler protected. It is deeply concerning that BB100 – which was intended to provide fire safety measures for schools that go beyond Approved Document B and BS9999 to protect the continuity of the education they facilitate – has been disregarded to this extent."

15 SEPTEMBER National Assessment Conference 2021 | 6-8 OCTOBER The National Education Show | 10 DECEMBER Save the Children Christmas Jumper Day 2020

15 SEPTEMBER

National Assessment Conference 2021
Online
bit.ly/ts106-nac21

Organised by Herts for Learning, this virtual conference will present ideas, discussion and debate on the nature and purpose of school assessment from some of the country's leading educationalists (including Academies Enterprise Trust CEO Rebecca Boomer-Clark and the University of Winchester's Bill Lucas) and host a variety of informative workshops.

6-8 OCTOBER

The National Education Show
Online
bit.ly/ts105-nes

Taking place across three days dedicated to ALN / SEN, teaching and learning, and mental health and wellbeing respectively, virtual attendees will have the chance to drop in on over 40 seminars and short talks. With topics ranging from cognitive behavioural practices to emotional resilience and working with parents, the lineup of speakers so far is set to include Professor Mick Waters, Sonia Gill and Hywel Roberts.

10 DECEMBER

Save the Children Christmas Jumper Day 2020
National
savethechildren.org.uk/christmas-jumper-day

Christmas Jumper Day will have everyone up and down the country rocking up to schools and work in their silliest, swankiest jumpers. Sign up at the website above and get your free fundraising pack, containing a Fundraising Game Plan and everything else you need to make Christmas Jumper Day epic.

PROGRESS IN COMPUTING: KEY STAGE 3

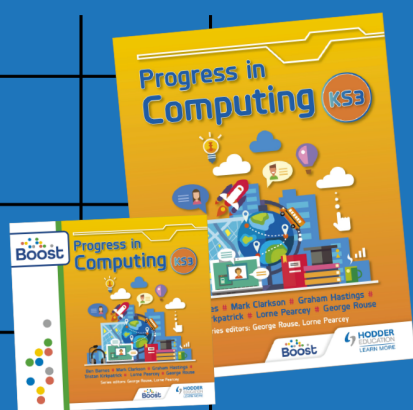
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MATHS CORNER

Intriguing problems to inspire curiosity

How Old Am I?

(nrich.maths.org/631)

On my last birthday, my friend said to me:
 "In 15 years' time, your age will be the square of your age 15 years ago!"
 Can you work out how old I am? This got me thinking...

Was there ever a time in my life when I had other birthdays that were special in this way? Could I have said:

"In 3 years' time, my age will be the square of my age 3 years ago"

or:

"In 4 years' time, my age will be the square of my age 4 years ago"

or:

"In 5 years' time, my age will be the square of my age 5 years ago"

A FEW MINUTES OF DESIGN

#INGENUITY PITCH



or:

"In 6 years' time, my age will be the square of my age 6 years ago"

Can you make any generalisations about which birthdays are special in this way?

Can you prove your findings?

NRICH provides thousands of free online mathematics resources covering all stages of secondary school education - completely free and available to all. You can access the latest secondary curriculum map and check the latest Live Problems at nrichmaths.org/9451 - the NRICH team looks forward to receiving your students' solutions and publishing some of the best ones on the website!



Look at the images on the card below and work out what the designer was trying to achieve.

Write a 100-word blog post or magazine article to launch the product, identifying the problem it addresses and explaining why this is a good solution.



Get Into Film



THE BATTLE OF THE SEXES (2017, 12A, 122 MINS)

CURRICULUM LINKS:

PSHE, physical education, citizenship

When the retired 1970s tennis champion turned sports celebrity Bobby Riggs challenged any female tennis player to beat him, it was left to the world number one Billie Jean King to take him up. This is a witty dramatisation of the events that led up to the notorious match which attracted over 40 million viewers, and remains the most-watched televised tennis match of all time.

The film depicts King's ongoing fight for equal pay for female players, as well as her personal struggle to keep her sexuality out of the limelight. *Battle of the Sexes* is a stirring sports drama that cleverly explores gender and sexual politics in the context of 1970s American conservatism.

Discussion questions:

- What do you know about the differences between men and women's tennis?
- Why do you think Bobby Riggs said such sexist things towards women? Is there anyone else in the film who is sexist in a different way?
- What are the current controversies within sport in regards to gender? Can you offer up any solutions?

Head online to intofilm.org to download the film guide for *Battle of the Sexes*



Retweets

Who's been saying what on Twitter this month?

Peter Hyman @PeterHyman21

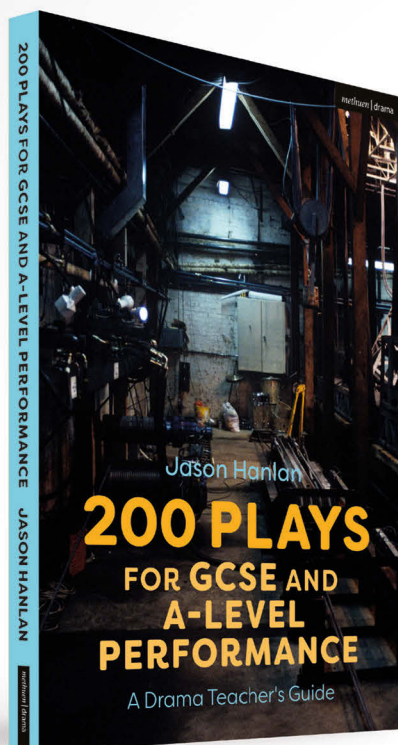
Multi modal assessment works in Universities for degrees like medicine. There is no subject discipline for which 2 hour written exams should be the only form of assessment. The world is interdisciplinary - school should teach students to think in this way, as well as in subjects

Cobbles @CobblesAnn

Things I don't need guidance on: mobile phones & how to improve behaviour. Things I do need guidance on: tackling the increasing problems caused by multiple staff and children having to isolate and what testing & exams will look like next academic year!

Follow us @teachsecondary - and let us know what you're thinking!

LOOKING FOR NEW PLAYS FOR YOUR GCSE AND A-LEVEL STUDENTS?



200 Plays for GCSE and A-Level Performance *A Drama Teacher's Guide*

Jason Hanlan



Going into hundreds of other teachers' schools over the years to see thousands of students demonstrate their skills as performers and designers gave me a privileged insight into what works and why ... Now, I reckon it's time to share with the wider Drama teaching community!

JASON HANLAN



Written specifically for drama teachers, Jason Hanlan's new book is a quick, easy-to-use guide to finding and staging the best performance material for 15-18 year-olds.

Pb | 9781350146624 | £18.99

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MORE PLAYS TO EXPLORE



Pb | 9781350233744 | 24.99

National Theatre Connections 2021

11 Plays for Young People



Connections is a celebration of youth theatre, new writing, creativity and partnership, and above all the importance of access for young people to the arts.

KRISTEN ADAM, CONNECTIONS
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Pb | 9781350204607 | 10.99

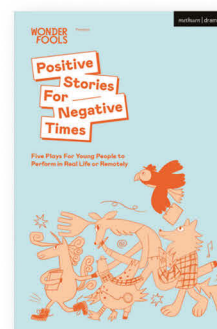
The Moors

Tonderai Munyevu



I found this play utterly fascinating and quite complex... It's funny, but it is extremely arresting at the same time as it tackles issues around race, identity, migrants and attitudes towards the roles in which Black actors are cast in plays today.

DRAMA AND THEATRE
MAGAZINE



Pb | 9781350233362 | 19.99

Positive Stories For Negative Times

Sabrina Mahfouz, Stef Smith, Chris Thorpe, Bea Webster, Jack Nurse and Robbie Gordon



The plays are all incredibly different but equally full of interesting stories, exciting forms and searching questions about this extraordinary moment we are living through.

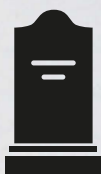
JACK NURSE,
WONDER FOOLS

Find more plays to explore at [bloomsbury.com/drama](https://www.bloomsbury.com/drama)



The Vocab Clinic

Support your students towards better language use, with the help of our resident word-wizard, **Alex Quigley**...



TRY THIS TODAY: 'SAID IS DEAD'

A defining feature of effective writing in the secondary classroom is pupils displaying a range of complex vocabulary, but word lists and items on knowledge organisers often fail to translate into writing. We can instead model, scaffold, and shrink the challenge of improving our pupils' word choices – and one such micro-writing approach is 'Said is dead'.

In English, but also in history, geography, RE and other subjects, use of the word 'said' forms part of the fabric of academic writing. A concerted focus on alternatives, such as 'shrieked', 'wailed' and 'exclaimed', will provide alternatives for fiction writing, while more neutral terms for essays could include 'stated', 'observed', 'explained' and 'revealed'.



Cracking the academic code

Great writers use a seemingly unlimited array of vocabulary, appearing to always possess the right word for the job. Of course, one requirement of great writing is to ensure words are appropriately emphasised in sentences to maximise their impact. This is where syntax – the structure of sentences – can be extremely helpful.

One strategy pupils can use is 'End focus'. Put simply, this describes leaving a key word or idea in the sentence until the very end. We see it in great writing, such as the opening to *Nineteen Eighty-Four*: "It was a bright cold day in April, and the clocks were striking thirteen."

DO THEY KNOW?

The word 'therein' contains 10 other words. Can you find them?

ONE FOR: HISTORY STUDENTS

REVOLUTION

Derives from: Latin, from 'revolvere' – meaning 'to roll back, repeat, to turn'

Means: An instance of great change; a turning point in history

Related terms: Revolt, rebellion, insurrection, insurgency, regime change



I DON'T THINK IT MEANS WHAT YOU THINK IT MEANS...

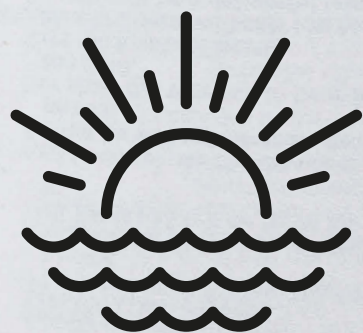
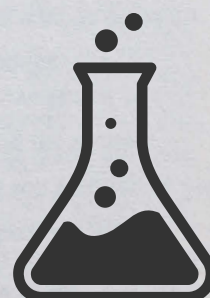
CONCENTRATION

In English

the act of focusing one's attention, or a close gathering of people or things

In science

the strength of a solution, particularly in terms of how 'crowded' the solute particles are



One word at a time

Mention the word 'Mediterranean' and many teachers will quickly call to mind images of sun-kissed holidays. It's a term that's used commonly in geography, as well as our daily lives. It's one of those vocabulary items whose word roots accurately describe their physical and symbolic place in the natural world. The root 'medius' means 'middle'. Now place this alongside its fellow root

'terra' ('think 'terrain'), which means 'earth' in Greek. For the Greek and Roman civilisations – from which so much of our modern language derives – the Mediterranean was the centre of

their world.



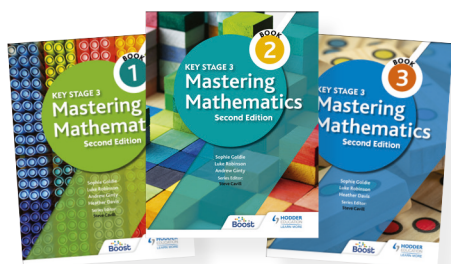
Alex Quigley is a former teacher and the author of *Closing the Reading Gap* and *Closing the Vocabulary Gap*; He also works for the Education Endowment Foundation as National Content Manager

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[M A T H S P R O B L E M]

AREA AND PERIMETER

Students often confuse area and perimeter, giving the answer to one when asked for the other. This lesson, by **Colin Foster**, aims to help students resolve this confusion...

Area and perimeter are really quite different quantities, but they are often cued by similar prompts, such as a drawing of a rectangle, with measurements written along two adjacent sides. In this lesson, students will explicitly contrast area and perimeter to see what is the same and what is different about them.

THE DIFFICULTY

This task is intended to bring to the surface students' confusions between area and perimeter.

Draw me two rectangles: one with an **area** of 24cm^2 and one with a **perimeter** of 24cm . Clearly label which one is which.

Students could do this task on mini-whiteboards or in their books. It would be easier to do on a squared background. Students are likely to produce a mixture of correct and incorrect responses, including confusions between area and perimeter.

One informal way to illustrate the difference is to think of **perimeter** as the amount of ink needed to **draw** the shape, and **area** as the amount of ink needed to **colour it**

in. It might be helpful to refer to the boundary of the school field as the **perimeter** of the field.

Find as many examples as you can of rectangles with an area of 24cm^2 and rectangles with a perimeter of 24cm .

A 24cm^2 **area** rectangle with integer sides must be 1×24 , 2×12 , 3×8 or 4×6 . A 24cm **perimeter** rectangle with integer sides must be 1×11 , 2×10 , 3×9 , 4×8 , 5×7 or 6×6 (the last one is square, but a square is just a special rectangle). But students may also find examples in which the sides are not integers.

THE SOLUTION

The tasks here are designed to focus students' attention on the value of the perimeter and the value of the area for the same rectangle, forcing them to constantly switch between the two as they compare and contrast them.

1. A rectangle with area = perimeter = 24

Can a single rectangle have both an area of 24cm^2 and a perimeter of 24cm ?

Students might think not, because they only consider rectangles with integer sides. If so, you could ask them which integer

rectangle comes **closest** to having area and perimeter both 24. The closest ones are the 3×9 rectangle, with a perimeter of 24cm but an area of 27cm^2 , and the 3×8 rectangle, with an area of 24cm^2 but a perimeter of 22cm . However, allowing **non-integer** sides could enable students to experiment on calculators to find that a $2.536... \times 9.464...$ rectangle has area and perimeter both equal to 24. (The exact dimensions are $6 + 2\sqrt{3}$ and $6 - 2\sqrt{3}$.)

2. Equable rectangles

Find some other rectangles that have **equal** area and perimeter.

Students may think that a 2×2 square satisfies these conditions, because $2 + 2 = 2 \times 2$, but $2 + 2$ is only the **semi-perimeter**, so it is actually a 4×4 square that satisfies the conditions. The only

other equable rectangle with integer sides is a 3×6 , but there are infinitely many with non-integer sides; in general an $l \times \frac{2l}{l-2}$ rectangle has area = perimeter = $\frac{2l^2}{l-2}$.

Students confident with Pythagoras's Theorem could attempt to find equable **triangles**. It turns out that there are only 5 different equable integer triangles; the two which are right-angled ($6-8-10$ and $5-12-13$) are easier to find than the other three ($6-25-29$, $7-15-20$ and $9-10-17$) (see Bradley, 2005, pp. 15-16).

Checking for understanding

Draw me two rectangles: one with an area **greater than** perimeter and one with an area **less than** perimeter. Clearly label which one is which and work out the area and the perimeter of both of them.



Colin Foster (@colinfoster77) is a Reader in Mathematics Education at the Mathematics Education Centre at Loughborough University. He has written many books and articles for mathematics teachers. foster77.co.uk

‘Teacher-led’ has its limits

Schools have long played a part in shaping young people’s morality, but the government’s new RSE demands risk taking this role a step too far, cautions Ian Mitchell...

From September 2021, the government’s statutory RSE curriculum for primary and secondary schools comes into effect, after the implementation deadline was moved back by 12 months.

According to the Secretary of State for Education, children need to know “How to manage their academic, personal and social lives in a positive way.” On sex and relationships specifically, RSE “should teach what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour in relationships.”

In the light of these new requirements, it’s worth reflecting upon the limits of teacher-led lessons, as there will be many teachers – often young and inexperienced – finding themselves having to teach children what a ‘positive relationship’ is like.

‘Acceptable and unacceptable’

When planning timetabled lessons, teachers are trained to identify objectives (what the students are going to do), which are distinct from outcomes – what the learners understand at the end of the lesson. Since lesson outcomes are unpredictable at the best of times, adopting a statutory RSE curriculum is likely to prove futile at best, and counterproductive at worst.

One way in which ‘Acceptable and unacceptable behaviour in relationships’ might be explored is by examining the notion of consent in relationships. When presenting information to a large class about consent, it’s inevitable that different individuals will reach

markedly different conclusions over how best to respond. Moreover, since consent itself is a difficult concept to discuss, such sessions could easily exacerbate existing uncertainties.

A secondary school teacher planning consent classes might consider showing students Thames Valley Police’s much-viewed three-minute video, ‘Tea and Consent’ (see bit.ly/ts106-ao1l), which explores the importance of sexual consent via the analogy of offering someone a cup of tea.

Whilst I applaud the video’s intention and slick execution, its efficacy rests upon the assumption that consenting to sex is comparable to consenting to a cup of tea. Is the emotional significance of sex not in danger of being trivialised? There is, after all, a world of difference between consenting to a cup of tea offered to make one feel better, and consenting to sex for similar reasons.

In a climate where ‘education’ is often proposed as a treatment for wider social problems, the government should keep in mind the limits of formal education. Frankly, it’s very difficult for teachers to approach such challenging subjects in a way that promotes relaxed discussion, while at the same time clearly identifying what is ‘acceptable’ and ‘unacceptable’.

Unpredictable outcomes

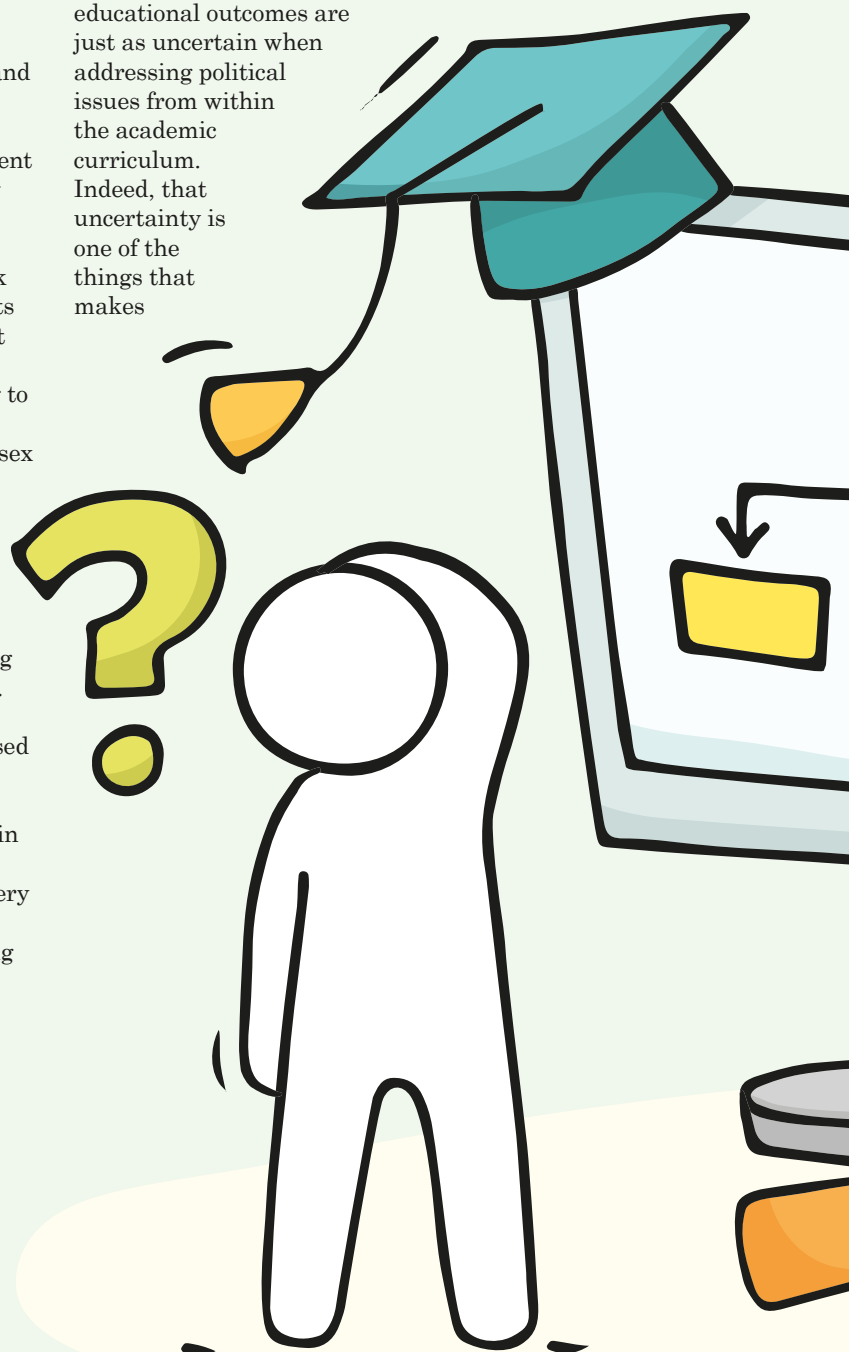
Consent is straightforward enough to define on the face of

it, but in real life situations, it’s infinitely harder to understand. The idea that teachers might be able to successfully ‘resolve’ relationship issues in timetabled lessons betrays a misunderstanding of what taught lessons are designed to achieve.

It can be argued that educational outcomes are just as uncertain when addressing political issues from within the academic curriculum. Indeed, that uncertainty is one of the things that makes

teaching so exciting.

J. B. Priestley’s *An Inspector Calls* is a case in point. Priestley’s play features a mysterious police inspector who visits a wealthy, middle class family to confront them over their treatment of a young, working class woman. The meanings



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and values of the play are outwardly sympathetic to socialism, but in my experience, the play's socialist agenda often provokes a robust defence of capitalism.

I saw for myself how *An Inspector Calls* isn't guaranteed to sell socialism when a 14-year-old girl, in pondering the merits of capitalism, shrugged and asked, 'But what's the alternative?' Having introduced a 'socialist' play to the class, I

was confronted with the sentiments of Margaret Thatcher – a vivid illustration of how lesson outcomes are rarely predictable, particularly in regard to political issues.

Clear messaging

I'm not suggesting that the RSE guidelines will only make things worse, or that schools don't contribute to children's moral character; reading literature, for instance, does much to help formulate our attitudes and values. Where the issue of consent is

concerned, a prudent pastoral tutor would point out to their sixth form boys where the law stands regarding the age of consent. Acknowledging what the law says sends out a clear message that's unlikely to be contradicted by anything an equally prudent parent might say.

Teaching what the law says about sex is explicit in the government's guidance. The problem lies in the inherent difficulty of 'teaching' the government's RSE

objectives, since they're context-dependent according to individual experience.

Having included scant mention of parents in its RSE document, the government has overlooked a crucial influence in every child's life. Long before attending any RSE lessons, students will have already 'caught' values from their parents and backgrounds. When the RSE curriculum states that pupils should know *'How to determine whether other children, adults or sources of information are trustworthy'*, it's granting schools the authority to overrule other adults. In effect, the government is encouraging children to scrutinise adult opinions that will inevitably include their own parents.

For many children, the values they've learned from their upbringing will resist the content of their RSE lessons; for others, their RSE lessons could bring them into conflict with the values of their families.

Moral character

Schools have long been expected to help shape the moral character of their students. In presenting his 1944 Education Act to parliament, R.A. Butler claimed that, *'Family life is the healthiest cell in the body politic. It is the Government's desire that family life shall be encouraged.'*

However, this shaping of moral character was hitherto achieved via the teaching of specific knowledge and/or implicit endorsement of family values. Supporting development is one thing; determining development is quite another.

Unfortunately, contemporary politicians increasingly see schools

and teachers in the same way that Priestley saw his enigmatic inspector – as agents of morality who can explicitly put the world to rights. While flattering, I fear that teachers are no more effective at combatting social problems, such as sexual harassment, than Priestley's inspector was at promoting socialism.

Relationships will obviously form an integral part of every young person's future, but questions remain as to whether teachers in the decontextualised environment of the classroom can instruct children in how to be 'good citizens'.

The truth is that education often works as an organic process, in which informal dialogue and conversations take place outside of established lesson objectives. Impromptu discussions between lessons are far more likely to succeed in challenging some of the wider problems facing young people.

If schools end up playing a role in students' moral development, it's unlikely to be because of weekly timetabled lessons. Teachers have perhaps become too skilled at spoon-feeding academic material in a way that enables children to pass tests. From September 2021, I suspect that these new RSE lessons will serve to remind teachers that not everything can be summarised via a few PowerPoint slides...



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Ian Mitchell has worked as a teacher of English and psychology for 22 years across both the state and independent sectors

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Creative confidence

We've seen how important the arts are to school life, now more than ever – which is why the government's recently announced funding cuts are such a grave misstep, says Alice King-Farlow

Over the past year, the National Theatre has reached over 91,600 students, teachers and education professionals across the UK through creative learning programmes, including virtual technical courses and creative playwriting courses. Over 4,100 schools are signed up to watch NT productions at home and in classrooms through the NT Collection, and we've created 111 new digital learning products this year. We've also been able to work with over 200 freelance artists to support the delivery of our learning programmes.

The NT building is usually abuzz with young people throughout the year discovering the magic of theatre, many for the first time – from youth theatre groups showcasing productions they've created at the Connections Festival, to pupils discovering hidden roles backstage through workshops and talks.

While we've had fewer students through our doors this year, the NT has been able to adapt its programmes following the closure of schools and theatres to ensure that pupils can continue participating in creative activities, watch productions and keep the spark for theatre alive.

Resilience and innovation

This past year has seen the NT work with a vast number of teachers. Its digitised content has fitted flexibly around teachers' busy schedules, while minimising cost and travel expenses. 72% of all UK state secondary schools are now signed up to the NT Collection, enabling them to watch renowned past NT productions including *Peter Pan*,

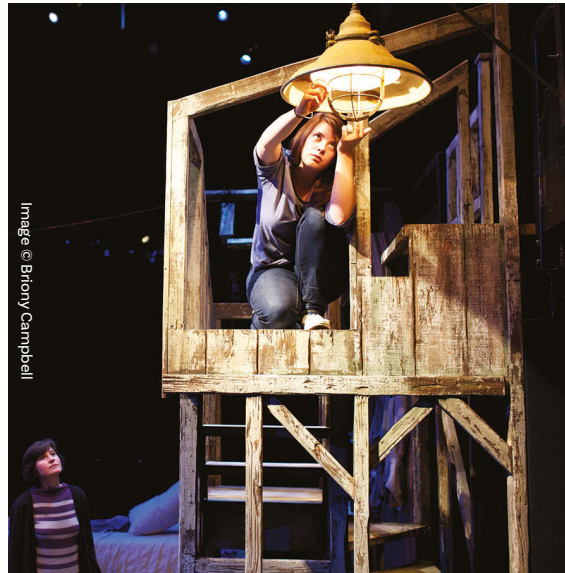


Image © Briony Campbell

Treasure Island and *King Lear*.

Resources have been posted to schools and pupils at home – ranging from mini technical parcels containing torches and circuit boards, to help students explore the technical craft of theatre production, to crates of props that can accompany explorations of the NT's newly created film of *Romeo and Juliet*. We know that drama teaching is a practical subject, with pupils learning through participation and creation, and have been inspired by the resilience and innovation shown by teachers who have continued teaching the subject. We remain determined to meet teachers' needs and provide useful resources to support them, however we can.

As students embark on a new academic year, it's

important that they can continue having access to creative and cultural opportunities as part of a broad and balanced education. We must respond to what young people need right now, and work with teachers and educators in devising programmes that allow young people to explore those issues that are important to them, while giving students the space to be creative and develop their confidence, self-expression and critical thinking skills.

Prioritising creativity

Following recent proposals to cut 50% of funding for creative and performing arts subjects at universities, classifying them as 'lower priority' in the process, the NT is determined to show just how important

a role the arts play within school life. Teachers from across the curriculum have told us how they prioritise creativity within their classrooms.

Prior to the pandemic, the creative industries grew at four times the rate of the UK economy, employing some 2 million people across all regions and creating jobs at three times the rate of the UK average. The creative industries represent a portion of the UK's fastest growing and most internationally competitive sectors; we must ensure that the sector's vital talent pipeline isn't diminished.

Funding cuts will inevitably result in the reduced availability of arts courses, thus limiting, rather than expanding opportunities, widening existing inequalities and lowering participation rates in higher education.

The students of today studying creative subjects are tomorrow's art, music and performing arts teachers and youth arts professionals. A level of funding that helps maintain a broad provision of courses is therefore critical to the future of arts and creative disciplines within schools, as well as arts-based extracurricular activities that help support wider wellbeing.

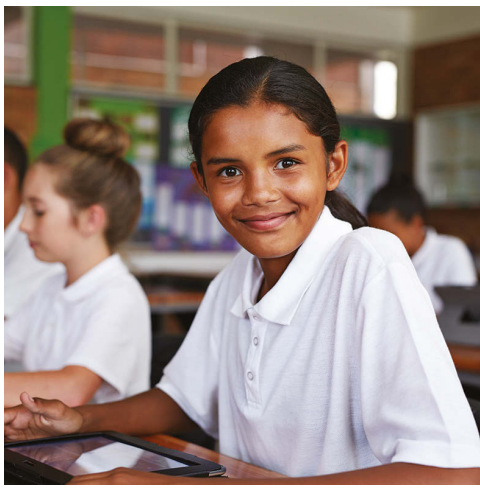
After a year of disruption, the creative sector is now building back. We must do all we can to continue supporting teachers and the next generation of learners.

National Theatre

The NT makes theatre for everyone, staging productions in London, on tour nationwide and worldwide and via digital broadcasts, while supporting creative education through nationwide learning programmes.



Alice King-Farlow is director of learning at the National Theatre; for more details, visit nationaltheatre.org.uk/learning or follow @NationalTheatre



ASK THE EXPERT

“Every child has been affected”

Irenka Suto explains why assessment provider CEM has turned its attention to student and teacher wellbeing

1 You've recently carried out some research into teacher wellbeing – as an assessment provider, what was your motivation for doing so?

The pandemic has been tough in so many ways. Every child – and every learning journey – has been affected, and so have our hard-working teachers. They've negotiated an ever-changing 'new normal', as schools and colleges have moved through stages of closure and reopening.

This has included widespread adjustment to new, remote and 'blended' teaching arrangements. We wanted to understand more about what teachers are going through, as we're here to help make their working lives easier.

2 What did the findings indicate, in terms of how teachers are currently feeling?

It's no surprise that both in the UK and internationally, teachers are experiencing lower levels of wellbeing this year. The main driver for this appears to be an increased workload. Also, while most teachers can use online platforms successfully, many find it challenging to teach both remotely and in person simultaneously.

3 What about students' wellbeing?

We've also conducted research with students. It's well-established that social interactions with their teachers and one another are critical to wellbeing and pedagogy. During lockdown, even students attending school spent less time interacting with teachers and peers, and more time working independently.

Going forward, most students – whether they attended school or worked remotely during lockdown – are eager for more interactive learning via whole class work, small group work and pair work.



EXPERT PROFILE

NAME:

Irenka Suto

JOB TITLE:

Assistant Director of Assessment

AREA OF EXPERTISE:

Psychological and educational assessment research

BEST PART OF MY JOB:

Working with teachers and students to better understand their assessment needs and how we can improve educational experiences

4 What key challenges can teachers expect to encounter across the coming academic year?

Our research indicates that many teachers have found their students to be less engaged than usual, which affects them too. They also reported that attainment gaps between the most and least able students appear to have widened.

Teaching and supporting more disparate groups of students with more varied needs will certainly be a key challenge. And of course, we don't yet know the implications of the proposed arrangements for summer 2022.

5 What practical steps or actions should teachers prioritise this September?

Teachers need to anchor their understanding of each student with reliable information. Alongside understanding students' wellbeing, teachers should have objective, benchmarked data from well-standardised assessments.

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What to expect from your new Y7s

Y6 teacher **Lou Walker** serves up some pointers to heed when welcoming that new cohort of fresh-faced Y7s into your school...

For most children, the anxieties that accompany their transition to 'big school' can be successfully managed one way or another.

However, as a Y6 teacher, I regularly hear about children who have trouble coping. I've fielded calls from Y7 staff who describe 'problem children' barely recognisable from the angels that left me just months ago – many of whom go on to move schools again before they even reach Y8.

The 2021/22 cohort will find their secondary transitions tougher than virtually any before them. These are children who will have experienced two prolonged periods of home learning, not to mention huge amounts of disruption to their in-school learning – so here are some things to look out for.

Best efforts

It's worth remembering that the impact of the pandemic has been far from consistent. Some children may have actually experienced some academic benefits, via the smaller-sized classes attended by the children of key workers, or the one-to-one help some home learners may have received from their parents. Then there are the many children who will have fallen through the net, or not made the progress required, despite best efforts. Research suggests that pupils from poorer families, particularly those



entitled to free school meals, are among the worst affected.

Secondary schools will see some impact of this in foundation subjects, notably English grammar and punctuation. The scrapping of the GPS assessment (forever the poor relation of the SATs) has resulted in a more practical teaching of grammar and punctuation throughout Y6. Ask your new cohort to tell you about the subjunctive mood or present perfect tense, and I'm confident you'll be met with blank faces – though children will surely survive their introduction to secondary school without possessing this knowledge...

Lack of independence, however, is an area where you'll likely notice greater all-round impact. Children

whose parents were able to sit with them through home learning may have been well-placed to benefit academically from lockdown, but with those parents essentially acting as one-to-ones, they'll have been denied important opportunities for independent learning.

Above all, this cohort have had markedly fewer opportunities for growing up. Most will have missed out on the Y6 residential trip that often represents their first extended time away from parents. Bubbles will have been stuck in classrooms, denying children the chance to demonstrate that they're the oldest and most responsible children in their school by, for example, becoming prefects.

Into the unknown

The 2021/22 cohort seem generally younger, more heavily reliant on adult support and ultimately unproven as independent learners. The gap between more nurturing primary schools and comparatively hands-off secondary schools has never been greater.

Finally, there's the transition itself. Many children won't have been able to visit their new school – to be welcomed through its doors and receive reassurance about the years ahead. Far fewer student representatives will have been able to visit their feeder schools. These children are stepping into the great unknown.

My advice to Y7 teachers and leaders would therefore be to go in soft. These children need to feel reassured and welcome. Place them with their friends. Don't be too concerned about a 'catch-up agenda' and don't be too quick to stream them on ability. Their learning has undergone too many recent fluctuations, but will even out, given more consistency.

If restrictions allow, build in some fun activities that can take place away from the school site; the children will be missing these more than their basic academic skills. Their secondary education will be a long process; getting it right in Y7 will pay dividends later on.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Louis Walker is a primary teacher based in Essex

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Despite long-running issues that require urgent – and in some areas, radical – change to the education system, there are some major barriers preventing any real progress from being made...

Melissa Benn



I first starting writing seriously about schools and schools policy 20 years ago. When recently going back through some of those early articles, two things struck me.

On the one hand, we still have the grossly unequal education system that I was so fired up about two decades ago – including massive gaps between the private and state sectors, the deforming impact of selection at the age of 11 in many parts of the country and few well-resourced schools in disadvantaged areas. On the other hand, no-one can failed to have noticed how dramatically the school landscape has been reshaped since then...

Vague ideas

The academies programme first introduced under Tony Blair had some features in common with the City Technology Colleges brought in under the Conservatives in the 1980s, in that CTCs and academies were both marketed as ‘independent state schools’, free from local authority control.

Crucially, however, there then followed the post-2010 Free Schools programme and mass academisation under the Coalition, which gave rise to the formation of MATs.

In politics, language is vitally important. Politicians of both parties have traditionally relied on the public being impressed by terms like ‘independent’ – with its disingenuous allusions to better resourced private schools – and vague ideas of freedom and lack of state control.

In fact, it’s more accurate to see the academies programme, which ties schools more directly to the edits of Whitehall ministers, as the more rigid,

top-down model.

Teachers’ pay and conditions are no longer set according to national benchmarks, while some school heads earn ludicrously high salaries. Some larger MATs have little connection to their schools’ local communities, and there’s clear evidence that significant amounts of public funding have been wasted in the operation of the scheme as a whole.

Exhausted by change

Despite this, anyone proposing a different model of school organisation currently faces some major hurdles. The teaching profession is exhausted by change. Many school leaders would actively resist any further upheaval – particularly if framed as a return to LAs, many of which have been diminished by years of neglect, reluctant collusion in austerity and replacement by metro and regional mayors’ offices.

At the same time, thanks to our pro-Conservative media, some sections of the public are convinced that academies have raised standards, despite ever-shifting accountability measures making this impossible to prove.

Meanwhile, Labour remains divided over the merits of academies. Some school leaders argue that small MATs can work well, enabling local groups of schools to support each other in terms of improvement and at times of crisis.

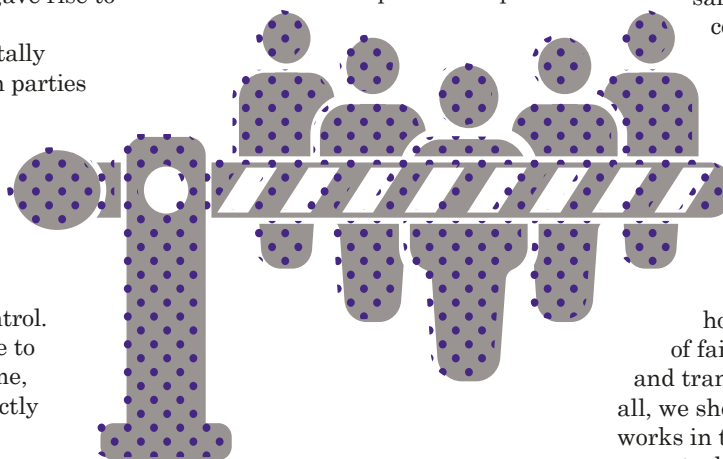
I would maintain that we still need radical reform, but it’s a complicated picture. Anyone who wants to improve the system needs to think through all of the above challenges honestly, while recognising that the left’s approach to debating structural reform can sometimes confuse, and even irritate voters.

An optimistic story

For Labour to get back on the front foot, it needs to tell an optimistic story of what state education has achieved – and could yet achieve – with the right conditions in place. The COVID crisis has highlighted the need for local oversight and collaboration, and sharpened public distrust of cronyism.

It should be acknowledged that small, federated groups of schools can work well, so long as they’re inclusive. Shift academy contracts to LAs, not Whitehall. Place key areas, like salaries, under Parliamentary control. Increase the transparency of school governance and simplify school admissions. Let academies return to their LAs if they wish, and allow LAs to build new schools where local conditions require it.

We should emphasise how important the principles of fairness, local collaboration, and transparency really are. Above all, we should speak more about what works in the interests of children, parents, heads and teachers.



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With teachers having shown their mettle and succeeding in keeping the educational show on the road during 2011, the time has now come for an education revolution...

Jaz Ampaw-Farr



There was no map to follow. No blueprint telling you what to think, feel, say or do. Yet you still managed to traverse the rocky road from suffering to survival – some days thriving, and always driving change.

Going 'back to normal' isn't an option. Was your 'normal' allowing you to be your best and make space for joy, or were you busy multitasking from the moment you woke up, spending more time than you'd like on emails and less than needed on your own wellbeing?

Everyday heroes

Teachers owe it to themselves to be more intentional in their post-pandemic way of being. If 'normal' wasn't meeting your needs, then why not seize the opportunity presented by this earthquake to rebuild a life lived more aligned with your own values – one that lets you acknowledge and celebrate the difference you make every day?

You're only as powerful as the story you tell, so tell a compelling one. Assertions like 'Our school is good' don't convey the degree to which you form the beating heart of your local community, with staff standing shoulder to shoulder alongside children and families during a time of huge adversity.

As an educator, you'll be used to confronting massive challenges (because it's not as if teaching was easy before the pandemic) – but over the past year and a half, every single day has seen schools placed on high alert, with staff doing their best to provide certainty for students during a period of drastic uncertainty.

You're nothing short of everyday heroes – people passionate about shaping young lives, and who regularly make a real difference. The long hours, the time you spent doing more with less, the lack of recognition – don't let any of that make you forget just how powerful you really are

Success stories

I hold you up as everyday heroes because I'm one of your many untold success stories. Statistically, I should be dead, or lost to substance abuse and sexual exploitation, but five key teachers were able to interrupt my trajectory by building ACE relationships with me – Authentic, Consistent and with high Expectations.

Growing up in poverty, against a backdrop of physical, mental and sexual abuse meted out by my parents, I lived a life of chaos. At home, I was afraid, angry and hopeless, but in school I felt safe. I was welcomed with a warm, friendly smile and provided with food. I belonged.

My teachers did small things that made a big impression and gave me hope. Mrs Cook's belief in me gave me the bravery to flee from the pimp I was living with at the age of 11 and turn myself in at a local police station.

In that moment, I did something that I knew would make Mrs Cook proud.

That's *your* story. I am the difference *you* make. The impact you have can never be measured in a set of exam results, because you're so much more than that. Because of everyday heroes like you, I became a teacher myself. I wanted to pay it forward, and prove to every adult in my school family that they were right to invest in me.

Is any of this sinking in? Are you hearing me? Your. Work. Changes. Lives.

Futureproof yourself

What lockdown did was shine a spotlight on schools and how their staff stepped up. Also stepping up were a number of businesses, including edtech provider GCSEPod, with whom I was delighted to work on a competition to celebrate everyday heroes in schools across the country.

Now that the world has witnessed just how powerful schools are at surviving, thriving and driving change, let's take this opportunity to revolutionise education from the bottom up. It's not going to be easy, of course – being a committed teacher and staying in the profession is hard, but look at how you've managed to survive, thrive and drive change during a period of incredible adversity.

Well, it's now time to futureproof yourself by taking control. Don't let anyone else write your story of excellence for you, but listen to the stories your students tell about you, as these are likely to be far more accurate than the *'I'm just a <insert school role here>'* tale you tell yourself. The truth about the impact you have is right there – so measure that!





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After the strangeness and distance of recent results days, a return to standard exam arrangements and triumphant celebrations would be welcome – though the likelihood of that still seems far from certain...

Vic Goddard



The huge volume of work created by teacher assessed grades has been undeniable. I have no doubt that the hardest job in secondary schools this exam cycle was being a head of department, especially in core subjects. Different exam boards, and even subjects within the same exam board, all did different things. Some decided that COVID had little impact on student learning and that therefore no content would need to be removed. Others thought differently.

I'm sure I'm not the only teacher who lost sleep trying to work out exactly what was meant by the vague guidance, driven by the worry of ensuring that our young people wouldn't be disadvantaged by a decision I made. However, we all made it out of the other end with most of our sanity intact.

Solo collections

Results days have been really weird these last couple of years. Like most schools, we have a traditional way of organising this very important event, and even without exams we've tried to maintain the feel of the day. It felt much more like it should have done this year, because we were able to stand and chat with the young people and their families. Last year it all felt very distant, and far from the celebration it ought to have been.

We also had cameras from ITV in with us, as we thought

that might help make the day feel exciting and build a lasting memory for our students. But what the TV crew noticed was really interesting.

The number of young people coming to collect results on their own this year was the highest I'd ever seen, and duly commented on by our TV guests. I'll admit that I was surprised, as our engagement with parents/carers is probably the strongest we've ever had – so why didn't they come along? Did they trust us and simply not feel the need to? Do the results mean less without the exams? Were they still being COVID cautious?

The shared challenges of the last 18 months has led to increased communication between ourselves and our families, and in turn empowered many of them to get in touch more regularly about their child. This is something that I know has happened in lots of schools, and one of the positives that we hope to maintain. Still, it would have been lovely to see more of them on results day – something for us to consider for next year!

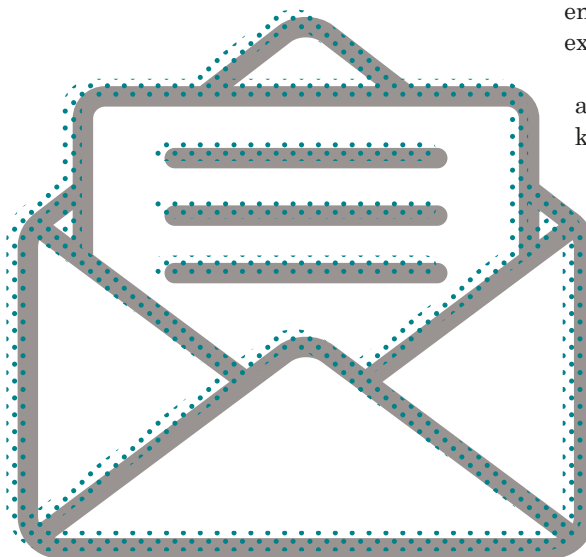
'Informal' exams

Happily, it didn't go unnoticed by the TV crew that when a young person arrived without a parent/carers, a member of staff tracked them from a distance to see if they stayed to open their envelope in school, and ensure they could have someone there to support them and celebrate with.

I think celebration has been conspicuously missing from many young people's lives recently, along with a sense of achievement. No matter how many times we told our students that they had earned their results, this messaging was frequently undermined by news and social media coverage posing questions along the lines of "*Will these results always be seen as being of less worth than previous years?*" – by the same media that often highlights the challenges around children's mental health, I hasten to add!

The unspoken truth is that some young people in schools sat more 'informal' exams, because of the fear we all had of being told we didn't have enough evidence than if the 'formal' exams still went ahead.

As we move back to an exam-based assessment system, it's vital that we keep in mind that the next cohort of Y11s and Y13s have missed as much learning as those who received CAGs or TAGs. Whilst I'd personally welcome the return of examinations, I don't think it's as simple as our political leaders are currently suggesting. I hope too that our teaching unions and other involved groups speak up loudly for them – those parents/carers and staff who will lose sleep worrying about what next year might hold.



Vic Goddard is co-principal at Passmores Academy – as seen on Channel 4's *Educating Essex* – and author of *The Best Job in the World* (Independent Thinking Press, £14.99)



CLASSROOM LIFE

A genuine alternative

Dr Jonty Clark OBE talks us through The Beckmead Trust's plans to open a community surplus hub at one of its alternative provision schools

Beckmead Moundwood Academy academised four years ago and formally joined The Beckmead Trust in May last year.

The building was in a very poor state, but we were fortunate to receive an environmental improvement grant from the DfE, allowing us to perform a series of curriculum-related refurbishments in the form of a music room, a food tech room and an IT suite. We've also set about installing a new roof and replacing windows, doors, radiators and electrical fittings, as well as acquiring additional furniture.

We can now plan for the future with a better degree of certainty, having negotiated a funding arrangement with Essex County Council whereby they will block book all of the school's places. Funding for alternative provision settings typically comes from places block-booked by LAs and placements from local mainstream schools for children identified as being of concern – an arrangement with some positives, but often difficult to financially plan around in terms of staffing.

Shopping experience

I was first introduced to Pesh Kapasiawala, founder and CEO of the charity 3Food4U, by Wells Park School – an excellent residential primary school that will be joining the Beckmead Trust in January next year.



WE BELIEVE IN THE PRINCIPLE OF SOCIAL PEDAGOGY, THE BASIS OF WHICH IS THAT CHILDREN NEED TO BE OWNED AND EDUCATED BY THEIR COMMUNITIES. WHEN THAT HAPPENS, IT CAN BREAK DOWN BARRIERS AND MUTUAL FEARS AND HAVE A SIGNIFICANT POSITIVE IMPACT ON YOUNG PEOPLE'S CHOICES – SUCH AS THE LIKELIHOOD OF THEM CARRYING WEAPONS.

**DR JONTY CLARK
OBE, CEO OF THE
BECKMEAD TRUST**

3Food4U runs what it calls 'community surplus hubs' that provide free food, home essentials, clothes and toys to families on a non-referral basis. We know that some of our families can find referral and voucher systems challenging and at times humiliating, on top of the strain of being unable to feed and care for their children. I visited 3Food4U's permanent site, and was hugely inspired by the operation and vision of their resource.

I saw how those using the provision were given a shopping-style experience, and witnessed some fantastic interactions between the users and volunteers. I was also impressed by their supply chain, and how the available items included toiletries, bunches of flowers and many other goods that went beyond basic 'subsistence' items. It very much echoed the sense of respect we try to afford some of our children and families, hence our decision to open a 3Food4U hub on the school's premises using funds raised from a sponsored 50k marathon.

The school, formerly TBAP Aspire Academy, had a very public moment in 2019 when it was featured on the BBC's *Panorama* programme, when

it was in an unhappy place. After taking on the school ourselves, we and the LA both felt that there had been a disconnect between the school and the local community. For us, the opening of the 3Food4U hub is one of the ways in which we hope to reconnect the school with the local community, open it up and show people that schools working with disadvantaged children can form an important part of local provision.

Giving back

Our plan is to have the hub open for one afternoon a week after school finishes, with donation windows and storage facilities available at the school. Once it's established, our intention is to install a chicken run and plant a small orchard at some point next year, which will give our students a better science curriculum, as well as opportunities to learn about the links between produce and consumption.

The families of children attending the school are generally nice, responsible people who may have been deskilled or experienced a catalogue of disadvantage for a number of reasons. Like

IN NUMBERS

Trust student population:
300 approx.

Schools:
6, with a further 4 due to be opened by 2022

Moundwood Academy population:
90 student places (53 currently on roll as the school undergoes restructuring) and 30 staff

most people, if they receive the right opportunities and support, they'll want to give back.

Our experiences so far with 3Food4U have shown us that for those using their hubs regularly, it will usually be an intervention that carries them through a difficult time. Once that difficult time is over, they'll frequently return to offer support, volunteer and help others in a similar position.

There's a clear link from our current plans with the Moundwood hub to the services provided by other schools within the trust. In January we opened Roundwood School and Community Centre in Brent, which has a strong out of hours community offering. Community groups can use the site's high quality facilities in return for volunteering hours and contributing to the school's timetable.

That's motivated in part by alternative funding being extremely tight, but also because we believe that alternative provision ought to be genuinely alternative. At Roundwood we therefore have mixed martial arts, art, drama, music, cooking and various sporting activities

taking place out of hours, with the providers all contributing sessions during the school days.

Metrics for success

Having worked in special education for 35 years, the metrics for success I pay most attention to can often be quite subjective. As far as Moundwood's 3Food4U hub is concerned, I would expect us to have some long-term users, but also some degree of mobility, and eventually support being provided by former users who may have called upon its support in the short-term. I would love to see us being able to increase our engagement with the local community via volunteering efforts.

Thus far, we've been astonished and humbled by the local response to the community hub at Roundwood. For now at least, demand certainly isn't an issue. We're gradually increasing the number of providers we work with as the school settles, but in my view, anything that helps to embed the school in the local area, and drive improvements in social cohesion and social mobility, would indicate to me that we're heading in the right direction.

Alternative provision can be highly complex, variable and almost impenetrable, to a degree. Quite often, families and their children will struggle to get their heads around what it is we actually do. *Will I be there for the short term or long term? Am I being punished?* It can be confusing, and often seemingly dislocated from the wider education system.

The risk can be that alternative provision diverges away from what it should be – largely a short-term intervention aimed at placing kids somewhere where they can succeed. For that to work, you ultimately have to be embedded within your local community. Only then will



you be able to offer good work experience placements via a local network, establish productive connections with local colleges and provide engaging opportunities within the wider community. That's what kids who the mainstream hasn't been successful for ultimately need most – something genuinely alternative.

Social pedagogy

As things stand, however, funding is so tight that too often, what they actually get is a narrower curriculum and fewer opportunities than what's available within mainstream education, which is no good for our kids. They need something different.

We believe in the principle

of social pedagogy, the basis of which is that children need to be owned and educated by their communities. When that happens, it can break down barriers and mutual fears and have a significant positive impact on young people's choices – such as the likelihood of them carrying weapons on their person.

If they're confident that there are engaging pathways open to them and comfortable in where they live – knowing they can visit local shops without people being scared of them, for example – then great things happen. But getting there has to involve more than schools alone can provide.

Community connection

3food4u founder and CEO Pesh Kapasiawala reflects on the charity's partnership with The Beckmead Trust

3food4u operates a series of community surplus hubs to provide essential groceries to those struggling in Essex. Our unique ethos means we don't require referrals or assessments, and anyone in need can access free food, home products, clothes and toys donated by local supermarkets, restaurants and individuals.

We are excited to partner with Moundwood Academy and The Beckmead Trust to support the local community. This will be our first school hub, and we look forward to seeing the additional benefits this will bring. For one, we hope it will make our service more accessible to the families who attend the school or live nearby.

We also plan for the school to supply food grown on its grounds. This will offer an exciting opportunity for Moundwood students, all of whom have social, emotional and mental health needs, to learn how different foods are produced, gain hands-on experience and give back to the community.

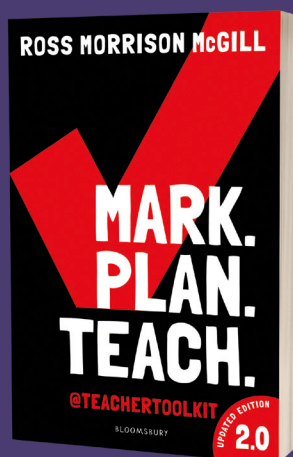
We have already had a great experience of working with the Trust so far, not least due to our shared ethos of treating and supporting people humanely, with dignity and respect. Our doors will open this autumn and if successful, we hope to expand this model within the Beckmead Trust and other educational organisations to support those in crisis.



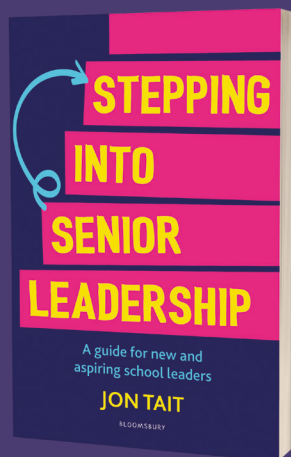
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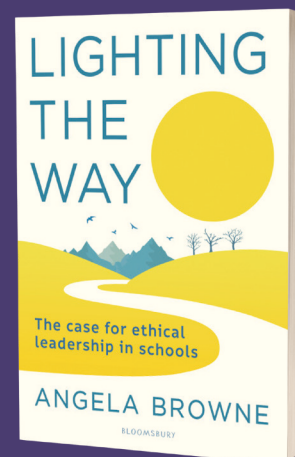
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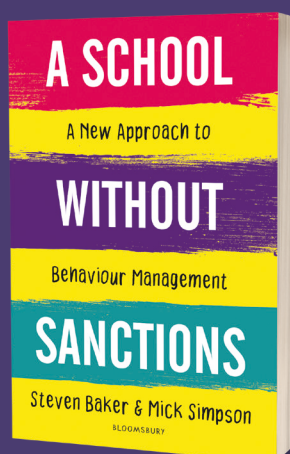


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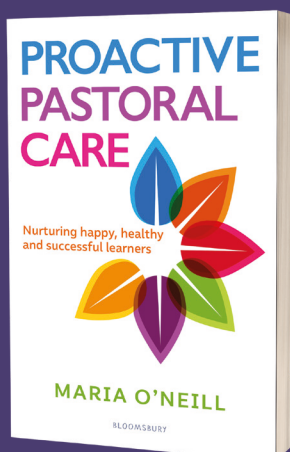


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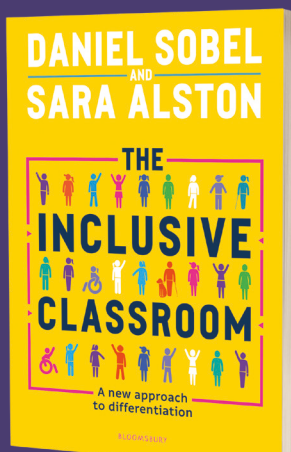


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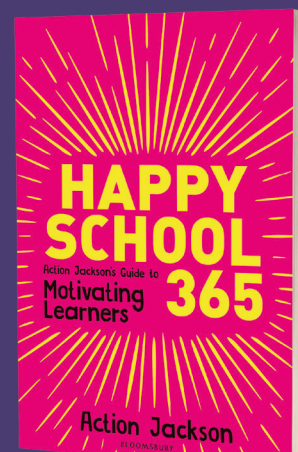
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BACK TO SCHOOL SALE

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3 things we've learnt about... HOW PARENTS CHOOSE THEIR SCHOOL

When deciding on which school to send their children to, what's the main information that parents will want to know, and where do they expect to find it?

1 Local is important, but kids are willing to travel

For many parents, a school that's near to their home or convenient to get to is key. While you obviously can't change the location of your school, you may want to tell prospective parents about its official catchment area and (if it's different) where your current cohort travel from.

Do bear in mind, however, that over a third of children don't attend the school that's located nearest to where they live. As you might expect, this is particularly applicable to secondary schools (where 42% don't attend their closest school) and sixth forms (where that figure rises to 60%). It's also worth noting that around 1 in 10 parents say that they've moved house to get into a particular school – and that 50% state they'd do it too, if they could afford it!

2 Are you open for visitors?

If it's practical for you to organise site visits between now and the end of the autumn term, they will definitely be appreciated by parents and prospective students. In pre-COVID days gone by, an overwhelming 9 out of 10 parents made a point of visiting at least one secondary school before making their choice. It doesn't seem to make much difference whether they have older children already attending the school; in most cases, they still want to visit.

Around 50% of parents will commence the process of choosing a school more than a year before applications are due, so if you need to restrict numbers this year, providing clarity as to which year's intake are allowed to visit could be the fairest way to do it. Regardless of whether your school is open to visitors or not, your website is vital. 71% of parents considering a particular secondary school will visit its website first.

3 What's the most important thing parents look for?

For most parents, there won't be just one reason for choosing a school but many. Location is important, but over half of secondary school parents say that they're also looking for a school that has an inclusive ethos where all pupils are valued; a senior leadership team that's 'effective'; discipline and behaviour policies which work to promote effective learning; well qualified teachers – and good exam results! Around a third of parents will additionally take the school's latest Ofsted rating into account when making their decision.

Whilst these are all things that most schools will already be mindful of, it's important to communicate your approaches in these areas clearly, by ensuring that they're detailed on your school's website and in your prospectus so that parents can easily find them.

**WHAT ARE
THE MOST
IMPORTANT
FACTORS WHEN
CHOOSING A
SCHOOL FOR
YOUR CHILDREN?**



Location

74%

Discipline and behaviour which promote effective learning

66%

Ofsted inspection rating

31%

Well-qualified teachers

56%

Examination results

51%

Inclusive ethos where all pupils are valued

75%

Effectiveness of school's senior leadership team

68%

Reputation for taking parents'/carers' views into account

31%

Links with the local community

27%

Parent responses were collected by Parent Ping and vary between 550 and 1,567, depending on the date asked.

For more snappy insights like this, download the free Parent Ping app for iOS and Android – you will learn something new every day.

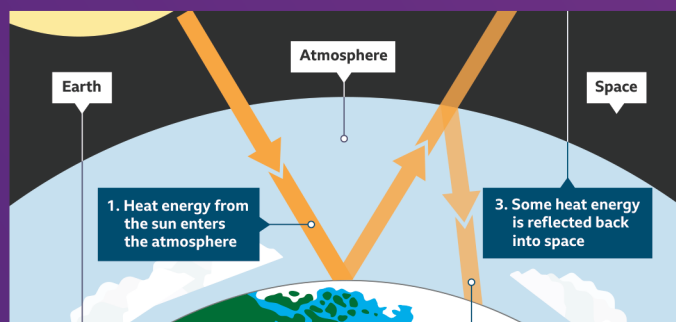
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WHAT I LEARNT AT SCHOOL

Broadcaster Steph McGovern looks back on the confidence and workplace experience she received at what was then a somewhat controversial school...

I went to what was, at the time, a newly-formed City Technology College – a Tory initiative in the 90s to try and marry education and industry.

I lived in Middlesbrough, historically a place of heavy industry, but also often at the rubbish end of the deprivation statistics. The school was therefore an educational experiment of sorts, and quite controversial when it first opened. It had a number of industrial sponsors, including British American Tobacco, so there are a few photos of me shaking hands with the company's chairman – little did I know...

As a student, I was your classic swot but also the class clown, always trying to strike a balance between doing well at school and making my mates laugh. I think I just wanted people to like me – standard 'TV presenter syndrome'!

The school was located in a tough part of Middlesbrough, with students from a real mix of backgrounds, and had a really egalitarian ethos, in the sense of, *'All children have skills, whatever their family's background.'* We were always taught to put what we learned into practice, so we were forever visiting businesses and got to use some amazing facilities



at the school. There was a TV studio on site, so instead of assemblies being held in the hall they'd be broadcast to TVs in the classrooms. Some of us also produced a college news bulletin.

Our teachers were great at making us feel as confident as the kids who went to the local public school, because they were who we were up against when taking part in various inter-school schemes and events. In a very down to earth, non-patronising way, our teachers would say *'What have they got that you haven't? Get yourselves in there and do your best.'* I've always done well since then by following that mentality.

The useful careers advice we received was mostly by proxy, because the main concern of the school's

sponsors was *'What are the kids learning that will actually help them in our business?'* That's partly why I now regularly work with schools and teachers. I've been to see Gavin Williamson, sat in his office and told him all this, because I think the government's requirements mean that teachers now have to be very narrowly focused in what they do. I run a regular school careers event, for example, and we've often had to hold it on Sports Day because it's the only date that won't clash with the school's curriculum-related learning.

As things stand, schools are forced to be like sausage factories, getting students in at one end and pumping them out at the other so that

they're all the same, rather than recognising their differences and playing to whatever their individual strengths and weaknesses might be.

The school I went to gave me the confidence to recognise my skills for what they were and apply for things, because what's the worst that can happen? So I'd email the bosses of programmes I liked, asking about work experience opportunities, or whether I could just come in and see what they did for a day. That helped me get my start on *Tomorrow's World*, before working my way up through the ranks at the BBC.

I'd have loved for my younger self to know that who I am, and what makes me different compared to others was a good thing, rather than a bad thing. When I've visited schools, my main focus is on overcoming kids' belief that they don't have any skills. I once worked with a group of 40 who were about to go out into the world having passed hardly any exams. When asked to write down the skills they had, none of them wrote anything.

So I asked one of them what they'd been doing the previous weekend. He said he was working, and there it was – *'Where? The local Chinese? Great. You were serving customers? That's a skill.'* If he didn't know about the transferable skills he already had, because he 'wasn't good' at maths or English, then what are we doing?

That's my mission, now – to help kids, particularly those from deprived backgrounds, know that they are skilled, despite not thinking that they are.

Steph McGovern is a journalist and broadcaster, and the presenter of *Steph's Packed Lunch*, which returns to Chanel 4 for a new series on September 6th; follow her at @StephLunch

“New teachers can feel OVERWHELMED”

Pete Foster welcomes the arrival of the Early Career Framework, but cautions that schools owe their NQTs more than the bare minimum of support and assistance...

During the first placement of my PGCE, I observed a class so terrifying that I did all I could to avoid ever having to teach them.

I watched as the nervous teacher got through what she could between fights and thrown chairs. One boy had previously escaped through an open window. Every time he stood up, my neck jerked away from the door towards the windows at the back of the room.

After one particularly tough lesson, I chatted with the teacher, offering no consolation – I had none to give. She stood up, paused, and said, “People say it gets easier, but it doesn’t.” When it comes to unhelpful things I heard throughout my PGCE, that statement is without parallel. It also isn’t true.

Inconsistent improvement

The admission that beginning to teach can be hard is too often confused with the sense that it *must* be hard, or that every aspect of it has to be a near-insurmountable challenge.

Long-serving teachers will sometimes cling to the strange belief that new teachers should have to suffer as they once did: *‘I had to mark all my books every day in three different colours – so should they! I taught six groups across 14 rooms – it’s only fair that*

they do the same. I had to manage behaviour through the dwindling force of my personality – why should they be any different?’

Given time, the vast majority of teachers will get better. And as they get better, the job gets easier. That teaching quality improves with experience is well known, well observed and, well, rather obvious. But new teachers aren’t a homogenous group. Improvement doesn’t happen at the same rate or to the same degree within all schools, or even to all teachers.

Teachers will tend to improve faster, and for longer, in supportive environments where leaders manage behaviour well, and focus on development.

Much-needed knowledge

Until recently, new teachers would effectively enter a kind of lottery when joining the profession. Some schools would be unfailingly supportive, while others were known to throw NQTs to the lions (AKA Y9) and simply expect them to cope.

This year, however, the DfE has taken concrete steps to make the transition from trainee teacher to new teacher that little bit easier. The Early Career Framework (see bit.ly/ts106-nqt1)

offers both the knowledge and support new teachers need. A resourced curriculum will guide early career teachers (ECTs) through how to build routines, deal with low-level disruption and lead effective pair

and group work. Instructional coaching – a process of regular observations and precise, actionable feedback – is now widely



“When we provide resources, we minimise the wheels new teachers have to reinvent”

available to ECTs.

However, the Early Career Framework won't automatically make life easier for new teachers – effective implementation remains vital. It's dangerous to lean too heavily into the fact that a framework now exists, without investigating whether your school is a genuinely supportive environment. Schools, leaders and mentors all need to recognise the spectrum of options at our disposal when it comes to supporting ECTs.

Teachers' cognitive lead

The research is clear – new teachers can feel overwhelmed by things that rarely trouble experienced staff. An experienced teacher can get students into the room, take in homework and usher a bee out of the window, barely conscious

of each step in the process.

In stark contrast, a new teacher will struggle to get all that done without major incident. The children don't settle. Arguments over the homework – with blame thrown at unreliable printers and home internet connections – delay the start of the lesson. The class' reaction to the bee's presence is, frankly, a little over the top. The new teacher knows they need to get these things right, but doesn't know where to start.

Learning student names. Understanding the curriculum. Setting and checking homework. Applying the behaviour policy. The enthusiasm new teachers might feel for all this can be significantly dampened if it's not channelled into a manageable sequence.

Experienced teachers might find it easy to diagnose the problems with a given lesson, but offering a blow-by-blow account of *what you would have done* is incredibly unhelpful.

New teachers need actionable next steps. That's true of lesson observations, but it's also applicable to how ECTs will use their PPA

time, how they interact with parents, how they give feedback and lots more besides.

The importance of planning

Before the pandemic, I was at a meeting of mentors for a local training provider. This was a chance for those lacking in self-awareness to share bad ideas whilst the rest of us had to sit there, nodding silently. The moronic peak was the suggestion that we should *'Withhold resources from new teachers so they had to make their own.'* Yeah, that'd teach them!

Teaching is such an isolating job that we can forget how we spent our own formative years. You know – all that time spent sifting through folders on the shared area, wondering how you were meant to spin an hour out of a PowerPoint presentation consisting of just one slide with the word 'Democracy?' on it. Before long, you were online, downloading whatever you could find to fill the time.

When we provide resources, we minimise the wheels new teachers have to reinvent. No new teacher should have to learn how to teach while simultaneously planning and resourcing an entire curriculum.

Beyond having resources available, shared and co-planning will give ECTs valuable insight into the minds of experts. When new and experienced teachers plan together, we bridge the gap between the content and the classroom.

A common approach

Debates continue to rage over how much freedom teachers should have over what happens in their classroom. In recent years the pendulum seems to have thankfully swung

more towards autonomy, but it's worth bearing in mind that consistent practices can help everyone – particularly those new to the profession.

If every teacher makes and uses a seating plan, then the ECT who needs one to manage their class won't have to push back against the complaints of students. At our school, every teacher starts their lesson with a short, silent activity. In the same way, every teacher has a set routine for ending the lesson. When it comes to behaviour, we use a shared language for giving consequences, highlighting student choice and a centralised system of detentions.

In the drive for teacher autonomy, we mustn't lose sight of the fact that teachers working in separate classrooms are still working as a team. When we all work together – say, on classroom routines and expectations – we all reap the benefits. New teachers even more so.

The recruitment and retention figures for new teachers should give us pause for thought. The Early Career Framework forms part of an answer to this problem. Finding a solution to the other part will require schools to focus and reflect on the level of support they provide to new teachers, as they start out in this difficult, yet rewarding profession.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Pete Foster is an English teacher and senior leader at an all-through school in Somerset; he blogs at curriculumteamleader.wordpress.com and can be followed at @pnjforster

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NEED TO KNOW- Q&A

“We’re preparing for an automated future”

Zoe Spilberg tells us how learning about robotics can equip students for tomorrow’s jobs market



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Why do schools need to prepare students today for the working environment of the future?

ZS By 2025, algorithms and intelligent machines are expected to create 133 million new roles globally, while displacing around 75 million – a net gain of 58 million jobs (Source: Capita 2019 Future of Work report).

STEM subjects enable students to acquire the knowledge and skills required for problem solving and innovation, which is essential for future jobs. Technology is moving fast, and schoolteachers are now challenged to give students the tools to solve problems using future technology that may not currently exist.

How should schools look to support their students?

By introducing robotic technology in a fun, hands-on school environment, you are more likely to positively engage young people with technology that will support their future, and which can be built upon throughout their formative learning years. It will support the application of digital and innovative thinking across the curriculum, while setting your students on the right path for their lives and future careers.

With so many resources available online, which should my school choose?

You need to know that what you’re delivering is up-to-date and appropriate for the ages and stages of your learners. BCS, The Chartered Institute for IT, in conjunction with the ICDL

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ABOUT ZOE:
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CLASSROOM VOICES

“Disjointed learning hinders long-term progression”

Bhamika Bhudia weighs up the pros and cons that come with having near infinite teaching resources just a mouse-click away...

Managing one's workload is among the most challenging tasks in education, and often cited as a major factor in the profession's ongoing retention crisis.

In many ways, though, we now live in an era of accessibility. Long gone are the days when every lesson had to be specifically planned by individual teachers – but has addressing that issue caused us to exacerbate others?

ALLOCATED TIME-FILLERS

Sharing lessons and resources via departmental hard drives, the kindness of internet strangers, social media exchanges and even buying and selling them, results in many benefits. Teaching is a demanding job, so sharing our resources is surely a smart way of managing time. Sharing resources also allows teachers to introduce new, more imaginative approaches to their classrooms, thus avoiding the same old repeat lessons with the usual activities year after year.

At its best, collaboration can encourage a blend of teaching styles, and help rejuvenate curricula and individual practice. But if not carefully considered, ready-to-go lessons and activities can cause problems of their own.

Pre-prepared curricula – particularly at KS3 – can often end up as allocated time-fillers, which you'll reach the end of without having achieved any real purpose, or made any progress beyond what the slides, worksheets or notes will have told you to do. Greater emphasis can end up being placed on just getting through the scheme of learning, rather than on the skills students will need at the end of the relevant unit, year or Key Stage. It's easy to lose sight of why

students are learning what they are, what they will be assessed on and what they need to know now, in order to succeed or excel in subsequent lessons.

DE-SKILLING TEACHERS

In a similar way, adding one-off lessons or activities into a unit because the content or approach seems interesting can be an engaging thing to do – but it can also cause you to veer off into directions that neither build on prior learning, nor provide any other platforms from which to grow future learning.

True learning and progress doesn't happen in short time frames; it involves students making connections between what they know and will need to know in future. Not everything has to fit into a grand scheme, but frequent disjointed learning will inevitably hinder long-term progression.

Relying on everything being pre-prepared can also effectively deskill teachers, particularly those in the earlier stages of their careers. The ability to sequence activities and lessons, while building and progressing skills in students over time, requires considerable practice and

refinement. As such, building lesson materials from scratch can be a valuable experience for any teacher.

ASSESS AND ADAPT

When using shared resources, it's important to try and understand how the learning is taking place. What's the rationale? What content and skills are being taught and why? How does the resource fit in with the bigger picture?

This isn't a straightforward task, however. The resource will ultimately be based on someone else's logic and thought processes, which will then feed into any lessons where the resource is used.

Adaptation is therefore key. There's no point driving to the end of a unit if all the necessary skills have been left lying at the roadside. Where do your students need more support? What did they struggle with and where did they excel? What do you need to go back over?

It's important not to rush through, particularly if the work isn't being done and students' understanding is insufficiently secure. Instead, use the opportunity to sharpen your own planning, both in the long and short term. Assess the effectiveness of other resources, then put that knowledge into your own lesson construction and sequencing.

Collaboration will always be hugely powerful, but as with so many tools in our field, we need to examine why the products of collaboration are designed the way are, and figure out a way of making them our own



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Bhamika Bhudia is a teacher of English and lead teacher in a mixed comprehensive secondary school in London; follow her at @MissMika_Eng

Lessons in CONSENT

There's no shame in adopting a whole school approach to tackling the widespread and pernicious problem of sexual harassment and abuse, says **Laura Bates...**

The first thing to say about sexual harassment and abuse in a school setting is that it isn't shameful or weak for a school to acknowledge that it's happening. There exists a huge fear that recognising the existence of these issues somehow marks a school out as failing, or having 'a problem'. Schools fear that it will damage their reputation, or put off prospective parents.

The reality is the opposite. There is no school where these issues don't exist. Pretending that your school is completely free of sexism and harassment doesn't make it better; it means that those issues are more likely to be brushed under the carpet, ignored and dismissed, and thereby made worse. A school that chooses to confront these issues head-on is one that's putting the needs of its students first, which is to be commended.

Cultural shift

Over the past 10 years I've worked with thousands of pupils of all ages, at schools across the UK and beyond – from single sex to mixed, state to private, inner-city to rural. I've never visited a school where these issues haven't affected pupils to some degree, but I've seen first-hand what a difference meaningful, sustainable intervention can make.

Dealing with school sexism and abuse isn't a tick-box exercise. Holding a one-off assembly, or exploring a single RSE or PSHE topic before washing your hands of

it sends the message to students that it isn't a priority. What's usually necessary is a sustained cultural shift, which means tackling the problem at all levels.

The first thing to examine is how a school deals with such incidents. Is there a separate, specific policy on sexual harassment and abuse, or just a brief mention within a generic bullying policy? Is there a clear reporting framework in place, and do pupils know what it is? Is there a framework for

shocking, but it's all too common to hear from girls that they've been told '*boys will be boys*' or '*he just likes you*' when trying to report harassment to teachers. Some are even blamed themselves, or told that their own clothing or behaviour was responsible for the harassment they experienced.

Girls who experience sexual harassment and bullying after nude photographs are shared without their consent shouldn't be blamed and

towards talking to boys instead about sexual consent and healthy relationships.

Young people should be given age appropriate, LGBTQ-inclusive information about healthy relationships, respect, abuse, gender stereotypes, online pornography and sexual consent, and staff should be supported, trained and well-resourced to provide it. Providing a forum in which young people can explore these issues in a safe, supportive environment is crucial. Some teachers and schools are already doing a wonderful job of providing such opportunities, but every child deserves and has a right to this information.

“Female students shouldn't be told that their clothing might ‘distract’ their male peers”

supporting victims that gives them a degree of control over the process, thus ensuring they don't experience any backlash or negative repercussions for coming forward?

Is there an opportunity to work with external specialist counsellors or local women's organisations to support survivors? Is the school keeping a record of incidents and their outcomes in order to ensure transparency and accountability, and track patterns and progress over time?

Sending a message

A whole school approach to sexual harassment means that all teachers should be trained to respond appropriately to disclosures or incidents they may witness. It may sound

shamed by schools for sending the photographs in the first place. Female students shouldn't be sent out of lessons to change their uniform, or told that their clothing might 'distract' their male peers.

All these examples send the clear message to young people that girls are responsible for preventing sexual harassment, that their bodies are inherently sexualised and dangerous, that boys can't help themselves and that sexual abuse from men is inevitable.

The same message is sent whenever girls are given lessons about sexual harassment or contraception while boys are sent out to play football. It's time for a concerted shift away from the idea of teaching girls not to wear short skirts, and

Building blocks

People will often gasp in horror if you talk about teaching consent to children as young as 4 or 5, because you can't talk about sex with children of that age. Yet nobody would bat an eyelid at the idea that we teach children of that age not to hit others – they wouldn't protest that you can't talk about violence with such young children.

These are all ideas that can be introduced from a very young age, and built up gradually and

sensitively. The basic building blocks of the idea that each child has the right to control and make decisions about their own body – and that nobody has the right to touch them without their consent – can be taught from the very earliest years of primary school.

Though all schools are aware of the dangers presented by certain types of online radicalisation, others continue to fly under the radar. There is funding and training available to spot red flags that suggest a young person might be vulnerable to Islamist extremism, for example, but how many schools are aware of the risks of extremist misogyny, and groups such as ‘incels’ and Men’s Rights Activists?

Few teachers receive training and advice about spotting the signs, despite the fact that these groups are widely and actively recruiting boys from around the age of 11, feeding them anti-feminist myths and false statistics. Teachers can help by familiarising themselves with the so-called ‘manosphere’ and looking out for sudden changes in

behaviour, including an intolerance to alternative viewpoints and listening out for red flag discussion topics – false rape allegations, the gender pay gap being a ‘myth’ and terms such as ‘cuck’, ‘triggered’, ‘red-pilled’.

Start small

A whole school approach to tackling these issues will entail looking at every area of the school ethos and curriculum to see how the culture of the school might be shaped in a positive way. It’s great to have an assembly about sexism, but who will deliver it? Engagement from male teachers, and particularly school leaders, on these topics sends an important message that they’re considered a priority.

What impact does it have if the entirety of a school’s SLT is white and male? What if the school’s dress

code has 15 points addressing girls’ bodies and clothes, but only five applicable to boys? Are the writers that students study in English, the composers they learn about in music and historical figures they cover in history all dead, white men? Is there diversity among those visiting the school to give talks to students? All these things add up.

Don’t be afraid to start small. Anything is better than nothing. Challenging low level, normalised sexism in the classroom is the first thing every teacher can do to make a huge difference. Even if they don’t feel able saying it out loud, your students will thank you for it.



THE TRIAL

My experiences of working with young people in schools led directly to my young adult novels, which tackle themes of sexism, sexual violence and consent through a fictional lens. My new novel, *The Trial*, is a response to the girls I’ve met who have come to believe that sexual harassment is a completely inevitable part of their school day – that sexual assault from male peers is to be expected, and that nobody will support them if they come forward.

I wanted to explore young people’s confusion about consent, and the genuine sense girls have that justice isn’t available to them. And I wanted to show them that these problems aren’t invisible, they aren’t alone, and they aren’t the ones who have anything to be ashamed of.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Laura Bates is a journalist, feminist writer and campaigner; *The Trial* is due for publication on 16th September (Simon & Schuster Children’s Books)

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THE TS GUIDE TO... ASSESSMENT

Important though it is, assessment is often cited by students and teachers alike as a perennial cause of stress and struggle. But what if we could approach it in a different way, and put it towards more imaginative, and even inspiring ends...?

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out of 89 surveyed teachers used personal observations and knowledge of students to inform decisions regarding students' needs prior to the pandemic; 10 confirmed using parental surveys

Source: British Educational Research Association

8 MONTHS

the amount of progress that can be achieved by applying formative assessment to students' writing

Source: Education Endowment Foundation

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Slow down to CATCH UP

To make up for COVID-related lost learning, educators should try to cover the curriculum ASAP, right? Not so fast, advises **David Lowbridge-Ellis**...

It would be easy to think, with all this talk of ‘catch-up’, that the best approach for mitigating the learning loss of repeated lockdowns would be to go as fast as we can through the curriculum. But nothing could be further from the truth.

To echo the immortal words of Taylor Swift, *we need to calm down*. And that means slowing down. Slowing down might seem counter-intuitive when we’re all trying to get our pupils caught up as quickly as possible, but we can’t pass on our own anxieties about curriculum coverage to our pupils..

The coverage trap

The last year or so has been strange for all of us, but perhaps the most bizarre thing I’ve heard about is a school that told all of its

subject leads to carve up the curriculum into equally-sized chunks, so that they could be sure to ‘cover’ the curriculum in time.

This would mean that in science, for example, the teachers would make sure that they ‘covered’ four pages of the textbook every lesson, regardless of whether the pupils had actually learned the contents of those four pages.

As Harvard educationalist and developmental psychologist Howard Gardner famously stated, “The greatest enemy of understanding is coverage. As long as you are determined to cover everything, you actually ensure that most kids are not going to understand.”

I’ve found myself quoting Gardner regularly this year – usually whenever someone introduces the word

‘coverage’ into a discussion about the curriculum.

It’s easy to see why going hell for leather through units and topics is commonly seen as the best, if not only course of action. Given the pressures of external accountability, we need to make sure our children are making enough progress to do well in their exams. Even with performance tables being suspended for a couple of years, this is hardwired into us. The result is often a form of short termism that sees a disproportionate amount of resources (principally our strongest teachers) intensively channelled into Y11.

But throwing as much at pupils as we can and hoping it sticks is the wrong way to go about things. Instead, we need to take some deep breaths and engage with the

complexity involved in having to constantly re-plan our curriculum. Because COVID and its aftermath is something we’ll all be dealing with for years to come.

Five questions

There are five questions that I’ve been repeatedly asking curriculum leads this year, and will probably be continuing to ask for the foreseeable future:

1 *How are you checking thoroughly if the children have gaps in their knowledge and understanding?*

2020-21 was the year of Checking For Understanding. I started using the capital letters in all of my communications to show its importance.

At this point, as a profession, we should be well beyond a mere list of

“We need to take some deep breaths and engage with the complexity involved in having to constantly re-plan our curriculum”



'AfL strategies'. Teaching is feedback and feedback is teaching. Even so, this year teachers really had to up their game in making Checking a routine part of everything they did.

The principle of Checking before you deliver anything was essential for identifying where there might be weaknesses in pupils' knowledge foundations. With dodgy foundations, everything else might collapse – though fortunately, the metaphor only goes so far. Pupils aren't collapsing buildings; we can fix rickety foundations, shoring them up until they can stand unsupported once again. But before we do anything else, we need to Check.

2 How are you adapting the planned curriculum based on this Checking?

All of the subject leads I worked with this year realised very quickly that their beautifully planned schemes and units would have to be substantially adjusted after they found that what pupils had learned over lockdown was... variable.

There is safety in a pre-planned scheme, but following it slavishly

is fatal. The word 'roadmap' has taken on new connotations. Inside classrooms, our maps have to be flexible. Having a destination in mind and sharing it with pupils remains essential, but even more so than before, we have to be ready to find alternative routes of getting there.

3 Are there any bits of the curriculum you can ditch entirely?

I feel very uncomfortable taking a utilitarian approach to the curriculum, teaching pupils only the things they 'need' to know. Even so, we do need to make some difficult decisions. In languages, for instance, do they really need to learn all of that vocabulary?

I've worked with a fabulous MFL lead this year who has split the curriculum into 'need to know' and 'nice to have'. In the former, they had the verbs that pupils could use when talking about multiple topics (home, school, holidays, etc), while more context-specific items were grouped together in the latter.

4 Where must you slow down to re-teach elements, and are there any areas where you can speed up?

Some subject leads,

particularly in the sciences and humanities, may baulk at missing out anything which appears on the specification. I get that – there's a chance it could appear on the exam. But if we're spending more time rebuilding foundations, then we need to find the time from somewhere. And not all knowledge is created equally.

The subject research summaries being released by Ofsted over the next two years are helpfully drawing more attention to the importance of identifying substantive concepts – those things which unlock bigger chunks of learning. Ofsted held curriculum roadshows explaining these at the end of the summer term, with accompanying videos now available to view on YouTube (see bit.ly/ts106-slow1).

5 When you discover further weaknesses in pupils' foundational knowledge, how do you plan to address them?

This is definitely a case of 'when', rather than 'if'. We'll be finding these weaknesses for a long time yet. My mantra with all the teachers I've worked with over this past year has been *assume pupils know less than you think they do*.

This isn't a case of us having low expectations of pupils. We can always speed up if we're confident they've thoroughly understood and comprehensively remembered what they've been taught – but almost every time, that's simply not the case.

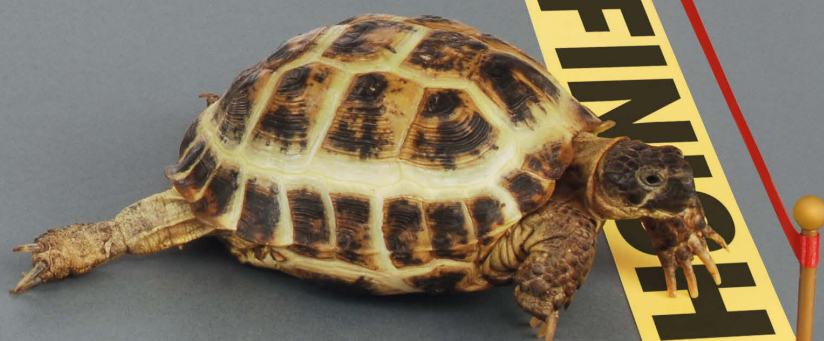
Assumptions are dangerous things, and it's always better to Check the extent of learning loss and proceed accordingly. But amid the hectic day-to-day goings-on of a school, we can sometimes lose sight of this and seek shortcuts.

The best thing we can do to alleviate our stress – and that of our pupils – is adopt *'they know less than I think they're going to'* as our starting position, and then not be disheartened when we have to take things more slowly than we'd originally planned to.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

David Lowbridge-Ellis leads on school improvement across Matrix Academy Trust in the West Midlands. He can be found on twitter @davidtlowbridge



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Measuring the unmeasurable

The drive to capture teaching and learning in statistics is causing us to miss hugely important, though harder to gauge, measures of students' success, says **Dr Gary Keogh**

Like many, I spent much of this summer watching incredible athletes compete at the Olympic Games. I remember being struck by the broadcast coverage's exhaustive analysis, with its measurements of top speeds, average speeds, cadence, stride length, PBs, SBs, ORs, NRs, WRs and more besides.

In truth, it was a little like being at school, where we see a similar obsession with measurement in terms of grades, targets, predictions and progress.

Wanting to 'win'

We love data. The measurement and analysis of statistics has become deeply engrained in our collective psyche and continues to exert a major hold on our education system.

But is this how we should actually measure the performance of our school students? Students have little choice in the matter, despite the massive impact existing metrics have on intangible elements of students' learning, such as motivation, attitudes, hopes

and ambitions, mental health and so on.

The performance of Olympic athletes can be effectively measured because it's safe to assume that they're trying to win. Students, however, might not want to 'win'. As teachers, our underlying assumption is that better grades are, well, better. A student may well be capable of achieving 3 A*s at A Level, but if they plan on teaching yoga classes on a beach, then they won't need, or indeed want to spend every waking hour revising in order to realise their academic potential.

Fervent persistence

Speed and distance are easy to quantify because they relate to clear units of measurement. Learning is far more ephemeral. There are methods by which we can *try* to measure learning

— setting different types of questions, continuous/terminal assessments, grade point averages, etc. — but we ought to consider more fundamental questions. Can learning actually be measured at all? What do we even mean by 'learning'?

Despite these uncertainties, we have fervently persisted with measuring students to the point of even allowing such measurements to drive our school policies.

No one would dispute that we need to grade students in some form or another, but should these measurements be allowed to play such a dominant role in our education system? More crucially, what impact are these detached and sterile numbers having on students' and teachers' mental health?

Human nature

Human beings don't neatly

correspond to statistics and measurements. We're intuitive, emotional, incalculable, unruly even. Our personalities, emotions and mindsets can't be measured, yet they're by far the most important determinants in teaching and learning.

We can't put numbers on these things, but we can pay attention to them — though doing so will require us to allow human nature into the equation and embrace those admittedly murky realities.

In practice, then, what should we do? We can give more weight to subjective analysis of learning, rather than becoming embroiled in dubious attempts to objectify. Subjective 'measurements' can give us an idea of how learning is going, without needing to put numbers on things. Yes, this may mean being unable to fill out forms that are universal across different schools, teachers and classes. But such is life — stubbornly unquantifiable. Just like teaching and learning.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr Gary Keogh is a former lecturer at the University of Manchester, and currently a full-time secondary school teacher and PSHE programme coordinator; his book, *The Pedagogy of Purpose: Classical Wisdom for the Modern Classroom*, is available now (John Catt Educational)



ASSESSMENT AS A MOTIVATOR

Harry Fletcher-Wood discusses how behavioural science has the potential to help students get more out of the assessment process

Every time I handed back her work, Kaya would always ask me the same question – “Am I a Level 4 yet?”.

I tried explaining to her that she needed to focus on how to improve, and that her grade would eventually reflect that improvement, but I never quite managed to convince her. Instead, she focused solely on the grade, and that was that.

Assessment is an incredibly powerful tool. It allows us to pinpoint students’ needs, plan to meet them and guide students along the path to improvement.

Yet assessment is also fraught, for both teachers and students alike. Students can often see assessments as a threat – as a chance for teachers to catch them out, rather than help them learn. They may prefer not to try, rather than try and fail. They may see constructive feedback as criticism.

But we can make assessments work better for students. I’ve spent the last three years examining evidence from behavioural science and looking at how we can apply it to teaching. Consequently, I’ve discovered some powerful techniques that can be used to help students build powerful learning habits, and improve the chances students have of benefiting from assessment. Here, I’ll highlight four:

1 Introducing assessment – making it meaningful

If students are to do their best, then they must see an assessment as something that’s personally meaningful to them. The problem we have, however, is that we can’t tailor different assessments for 30 individual students.

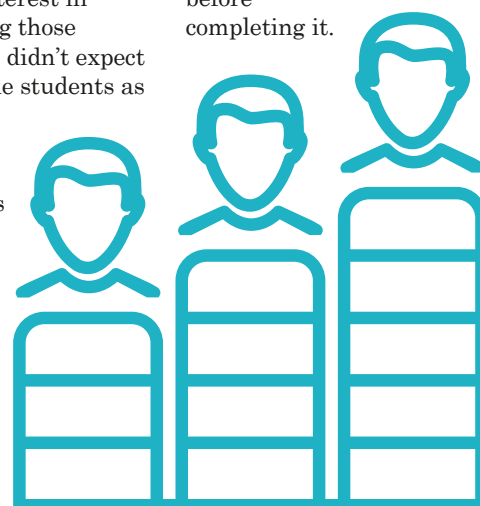
One exciting approach I’ve discovered involves giving all students the same task, but prompting them to consider its personal importance. For example, following a classroom experiment, science students were asked how the unit they had just completed could be ‘Useful

to you, or a friend/relative, in daily life? How does learning about this topic apply to your future plans?”

This prompt succeeded in increasing interest in science among those students who didn’t expect to do well. The students as a whole subsequently achieved higher grades when compared to a control group who only reviewed the topics.

The takeaway from this

would seem to be that it’s well worth prompting students to think about why a topic and assessment matters to them before completing it.



2 Encouraging effort – highlighting the norm

People young and old will tend look to their peers for cues as to how to behave. Whether everyone’s working hard or no one is, few students will want to do the opposite.

We can harness this tendency in a way that encourages students to see assessments as something that’s beneficial to them. We could, for instance, highlight the following:

- **Effort:** “It’s great to see everyone so focused.”
- **Technique:** “I’m glad to see so many of us carefully laying out our working.”
- **Progress:** “Your answers are so much clearer than last week.”

Highlight and point to all of those things you see going right, so as to encourage students to join in, or to keep going if they’re already on the right track.

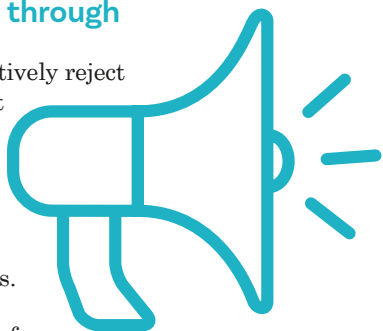


3 Building trust through feedback

Some students will actively reject feedback, perceiving it as a threat or a criticism. One study I came across seemed to suggest a great way of navigating around this.

Beside their teacher's comments, one group of students also received an additional message that read, *"I'm giving you these comments because I have very high expectations, and I know that you can reach them."*

This sentiment made students more likely to edit and resubmit their work – thus gaining higher grades as a result, while helping to build their trust in the school. It's therefore worth emphasising that you have high standards, and that you firmly believe your students can meet them.



4 Forming habits of success

For my book *Habits of Success*, I carried out a considerable amount of research into the importance of positive habits and habit-forming.

Too often, a student's motivation to learn will be fleeting and somewhat fickle. Today? *'I'm enthused!'* Tomorrow? *'I feel lethargic.'*

Positive habits help to circumvent and get around this difficulty. All of us will want our students to assume positive habits, such as making plans in advance, working hard throughout the assessments we set them and acting on any feedback they receive.

If we can help students form fixed habits such as these, then we won't need to motivate or nag them to work each time they begin a new assessment.



Instead, we can simply rely on them to do their best from the outset.

If students are to make any appreciable progress, assessment is crucial. By infusing our approach to assessment with some of the best ideas drawn from behavioural science, we can, I believe, help students form habits of success that will allow them to get more out of assessments – and more out of their wider education as a whole.

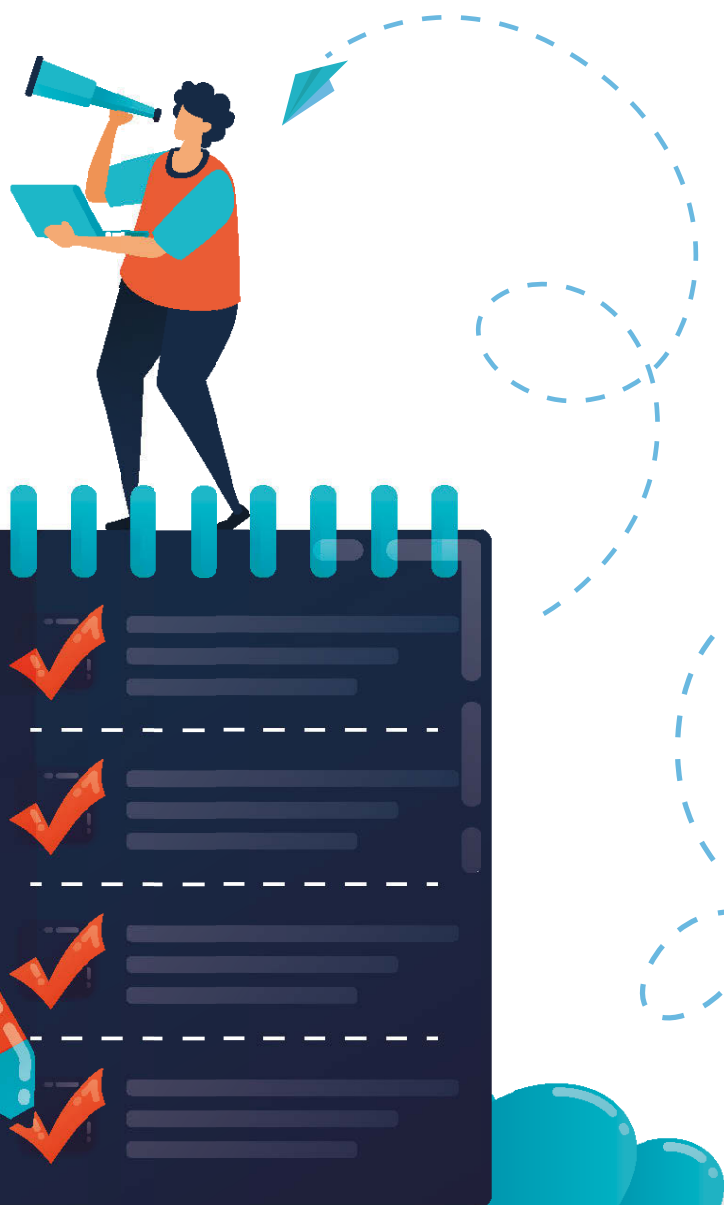
“Students can often see assessments as a threat”



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Harry Fletcher-Wood is a former history teacher, now associate dean at Ambition Institute.

His book, *Habits of Success: Getting Every Student Learning*, is available now (Routledge); for more information, visit his blog at improvingteaching.co.uk or follow @HFletcherWood



“Science education isn’t GOOD ENOUGH”

Joe Temple reflects on his growth as a science teacher and realisation that the subject as practised wasn’t preparing his students for their futures as well as it could be...

People enter teaching for many different reasons. One of mine was that I’d often imagine myself in my teachers’ position when I was at school, and think ‘*I could do a better job than that.*’ It was quite arrogant to think that, of course, as I soon discovered that going into teaching involved a *really* steep learning curve.

Having now spent six years as a science teacher, I’ve become much more confident, better able to reflect on my

much to get through.

Take how our students learn about the ‘history of the atom’, for example. They’ll learn all about the names and the dates before being assessed on them. However, the key thing that students need to learn from studying the history of atomic research is *how we build on models* – not that Dalton, Democritus and Bohr all developed certain models at certain times. That ‘who/when’ information is largely irrelevant.

The same cycles

In our department, we’ve always been reflective with regards to our practice. More recently, we’ve tried exercising more of the freedom we have in shaping our KS3 curriculum. We follow the National Curriculum, of course, but the slightly lesser emphasis on facts and specifics has allowed us more opportunities to have students investigate the world around them. Our KS3 curriculum is now based around real world phenomena, and how students can build their skills at investigating the world around them.

When I talk to other educators, I’m always conscious that there’s an element of survivor bias; we’ve all been through the education system ourselves and been successful, but we’ve also got to keep in mind those students who aren’t as successful, and who likely won’t

succeed at science, however much we try.

I therefore always try to be mindful of the need to make students more engaged with the world around them – or at least want to be – so that they can be successful in

“As women accumulate classroom experience, their pay gradually falls below that of men”

own teaching and ready to acknowledge that moving forward, things need to change.

Content-oriented

The students I’ve been teaching are ‘successful’ at GCSE science, in the sense that some have successfully attained grade 9s, yet I still feel that I could be teaching them so much more. I could be giving them more of the skills they’ll need to succeed in later life, beyond what the framework currently requires.

The framework is currently so content-oriented that it’s incredibly hard to build in time for studying real life phenomena that we can investigate together and present the findings of. It limits us in terms of time, because there’s simply so

On top of that, there’s the treatment of global warming. A student can presently be ‘successful’ at GCSE science without once mentioning the term ‘climate change’ – which to me, seems incredible. It’s going to be the biggest scientific challenge our students will face in their lifetimes, so how can they ‘succeed’ at school science while potentially having no grasp of climate change whatsoever?



applying themselves to the study of science. I want to ensure that we don't just do the same things again and again, endlessly repeating the same cycles.

Experimental activity

At Headland we've now moved from a three-year GCSE course to a two-year, which has given us more time at KS3 to build in those important science skills. Despite that steep learning curve, I was fairly experimental as an NQT and believed that the various things I was doing were helping to build those skills, but at every step I was always

required to justify what I was doing, and what progress was being made within the framework at that moment.

At the time I was impressionable, and often felt that whenever I was called upon to justify what I was doing I was almost doing something wrong, though nobody ever told me that explicitly. To some extent, of course, it was right that had to justify what I was doing – I had to be able to support my students in making progress – but I wanted to do something different and branch out in terms of my skillset as a teacher. Moving forward, I gradually learned to incorporate my more experimental activity into what was expected of me.

I readily acknowledge that at KS4, the best outcome for our students is achieving the best grade. We've tried to work around that as a department by allocating as much investigative and real world phenomena to KS3 as we can.

That way, once the students enter Y10 and we start introducing them to the content we're going to teach across KS4, they already possess the skills needed to investigate what we're teaching them – or at least research what we're teaching them – in order to critically evaluate what we're doing.

Following instructions

We've taken GCSE content that might have previously occupied a whole lesson and allocated space to it in amended form at KS3, so that students can acquire experience of investigating the relevant area.

One example that springs to mind is homeostasis and reflexes. At KS4 it would occupy one lesson, but in assigning it to KS3 we've changed it and elaborated upon it. For instance,

SCIENCE EVOLVED



'The evolution of science education' is a report published by Oxford University Press that analyses the core purpose of science education, how well-served learners are by the subject as it's currently practised and how students can be equipped with skills and competencies to help meet the scientific challenges they're likely to experience in their future.

The full report can be downloaded via bit.ly/ts106-science1

DOWNLOAD

A mini scheme of learning for Y9 developed by Headlands School

teachwire.net/ts106-science



we've set students investigations involving the use of maggots. The students design the investigation, perform the investigation and then investigate their own conclusions – though always with support from a teacher who's able to guide them as to what the theories and phenomena they're looking at actually are, and how they work.

By contrast, the standard approach at GCSE level is currently to set a mandated series of practicals that students must complete. In one sense, this is a useful approach in that it requires teachers to oversee a practical element, rather than simply declaring to students 'This all the content you need to know.' However, that overlooks the fact that their method sheets are handed out to them, meaning that their 'practical' experience is limited to just following a set of instructions.

I'm admittedly describing a poorly-taught science lesson here, but that's nevertheless what the majority of science education currently resembles at the moment. I just don't think it's good enough.

Inquisitive thinking

What I'd love to see is a framework with the spine of some big, important features that students are assessed on – things like global warming, hydrogen fuels and battery life. These are all large and complex issues that will be of huge importance for our students in the future.

I'd also love to see students tackle and attempt to figure

out some open-ended problems at GCSE level, whereby students would acquire some real-world experience of applying the science they've been taught, possibly in the form of a controlled assessment or via coursework. Teachers all over the world want and need to see more of the real-world, hands-on science that's too often been overlooked in favour of theory.

I feel there needs to be more emphasis on encouraging inquisitive thinking among students, rather than on what students 'need to know.' The subject is presently so content-heavy that teachers feel restrained as a result, and compelled to teach specific content at breakneck pace in a certain order.

I want to see teachers who feel able to flex their wings, and be willing to declare '*I'm the expert in the room, and we're doing science today, rather than 'Today, we're going to learn about the history of science.'*



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Joe Temple is biology lead at Headlands School, Bridlington

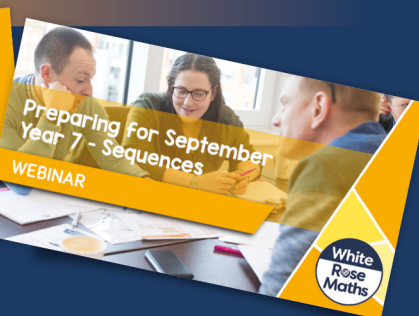
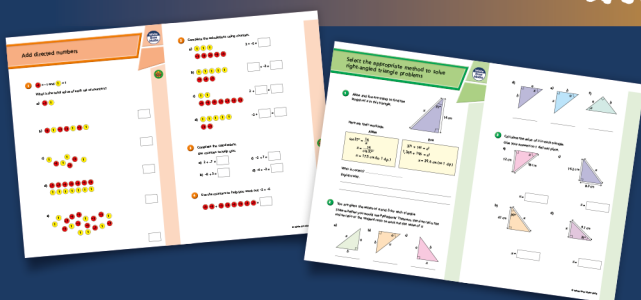
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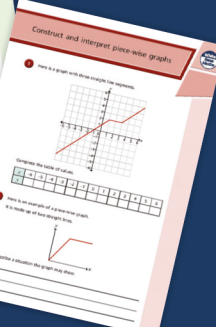
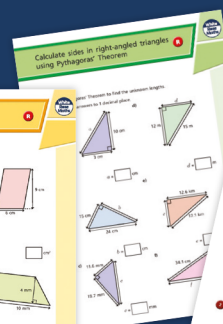
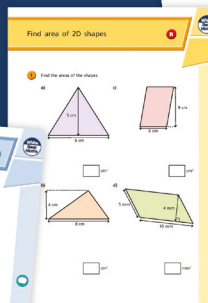
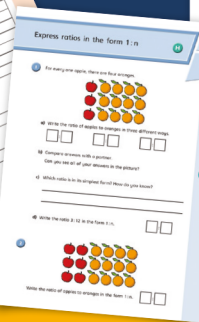
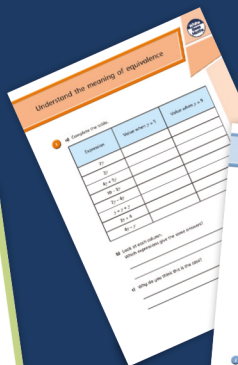
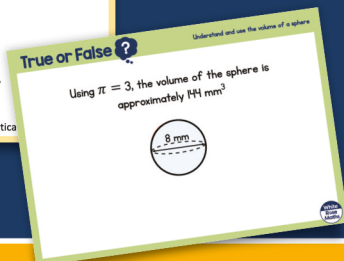
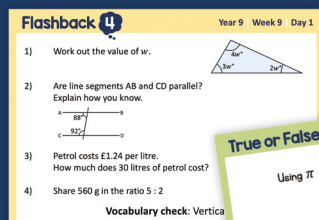
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The 'natives' ARE RESTLESS

Complaints that today's tech-savvy youth aren't sufficiently employable are nothing new – but if that's genuinely the case, the fault lies with our current curriculum priorities...

Sometimes you read an article that causes you to roll your eyes in disbelief. And then reach for the keyboard.

The *FE Week* article 'Young people aren't digital natives in the way employers need', by Bev Jones of the Career Colleges Trust is one such example (see bit.ly/ts106-natives). My complaint isn't that I disagree with what Bev has to say; in fact, I agree with most of her main observations. It's more the "Why are employers struggling to find young people with adequate levels of digital literacy?" question it provokes. Are memories in education really so short?

First, a couple of caveats. Employers always state that education is 'failing to prepare students for the world of work'. I can't remember a time – even as far back as my own school days – when the director-general of the CBI, or someone of that ilk, wasn't moaning that pupils are arriving in the workplace ill-equipped. If

we had time machines, we'd probably witness tribal chiefs at the dawn of civilisation complaining that everyone wants to be hunters amid a dire shortage of those with gathering skills.

We also know that the 'digital native' trope writer and speaker Marc Prensky gave the world has often proved less than helpful. In her article, however, Bev carefully lays out the reverse 'digital native' variant, making it clear that students' familiarity with SnapChat filters doesn't make them all employable tech whizzes.

'Toxic' ICT

The main reason for my ocular rotation was Bev's query as to why today's students lack digital literacy. The simple answer is that it's no longer sufficiently valued in the curriculum, nor in the assessments for which schools carefully prepare their students.

In 2011, then Google CEO Eric Schmidt gave the MacTaggart Lecture at that year's Edinburgh TV festival, at a time when reports from NextGen, Ofsted and the Royal Society were highlighting

flaws in the digital education of the day and capturing the attention of politicians.

When it was subsequently decreed that ICT in its existing state was now 'toxic', a number of educators and industry professionals proceeded to build consensus over the development of a new computing draft curriculum. The end result comprised a carefully-balanced mix of computer science, IT and digital literacy – helpfully described by computer science academic Miles Berry, one of those involved, as the 'foundations', 'applications' and 'implications' of the discipline respectively (see bit.ly/ts106-natives2). So what went wrong?

Relentless focus

Some suggest the consensus was betrayed when certain vested interests stepped in. Whatever the truth of that, what ultimately emerged from the process wasn't a tripartite, balanced curriculum, but

one relentlessly focused on computer science. Digital literacy and information technology took a back seat at KS3, and barely had a seat at all at GCSE, with only computer science on offer.

The digital literacy that survived now has a huge focus on e-safety and cyber-bullying. Both are important, yes – but in isolation, hardly conducive to awakening cohorts of pupils to the rich wonders of the digital world.

All is not lost, of course. There are some great teachers delivering a more balanced computing curriculum, particularly at early Key Stages, but the current accountability system ensures that the secondary assessment tail wags the dog.

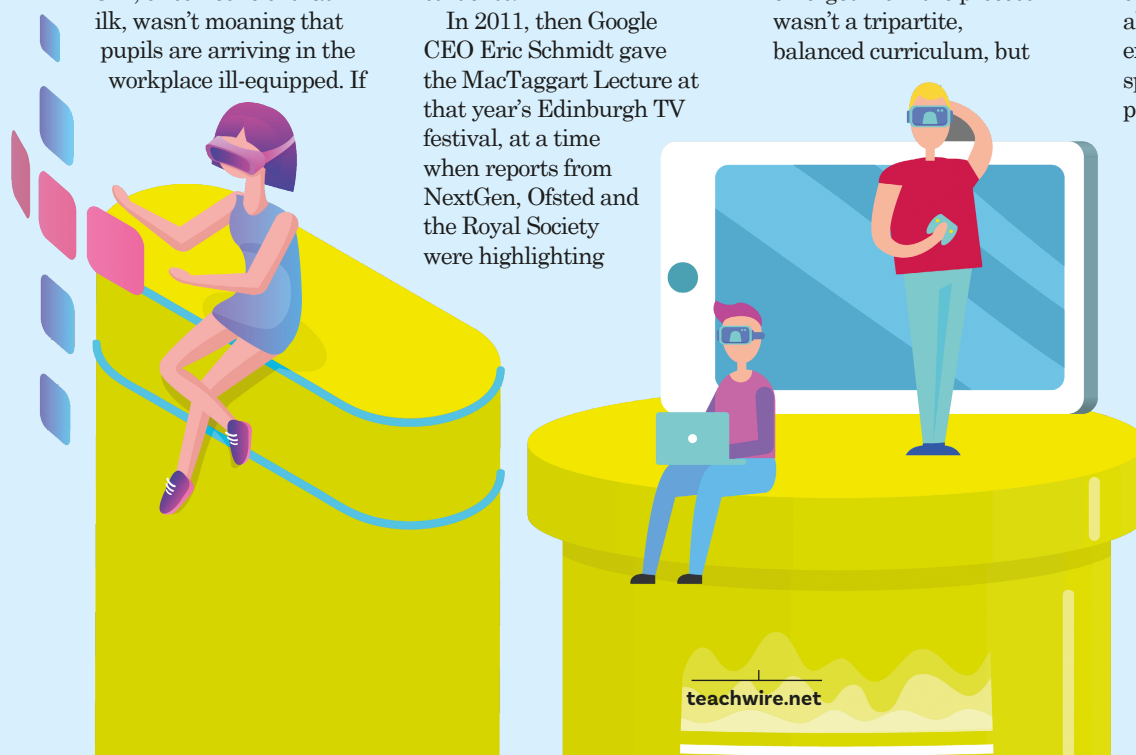
If we want to see cohorts of truly digitally literate pupils enter the world of work, then we need to have some true GCSE computing assessment at the end of KS4, not just computer science. Ideally alongside a set of vocational exams that offer opportunities spanning the full spectrum of potential digital employment.

Who knows – this may even do something to address the dire gender imbalance that's still all too evident in the field...



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Tony Parkin is an educational technologist and consultant, speaker, writer and mentor; follow him at [@tonyparkin](https://twitter.com/tonyparkin) and [linkedin.com/in/tonyparkin](https://www.linkedin.com/in/tonyparkin)



Diversity, EQUITY AND INCLUSION

Hannah Wilson explores what needs to happen if schools are to become truly secure, safe and inclusive for members of their local community

Over the last 12 months, diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) has become a hot topic in national educational discussions – particularly in the aftermath of George Floyd's murder and the growing profile of the BLM movement.

Diversity of people and perspectives. Equity in policy, practice and position. Inclusion via power, voice and culture. These are all issues that affect what goes on in our classrooms, staffrooms, boardrooms and playgrounds. As competing priorities emerge ahead of the new academic year, how can we sustain momentum, preserve commitments and ensure some degree of longevity in the DEI commitments that have been articulated in 2020/21?

System-wide approach

Race is one of the nine protected characteristics identified in the Equality Act (2010). Across the school system we've seen a number of schools visibly commit to adopting anti-racist approaches, but how successful have those intentions been? To what extent have they had any noticeable impact in terms of policies and actions?

Moreover, is enough being done to approach DEI commitments in an intersectional way – holistically considering the whole person and being inclusive of all identities – or has the tendency been for schools to take a 'single issue approach'?

We should all remember that DEI is a marathon rather than a sprint, and that transforming our culture and curriculum will inevitably take time. What's needed is a system-wide approach to ensure that DEI becomes embedded, and can run like a golden thread through every aspect of the school.

It's important to challenge ourselves and each other regarding our DEI beliefs. When engaging with this type of work, you'll likely hear it expressed that one needs to 'do the inner work, in order to do the outer work', and 'be comfortable with the uncomfortable.'

DEI work ultimately entails making a cultural commitment at a strategic level, which will involve evaluating every aspect of school life. It's an invitation to take a long, hard look at ourselves, to step outside of our lived experience and consider who's in the dominant group. This will often give way to a recognition that some

individuals and groups are being marginalised and excluded.

Lean out

Getting DEI right calls for school and trust leaders who are prepared to be courageous, vulnerable and authentic. It requires leaders to lean out and let others lean in, and do the listening, rather than the talking. It encourages leaders to recognise their own privilege and power, and both challenge and dismantle those systems that have empowered them while simultaneously disempowering others.

Intersectional DEI strategies are necessary, since there is no set hierarchy of identities or oppression. Were we to take a single-issue approach by focusing on one protected characteristic at a time, we would risk inadvertently neglecting the safety of the other identities. DEI is ultimately about us creating an

inclusive culture, where inclusive behaviours are foregrounded at all times.

It's our belief that DEI work amounts to safeguarding work, since it involves reviewing who feels physically and psychologically safe, and who feels a sense of belonging within their organisations. The safeguarding, belonging and psychological safety of school staff is just as important as that of students.

This might all sound like common sense, and in many ways it is, but we have historically got it wrong.



“Our workforce often doesn’t reflect the diverse communities we serve”

The data speaks volumes – who we recruit, who we retain, who we promote, who gets to lead our schools and trusts, and who sits on trust boards. Our workforce often doesn’t reflect the diverse communities we serve.

We currently have rich data sets when it comes to our student cohorts, but still lack access to the kind of staff data that would allow us to identify and address the gaps, barriers and obstacles our colleagues experience. There has historically been a lack of national, regional and local data when it comes to staff representation, so that’s

where we need to start. We should then look to dig deeper by having courageous conversations with our stakeholders. What data do we need, and what stories will that data tell us about DEI in our schools?

ensure there are visible role models for all learners? How diverse are the texts in your school library?

10 THINGS TO CONSIDER IN YOUR DEI STRATEGY:

1. THE PLAYGROUND

How safe do children feel at breaks and lunchtimes? How integrated is your student body?

2. THE BEHAVIOUR CODE

How inclusive is your uniform and hair policy? What story does your data tell you about who gets rewarded and who gets sanctioned?

3. THE INNER CURRICULUM

How are you developing understanding of other identities in your assemblies? How are you teaching acceptance through your school’s values?

4. CURRICULUM DIVERSITY

Are you reviewing your current curriculum offer to

5. THE TRAINING NEEDS

Are you listening to your stakeholders? What are you doing to build in bespoke training that can help develop staff confidence and competence?

6. THE TALENT MANAGEMENT

Have you ensured that your recruitment practices are appropriately inclusive? How are you developing and retaining your whole staff, whilst reflecting on who leaves your team?

7. THE GOVERNANCE

Are you sufficiently holding yourselves to account? To what degree have you invited challenge from peers across the sector who might hold a different perspective?

8. THE POLICIES

Have you reviewed your policies through an intersectional lens? Are you ensuring your processes meet the needs of staff, as well as the needs of your learners?

9. THE CULTURE

How are you empowering everyone to stand up and speak out about social justice issues? Is there a shared understanding within your school concerning individuals’ lived experience and appreciation for intersectional identities?

10. YOUR FORMER COMMUNICATION

How are you anchoring your DEI commitment into your school’s vision, mission and values? Have you sought to build a coalition and distribute responsibility and oversight of DEI within your school?

Student, staff and parent voice activities may well reveal some hard truths that will help us shape the direction of travel, so that our DEI commitments go beyond the merely tokenistic to instead creating meaningful,

long lasting change.

For us, addressing DEI issues within a given school amounts to a far-reaching role and remit that someone needs to be appointed to and remunerated for. It’s a role that will require time, resourcing, training, and just like safeguarding, a named strategic lead – though all staff will need to be trained in understanding the individual role they can play in their school’s wider DEI improvement efforts.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Hannah Wilson is the director of Diverse Educators (diverseeducators.co.uk) and among the contributors to Edurio’s new report, ‘Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Among School Staff’; for more details, visit home.edurio.com/edi-report



Off the Shelves

Brilliant titles for you and your students to explore

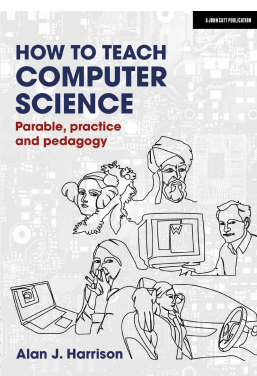


Atlas of AI

(Kate Crawford, Yale University Press, £16)

One of the purposes of learning computing is to ensure pupils can evaluate IT by delving below the surface. This 'Atlas' takes students deep into the field of artificial intelligence which, according to Crawford, is actually neither artificial, nor intelligent. Venturing beyond considerations of algorithms with built-in biases, she goes on to explore the larger projected costs of AI in terms of both physical and human resources. Her observations are highly readable, and will likely to give teachers a wider and a more in-depth knowledge of what can be a difficult topic to grasp. Crawford pointedly queries certain applications of AI, such as emotion recognition, and firmly rejects the notion of techno-determinism. On the whole, *Atlas of AI* is a well-researched well-written, and enlightening – if somewhat depressing – read.

Reviewed by Terry Freedman

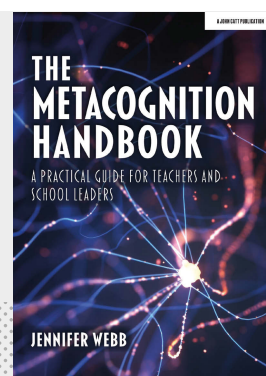


How to Teach Computer Science

(Alan J. Harrison, John Catt, £15.00)

As a subject, computer science suffers from a double whammy – few people who teach it have a degree in it, and being a relatively new addition to the school curriculum, there's comparatively less established associated pedagogy. Enter Harrison, who has provided teachers with a series of actionable classroom ideas. Each chapter begins with an historical anecdote and concludes with a summary, PCK (pedagogy, content, knowledge) suggestions and 'fertile questions'. The examples and analogies provided are wide, ranging from Braille to the I-Ching. Harrison is refreshingly candid regarding the practical challenges of physical computing during lessons, so it's something a pity that at one point he invokes the far from proven notion of cognitive load theory. That notwithstanding, this is an essential addition to any CS teacher's armoury

Reviewed by Terry Freedman



The Metacognition Handbook

(Jennifer Webb, John Catt, £15)

Practitioners keen on exploring the cutting edge of education theory will find much to enjoy in Webb's attempt to map out the terrain of 'thinking about thinking'. Given how imposing and complex the area of metacognition can be, one might assume that with that title, this would be a book heavy with dense theory, but that's far from the case. Instead, Webb grounds her advice on how to help students become capable and independent learners in everyday teaching practice. A section dedicated to classroom case studies sees Webb give the floor to four teachers who present metacognitive suggestions of their own, alongside a particularly incisive chapter on how metacognitive strategies can be applied within a CPD context to make teachers better learners themselves.

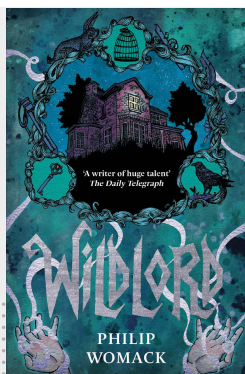
THE WORD

Find out what our regular student reviewer, Oliver Minter-King (Y13) has been reading this month...

You're The One That I Want
(Simon James Green, Scholastic, £7.99)

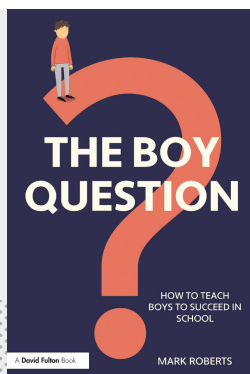
After devolving into an awkward mess at a party for his mum's upcoming TV show, Freddie realises his desire to stand out amongst his peers and decides that he needs to change himself by following a simple rule: saying yes to every opportunity that comes his way. The 'Freddie Project' begins with an audition for the school musical that leads to a potential romance with new classmate Zach – however, it's not always smooth sailing...

Freddie's anxious, yet endearing personality is brought about extremely well by Green, who excels at both exploring and making light of those awkward aspects of teenage school life, resulting in a likeable protagonist who must face many challenges that young adult readers may well relate to. Whilst the story has some very sincere moments, especially regarding LGBTQ+ relationships, Green sprinkles in plenty of humour throughout, making for an entertaining read that I'd recommend to any fans of rom-coms or LGBTQ+ novels.



Wildlord
(Philip Womack, Little Island, £7.99)

High fantasy, supernatural goings-on and family intrigue combine to winning effect in this pacey teen novel from the author of the 'Darkening Path' trilogy. Just as he's contemplating the summer holiday from boarding school stretching out before him, 16-year-old orphan Tom Swinton is surprised to receive a handwritten and hand-delivered message from an uncle he never knew he had, summoning him to his home on a farm in Suffolk. Upon arriving there, Mundham Farm doesn't seem like the most hospitable place to spend the summer – but then the chance discovery of some old diaries penned by a local rector's daughter leads him to a startling encounter with a race of otherworldly beings called the Samdhiya, the unearthing of dark secrets from his family's past and an almost impossible moral quandary...



The Boy Question – How To Teach Boys To Succeed In School
(Mark Roberts, Routledge, £16.99)

The vexed topic of how to narrow the disparities in academic performance between boys and girls has seen much debate and discussion in recent years, thanks in part to Roberts' highly influential book *Boys Don't Try?* In this follow-up, he sets about tackling nine distinct questions at chapter length that any teacher or school leader will instantly relate to, ranging from 'How should I react to boys who misbehave in my classroom?' to 'How can I improve the study skills of the boys I teach?' and 'What can I do to get boys reading?' His incisive observations and unearthing of compelling research are conveyed in approachable and plain-spoken prose that speaks to his years at the education coal-face, making for a guide that's well worth the price of admission.

Meet the author

MARK ROBERTS



What's your aim with *The Boy Question*, compared to your previous title *Boys Don't Try?*

With *Boys Don't Try?*, my focus was on tackling myths around boys' attainment, and rethinking our expectations of what boys can achieve. The success of the first book led to me giving talks at education conferences and delivering CPD sessions at schools around the country, where I noticed the same questions kept cropping up at the end: *How can I motivate boys to succeed? Why don't boys do their homework?* The nine most significant questions became the basis for *The Boy Question*.

What's your sense of the impact the pandemic has had on boys' attainment?

Anecdotally, teachers tell me that on the whole, boys were likely to do less work than girls during remote learning. Several studies suggest that boys have been worst hit in terms of pandemic-related learning loss, while research seem to show that gender reading gaps have widened further during COVID, with boys reading even less frequently for pleasure than girls. I think that's largely explained by boys' generally poorer study skills and lower levels of intrinsic academic motivation. Sadly, the research suggests that many boys struggle in this regard.

What trends or developments currently give you cause for optimism?

Advances in cognitive science are giving teachers a greater understanding of how students might learn best. Some studies suggest boys are more likely to use the least effective study techniques, which seems to indicate that if we can teach boys how to use these skills regularly, gender attainment gaps might begin to disappear.

What important points get overlooked in conversations around boys' academic outcomes?

A key area, I'd argue, is the need to improve boys' writing motivation. When boys are reluctant to write, we often assume they're lazy, or lack the stamina to write at length academically. As a result, schools have often lowered expectations of boys through engagement activities and 'boy-friendly' curricula. Instead, as I argue in *The Boy Question*, once boys are consistently shown subject-specific writing techniques at word, sentence and whole-text level, their motivation to write will increase and their outcomes will improve.

Breaking new boundaries

Steve Brace looks at how geography is evolving in light of recent changes, giving rise to some areas of concern, but also some valuable teaching and learning opportunities...

As I write these words, geography teachers will hopefully be enjoying a well-deserved summer break. They certainly have cause for celebration, with GCSE entries rising to a 20-year high of 268,000 candidates, as well as a 16% increase in A Level entries.

However, a subject's strength isn't solely measured by how many pupils are opting to take it. We also need a sufficient number of well-trained

subject specialists – and a somewhat unwelcome cloud on the horizon is the recent downturn in applications to geography ITT courses. This year's numbers have fallen behind those of 2020, and are running significantly lower than 2019's.

The COVID factor

Needless to say, the most significant influence on teachers' work over the last 18 months has been COVID-19. As well as the pandemic's profound impact on peoples' lives and livelihoods, COVID has brought about significant

changes in how geography is assessed, and dramatically disrupted teachers' ability to undertake fieldwork.

We've seen teacher assessed grades used to award GCSE and A Level qualifications for two years running, and a recent Ofqual consultation on proposed changes to the summer 2022 GCSE exam papers. The latter proposals would, half-way through a live course, change some previously required units into options. This would clearly disadvantage those schools which taught the 'optional' units in Y10, and whose pupils would face learning all the required units in Y11. In contrast, schools which had already taught the required units would now be able to cherry pick from the newly optional Y11 units.

With lockdown having severely curtailed pupils' fieldwork experiences, the Royal Geographical Society (RGS) was delighted to see the DfE announcements in April and May this year that schools could run day and residential visits, and

encouraged to see schools responding so positively. Many have since shared news of their various fieldwork studies into coastal and river processes, urban change or the carbon capacity of their local woodland. The Field Studies Council has reported that pupils from over 150 schools have already visited their centres.

This welcome return to the field, however, needs to be set against Ofqual's decision to remove the need to report on whether schools offer the full fieldwork requirements for GCSE and A Level. This won't stop schools running fieldwork, but some teachers may face pressure to reduce their visits, with the result that practical experience of fieldwork may become subject to externally-imposed limits (at present, fieldwork is typically required in two contrasting environments at GCSE and over four days at A Level), or replaced altogether by 'virtual' activities.

The 2021 summer term also saw the publication of Ofsted's 'Research review: Geography' paper (see bit.ly/ts106-geo1), which explores the literature relating to primary and secondary geography. Among the areas it covers are the curriculum, disciplinary knowledge, spatial thinking, selection of case



studies and debates surrounding pedagogy, assessment and wider school decision making, as well as the main factors supporting high quality geography education (see ‘The building blocks of good geography’, opposite).

A representative subject?

Many geography teachers will have already discussed Ofsted’s report within their departments, and be factoring in its findings into their departmental reviews. Among those commenting on the review have been Dr C Nayeri and Dr E Rushton (see bit.ly/ts106-geo2), who have highlighted the place of race within geography, drawing on the work of Professor Gillian Rose, who in turn observed that attention to race and diversity is at the heart of ‘*What makes good geography.*’

With respect to equality, diversity and inclusion, geography has made good progress in securing a more diverse intake at GCSE (see bit.ly/ts106-geo3). Its positive GCSE growth has come predominately from previously under-represented groups, notably BAME and disadvantaged students, and those with lower prior attainment. This progress isn’t reflected as much in the transition from GCSE to A Level however, where fewer non-white pupils chose geography than would be expected – a trend that appears to continue into higher education, resulting in a further narrowing of geography’s BAME intake.

There are also some concerns over how representative and accurate the subject is in relation to its coverage of more diverse perspectives. For example, a teacher at one recent RGS focus

group recently remarked that “Kids, especially BAME kids, don’t see themselves in the [geography] curriculum.”

For its part, Ofsted has advised teachers to “Critically reflect on the imagery, data and attitudes they portray, and the messages that are conveyed to pupils [to] ensure that geography accurately represents the nature of the world’s people, their communities, economies, diversities and experiences.”

“Geography has made good progress in securing a more diverse intake at GCSE”

There is more work to be undertaken in this area, especially given geography’s past as a subject that emerged from the structures of imperialism and colonialism. Teachers might find some useful perspectives in the work of Black Geographers (blackgeographers.com), as well as the various case studies, resources and teacher-led initiatives highlighted in the RGS’ submission to the All Party Parliamentary Group Inquiry on Africa and its diaspora in the UK School Curricula (see bit.ly/ts106-geo4).

Public profile

As a subject, geography should also do more to share the positive contribution it can make to all young peoples’ futures. We practitioners will often promote geography’s ability to bring positive change to the future of ‘the’ world; what’s needed now is for us to strengthen our articulation of how it can support young people to positively change ‘their’ futures too. Geography careers are too important to be left until your next ‘options

evening’ presentation.

On the plus side, however, it’s been good to see many teachers embedding ‘I am a geographer’ careers profiles (see rgs.org/iamageographer) into their KS3 schemes of work, illustrating how geography graduates benefit from above average levels of graduate employment and earnings.

More broadly, we’re seeing the subject achieve a greater public profile, with expert geographers being regularly cited in the press on issues ranging from the recent European floods, to the gentrification aspects of the government’s ‘levelling

up’ agenda and concerns over air quality. In the years ahead we can also expect to see the growing prominence of the UK geo-spatial sector, which is currently estimated to deliver £11 billion of future financial benefit to the UK, plus the continued growth of the UK’s £48 billion low carbon economy.

Geography’s existing bedrock gives the subject many strengths upon which to build. I hope this year’s summer break will have given teachers a chance to renew their energies, but also opportunities to explore how the new academic year might be used to further enhance geography’s positive impact in classrooms and on students.

A geographer’s curiosity at how COVID has changed our local areas lies at the heart of the RGS’s Young Geographer of the Year competition, which this year is tasking pupils with submitting a ‘Remapping our Lives’ map by 1st October – find out more at bit.ly/ts106-geo5



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Steve Brace is a former geography teacher, now head of education at the Royal Geographical Society, working closely with the DfE, Ofsted and Ofqual – follow him at [@stevebracegeog](https://twitter.com/stevebracegeog)

For more information about the RGS’ support for geography, visit rgs.org/schools or follow @RGS_IBGschools

THE BUILDING BLOCKS OF GOOD GEOGRAPHY

Ofsted’s Research Review on Geography identifies the following factors as those supporting high quality geography:

- Capable teachers who possess the necessary subject knowledge and appreciation of the discipline
- The development of pupils’ geographical skills and fieldwork
- Careful selection of content and awareness of how the geography curriculum can be organized effectively
- Messaging that presents geography as a dynamic subject with different viewpoints
- Locational knowledge and a willingness to develop a more complex understanding of places among students
- An awareness of how senior leadership decisions can impact on a school’s geography provision, particularly in relation to teaching time, subject specialism and fieldwork





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Step into England's story

“Costly and burdensome”

James Noble-Rogers outlines his concerns with recent government proposals to reshape the initial teacher training market

The government’s recently published ‘Initial teacher training (ITT) market review’ (see bit.ly/ts106-itt1) contains the suggestion that all ITT providers seek re-accreditation against new criteria. This will be a hugely costly and burdensome process, both for providers and central government, and could potentially force some high quality ITT providers out of the market, further damaging teacher supply. And yet, no rationale is given within the proposals as to why it’s needed.

Even if you accept the rest of the report’s recommendations – which we at the Universities’ Council for the Education of Teachers don’t – there’s no explanation given as to why a re-accreditation process is needed to deliver the government’s stated intentions.

The review further suggests that some, likely smaller providers may be required to act as junior delivery partners and be effectively subsumed within larger partnerships. If they’re going to lose the autonomy they have to deliver their own ITT programmes, then they too might decide to withdraw from the market. Research-intensive university providers might be similarly reluctant to conform to detailed ITT content requirements over and above what’s already expected under the core content framework.



The locality factor

We also know from the DfE’s own research that one of the key determining factors in where people train is locality. Some individuals will only commence training to become teachers and attend placement schools in areas close to where they live, be it for family, financial or other reasons. With fewer larger providers, we risk breaking that locality made possible by smaller providers.

Then there’s the matter of some students only wanting to train with certain types of provider. Those currently applying to Oxbridge universities will be doing so because they recognise the pedagogic research and subject expertise of those centres.

A further impact on future supply could emerge from schools being forced to partner up with larger and

more remote ITT providers, following the withdrawal of a former local provider. Schools now have a leading role under the government’s own school-led policy, and therefore might not wish to form a partnership with a remote ITT provider with whom they have no prior relationship.

The proposals will also be burdensome for schools, with expectations being placed on them to release ITT mentors for training more often across multiple school sites, and host student teachers for longer than they do currently.

Direct control

The proposals don’t explicitly call for fewer and larger providers, but that does seem to be an unspoken implication of what’s being suggested.

The fewer providers

there are, the more direct control government can have over ITT, and therefore how teachers teach in schools. That said, our view is not that everything is currently working perfectly. We’d actually welcome a properly conducted and evidenced review.

There are a number of what we’ve termed ‘COVID keepers’ that the government could have reflected on and learned from before embarking on this review. Interviews with prospective student teachers and mentor training sessions will likely see better take-up if conducted online, for instance.

What concerns us is that the models of partnership the government would like to see will be less flexible than what we currently have. It’s important that ITT providers and schools can agree among themselves as to how programmes should be structured and delivered, subject to national frameworks, and how responsibilities should be shared across them. That’s something that shouldn’t be imposed by central government.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

James Noble-Rogers is executive director at the Universities’ Council for the Education of Teachers; for more information, visit ucet.ac.uk or follow @UCET_UK

What's the worst that can happen?

Gordon Cairns looks at what schools can do to assuage parents' fears ahead of a major school trip or residential

I'm sure many teachers would agree that organising a week-long school trip would be a far less complicated affair if only we could tick a box confirming that every one of the parents' and carers' concerns had been met.

The checklist of paperwork to complete and planning meetings might feel endless, but as the coach leaves the school car park, at least you can now relax, knowing that the most tiring and stressful

part of the whole business is now over. Who knew that collecting 30 straightforward medical forms could be such a Herculean task?

Understandably, however, the anxiety levels of the students' parents back at home will be anything but settled, thanks to a combination of that inner anxiety that comes naturally to parents, coupled with the often risky activities their children will soon be engaging in. If it's their offspring or dependant's first

trip away from home, then expect those stress levels to be amped up all the more.

I've heard of parental anxieties being expressed in myriad forms – from practical concerns regarding food, to fears around worst case scenarios. In one somewhat extreme case, I attended a parent's information meeting where one mother expressed concern that the nearest A&E department was more than a 30-minute helicopter journey away from the residential centre, creating a wave of unrest amongst the children who suddenly feared that they'd be taking part in life-threatening activities.

I've also previously come across a Mumsnet blogpost, wherein a parent confessed to not only physically checking that every single seatbelt on their school minibus was in working order, but also to asking the driver if he'd had sufficient

sleep the night before, ahead of taking her precious charge on a short day trip to the local farm.

Sleepless nights

That said, those staff assigned to accompanying students on the trip mustn't forget that while some causes of parents' stress may seem hugely unlikely, such concerns simply reflect how important their child's safety is to them.

We might define a successful school trip as one where the students feel fulfilled, happy and safe. To that success criteria, we can perhaps add 'Parents and carers didn't experience a week of sleepless nights imagining the worst, having been assured that their children were in safe hands.' After all, their anxieties can be transmittable to their offspring, when what the children in question ought to be focusing on is making

“One mother expressed concern that the nearest A&E department was more than a 30-minute helicopter journey away”



sure they have a fun and rewarding experience.

We can achieve this best by properly understanding the causes that underlie mum and dad's fears. Just as parental fears might manifest themselves in many different forms, the causes of these fears can be equally diverse. Educational psychologist Dr Dirk Flower, executive director of Flower Associates International, explains that these kinds of anxieties may stem from a number of sources, including how the parent may have seen their child treated on previous public outings:

"Parents will have come across lots of places that don't cater properly for their child, in regard to how their child was treated by other people or families. While this is historical, it can make them very suspicious."

This may be an experience more common to parents of neurodiverse children, but it's almost certain that every parent will have come up against an adverse environment for their child at least once. "Parents may recycle previous negative experiences where they've felt some enmity from others," Dr Flower observes.

Earning parents' trust

The anxiety some parents feel may develop further if they fear their youngsters might be having a difficult time on the trip while they're not there to protect them. Other parents may be guilty of putting their children on a pedestal, where they've risen to the challenge of meeting their every whim, while fearing that the school might not be up to the task. As Dr Flower puts it, "Some parents are used to treating their children like a little prince or princess, and so they try to manage the response of the educational provider."

Dr Flower does, however, stress that parental concerns – which can often

seem to focus on diet – shouldn't be simply dismissed by the organisers of the trip. In my own experience, parents worried that their child will only eat a limited selection of foods will often find that they simply follow the same diet as their classmates while away. A far more serious matter will be the young person who might have food allergies the school is completely unaware of.

There are some steps schools can take to reduce such anxieties. Dr Flower suggests sharing pre-trip risk assessments and planning with parents, since this will help them see the trip's lead teacher as a responsible surrogate. "A lot of parents feel a very strong, deep responsibility for their child. Before they

can pass that responsibility to the school, a high level of trust has to be earned – which can be gained by demonstrating a high level of planning, and showing a willingness to earn that trust."

One pre-trip activity suggested by Dr Flower is to run through 'What if' scenarios with parents, outlining the preparations that have been made in the event of something going wrong. This will allow parents to clearly see the level of planning that's gone into the trip's arrangements, thus reassuring them that considerable thought and expertise has gone into keeping their children safe at all times.

Yet while good communication and clarity is certainly recommended,

it's likely that neither will fully succeed in preventing parents from worrying. "Letting the parent know what is going on may or may not reduce their anxiety," Dr Flower concludes, "but if they know *exactly* what's going on, that'll help to reduce the anxiety their children feel. If they don't, then their anxiety will spill over to the children."



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Gordon Cairns is an English and forest school teacher who works in a unit for secondary pupils with ASD; he also writes about education, society, cycling and football for a number of publications

ANXIETY BUSTERS

Four simple steps schools can take to quell parents' anxieties

1 HAVE RESPONSIBLE ADULTS CARRY MOBILES

In the past, children away from home were unable to stay in touch with their parents, but that's no longer the case – I once witnessed a parent collect her child from a trip I'd organised after the child phoned home to complain the tuck shop didn't have the right kind of soft drink. Some schools will impose an outright ban on phones during trips, but Dr Flower suggests that phones should be allowed, albeit kept by a teacher and released at a pre-arranged time during the day.

2 GIVE PARENTS OPPORTUNITIES TO MEET INSTRUCTORS

Accidents involving young people on adventure breaks are thankfully extremely rare. If a parents' meeting can be arranged, where one of the venue's instructors talks parents through the planned activities and safety measures in place, the reassuring presence of an expert should help minimise the fears some parents will inevitably have in spite of the statistical probabilities. In some cases, it might be worth looking into whether parents can visit the venue in advance.



3 ENSURE INSTRUCTORS ARE ON THE SAME PAGE

One mother of a teenager I took on a trip was hopeful that spending a week away from his friends would help break his cigarette habit. When she asked about smoking at the pre-trip meeting, the instructor explained that there was a place away from the main building for those who wanted to smoke. Make a point of speaking to instructors in advance, and agreeing on what the housekeeping rules of your trip will involve.

4 CHOOSE YOUR ACCOMPANYING STAFF CAREFULLY

If possible, the school staff attending the trip should be significant adults in the lives of the young people who will be going away. If that's not possible, then at the very least, the teachers going should meet with each child in advance, so that they're familiar with who the supportive adults will be, ahead of what may well be a new and strange experience for them.

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“FEMINISM IS CONSTANTLY EVOLVING”

Jamia Wilson talks us through some of the thinking, observations and discoveries that informed her new non-fiction book for teens, *This Book is Feminist*

Feminism was something taught to me by example. I grew up in a very progressive family, with strong matriarchs. My mother was a career woman, and the first African American woman PhD in her field. My grandmother gained a sports scholarship to study at Tuskegee Institute, becoming a college educated black woman at a time when most didn't have that opportunity.

I grew up hearing stories about their work in racial justice, as well feminism. My mom would tell stories about helping to organise the Civil Rights Movement and getting arrested, but then going to meetings where she and the other women would be called 'girls' and asked to get the coffee.

Hearing all of that was what taught me about intersectionality – that issues like race, class and gender are complex, that perspectives impact upon them, and that learning about contexts is important.

Groundswell of change

I've recently been inspired by how the public discourse around feminism has evolved. I've always understood feminism through a black feminist and intersectional perspective, knowing that there's more to the story than the second wave version that centres white women's experience. What's exciting to me is that

this perspective and story is now becoming more widely known, which I'm seeing in conversations that recognise how feminism is nuanced, complex and constantly evolving.

I wrote *This Book is Feminist* with the view that we must have humility for all ideas and theoretical approaches. One of the reasons why feminism is so widely mythologised and misunderstood is that people will often will look at it in one singular, narrow and limited way, instead of approaching it as an evolutionary thought project, like any other big idea.

Looking back at the discourse during the supposed 'multicultural 90s', I feel now that it could and should have been much more expansive and inclusive. In contrast, today I talk to the young readers of my books, and I sense a real groundswell of change and possibility in their understanding of how power relationships work, and the normalisation of inclusion as the dominant way of

thinking.

Young people might not use the same language or mode of communication that we do, but that's what makes it great – they really grasp those core issues, and place value on achieving equity, justice, freedom and access for all people.

Bigger conversations

At the moment, the media is the largest public education tool in the world. It's how most of us obtain much of the knowledge we have, both good and bad, and often helps shape the way people are introduced to concepts like feminism, but I believe there are bigger conversations currently happening in the classroom.

Regardless of whether or not these concepts are being formally taught, the instant access so many kids now have to modern media has meant they're demanding answers to their questions with more rapidity.

It's been interesting to follow the discussion around

COVID-19 vaccines, and how some teenagers speak of diverging from their parents' views on the topic. It's been often asked in the US – depending on the state – whether teens should be able to get vaccinated if their parents don't agree with them doing so. Many of these kids will get their information from certain media, and potentially hearing both distortions and facts, which is what might be shaping those divergent opinions.

That's been an education for me. What does it mean, now that there are a lot of kids thinking differently from their parents, and with media literacy being taught much more widely in schools – certainly compared with when I was a child?

There's still a lot of work to do. Something I frequently think about is how to be more global in my approach, because it's an area of focus that a lot of Americans really need to work on. I'd like to see feminism writ large here, and be discussed not just in academic circles, but everywhere, with a more global perspective and with more solidarity between movements.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Jamia Wilson is a US-based activist and writer, and currently vice president and executive editor of the Random House publishing imprint



A teacher? Yes. **A LEADER? NO.**

Caroline Aldous-Goodge ponders the continuing gender imbalance in school leadership and asks what it will take for the glass ceiling to break...

I have a headache. I'm not sure if it's COVID-related, a migraine or the accumulated result of two years spent banging my head against the glass ceiling trying to break into senior leadership. I've been starting to ask myself whether it's simply down to me; whether I'm good enough, or if it might perhaps be time to do something else...

So far I've applied for five assistant head jobs and managed to secure two interviews – one internal, one external, but with no success. The feedback I've

Part of the change

63% of teaching staff in secondary schools are female, but only 38% of headteachers are women. The divide at primary level is even more pronounced, with women making up 86% of teaching staff but 73% of headteachers being men. Despite women making up the majority of the educational workforce, senior teams are, more often than not, dominated by men.

Whether this remains the case post-COVID remains to be seen, but I want to be a part of the

in 2016 were women – a rise of four percentage points. I would suggest that these positive changes are in part thanks to movements such as #WomenEd, which I first learned about when taking part in a workshop designed

to help women move into leadership roles.

#WomenEd is a fantastic

“As women accumulate classroom experience, their pay gradually falls below that of men”

received has been mostly positive, but the level of competition is consistently fierce, with lots of strong candidates boasting relevant experience and qualifications. Many of the jobs I've applied for have had 30 to 50 applicants!

Of the jobs I've applied for, from asking around I've discovered that they were all eventually given to men. To be clear, I'm not denying that the men in question would all have been excellent candidates entirely deserving of their roles – but those appointments do seem to echo a national picture.

change. I want my daughters to grow up being aware of, and being inspired by strong women leaders.

That said, things are changing, albeit slowly. It's worth noting that the proportion of women in leadership roles actually increased between 2010 and 2020, with 77% of newly promoted primary school headteachers in 2016 being women, representing a rise of three percentage points on 2011.

In secondary schools, 43% of newly promoted headteachers



group of women that was formed in order to encourage more women into leadership roles and buck the trend of male dominance. They initially got together almost by accident, but have since gone on to form an impressive alliance and have even had a book published – *10% Braver: Inspiring Women to Lead Education*.

The experience gap

Attitudes in education must continue to advance, and it seems as though they are – though for now, at least, the numbers remain shocking. The teaching profession in England continues to be dominated by women, but as they accumulate classroom experience, their pay gradually falls below that of men.

By the time they've accumulated 20 years of experience, male secondary teachers will likely be earning around £50,000 per year, compared to women who will typically be earning a figure below £45,000.

The gap is even larger in primary schools, with men earning over £51,000,

compared with the £43,000 typically earned by women. Men also tend to need fewer years of experience than their female counterparts before being promoted into more senior roles. Male teachers are more likely to have previously argued for a higher wage than women, whereas women are much more likely to slip back into their prior teaching positions at some stage following promotion.

Left playing catch-up

So what can be done to change this? Speaking to female colleagues, the reasons most commonly given for the lack of female leaders in schools include having a family, a lack of time and a more general lack of ambition.

Many women, myself included, have wanted to stay at home after having children. Later on, uncomfortable at the thought of leaving their children in childcare all day, some women will opt to return to work on a part-time basis.

Once their children become older, it's not uncommon for women to want to increase their hours, only to find their headteacher unwilling to make the necessary changes and a workforce that's moved on. Colleagues on what was once a similar pay scale will have been promoted, while any new roles that come up are offered first to younger (and cheaper) staff living without the commitments that come with having a family.

With women essentially left playing catch-up, is it any wonder that so many decide it's too much for them,

and opt to work part-time, or step down from a more senior role in favour of returning to the classroom?

Shared roles

The only way I can see this ever being resolved is to allow teachers to continue working in senior roles on a part-time or shared basis after starting a family. This is already happening at many schools, including the one where I work.

Also, it wouldn't hurt to give working mothers more support in progressing their careers after having a family, and allow female staff to increase their hours, while giving them new responsibilities that

will enhance their professional knowledge and expertise.

Personally, I've resolved to continue banging my head against that stubborn glass ceiling until someone either helps me break it, or I manage to make it through myself. If I do, then I'll encourage women of all ages to follow me, just as the women at #WomenEd are doing!



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Caroline Aldous-Goodge is an art and design teacher, head of year and education researcher

TALKING POINTS

Russell Hobby

Teach First CEO and former general secretary of the NAHT

"Looking at average pay rises, rather than just average salaries, suggests that lower pay for women in senior roles isn't caused solely by slower career progression (due to family commitments, for example). Female leaders seem to be offered lower pay rises for the same roles.

"It's not a great finding for a profession that can claim with some pride to have one of the largest densities of female chief executives in the country. A more professionalised recruitment and pay-setting process for senior roles might help; this is an especially urgent need, now that significant discretion on pay has been delegated to governing bodies."

Kate Chhatwal

Challenge Partners CEO and previously chief programme officer at The Future Leaders Trust

"It is almost as if women have to prove themselves to governors (and sometimes to themselves) in a way that isn't expected of men before being able to take on the role of leader substantively. And those who do look elsewhere for headships can face discrimination from governing bodies looking to recruit the 'right man' for the job, evidenced both in anecdotal feedback and figures suggesting our female Future Leaders make more applications, on average, than male Future Leaders before securing their first headship."

Professor John Howson

Chairman at Oxford Teacher Services Ltd.

"Both career breaks and a lack of mobility may affect the pay of women leaders in schools, leaving them earning less than men."



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CLASSROOM VOICES

“Teacher training made me a better person”

Neil D'Arcy-Jones looks back on what turned out to be a relentlessly intensive, yet instructive year of initial teacher training...

The hardest year of your life.' That was the overarching opinion of all my teacher friends. While they were mainly positive and encouraging about my choice of new career, I was under no illusions as to how tough it was going to be. Yet not even my teacher friends could predict how ridiculously challenging this training year would turn out to be.

Before going into the details of my last 10 months, I feel it only right to metaphorically doff my cap to those currently in their NQT year. Despite having had a lot less support and much more time in the classroom, what they've achieved during these exceptional times is truly remarkable.

DOWN THE RABBIT HOLE

In September 2020, I stepped inside my first classroom with a mixture of excitement and trepidation. I'd spent a wonderful summer doing an English subject knowledge enhancement course to ready myself for my training, and couldn't wait to impart my enthusiasm for all things poetry, prose and Shakespeare.

My idea of teaching at that stage was all about the subject knowledge, and the passing on of accumulated skills and information – but of course, teaching involves much more than that. Within weeks, there was talk of differentiation, behaviour management and assessment. The teacher standards loomed large. I was well and truly down the educational rabbit hole.

For me, teacher training was much like being in Lewis Carroll's Wonderland, with all the attendant bemusement and disorientation. I remember my very first lesson, covering for someone off sick, helping a class of Y10's write a newspaper report. Having worked as

a journalist myself for more than 20 years, I reasoned that if I couldn't teach that, I may as well give up there and then.

JUGGLING ACT

That lesson proved to be one of many highs during those first few weeks, but there were unfortunately plenty of lows as well. The class of unruly Y8s. The lesson plan that got ripped to shreds (and rightly so). The constant need to teach to the top, while scaffolding up.

Throughout, I found the biggest challenge to be the constant juggling act of it all – making sure my elements of good teaching were in place, while simultaneously attempting to work out the most appropriate teaching strategies for my particular personality and strengths.

As those weeks wore on, that warning from my teacher friends kept coming to mind. Everything seemed far tougher than I'd ever anticipated. I became aware of other trainees starting to drop out, and was beginning to feel the pressure

myself. I'm not ashamed to admit that I experienced serious doubts, and on a couple of occasions, even thought about joining them by throwing in the towel.

I wouldn't have made it through the training had it not been for my mentors. At every stage, especially during my second placement, they provided me sage advice and constant affirmation.

A BETTER PERSON

The real surprise for me has been in seeing just how many different elements there are to teaching – whether during a global pandemic or otherwise.

If I'm honest, it's the task of teaching itself that still appeals to me most. When an unruly Y8 explained to me what Shakespeare meant by '*We are such stuff as dreams are made on*,' I knew then why the maths teacher at my second placement school had called it the best job in the world.

There's no other feeling quite like the one that comes from seeing the results of your teaching endeavours – be it a beautifully penned essay answer, or an idea that suddenly pops into a student's head from a follow-up question.

Some of the best moments I experienced in this training year were when we all – students and teachers alike – learnt something new. I came to realise that my training hadn't just taught me how to teach and how to be a great teacher; it had also made me a better person in terms of the skills I now possessed, and had given me a better understanding of the kind of person I want to be.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Neil D'Arcy-Jones is a former local newspaper journalist who has recently completed his initial teacher training

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FOCUS ON: ENGLISH

From cunning ways of improving students' accuracy, to the battle over poetry's place in the curriculum, we look at the current state of play with regards to reading and writing...

What strategies can English teachers call on to support, encourage and inspire their students?

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Those fearing that the study of poetry at secondary school may have been read the last rites, courtesy of Ofqual, can rest easy, says Zoe Enser...



How to teach ACCURACY

Chris Curtis suggests some ways of attending to common mistakes and inaccuracies that all students make at some point, so that they don't become a fixed habit...

Why do students struggle with accuracy?

Aside from some who have genuine cognitive wiring issues, we can usually put students into three behavioural camps: the 'haven't been taught' group, the 'blindness' group and the 'lazy' group (I'll address dyslexic students shortly, and obviously exclude them from these categories).

I have two daughters and, like all good teachers, observe how my children learn. One is a great speller, but she can be lazy and so will get the occasional word wrong. The other rushes to get her ideas on the page so quickly that there are always several mistakes. When questioned, one can see the mistakes while the other can't and needs directing to them. One child is lazy with spellings, the other is blind to them – which is interesting, as they are identical twins.

There are some students who struggle with spellings and spotting errors because the writing is hard to decode, and I empathise with them – but not every student who cannot spell is dyslexic, and it is unfair to dyslexic students if that myth is propagated by teachers. Although everybody is on a spectrum, dyslexia is a complex issue, and

there is more to it than just spelling.

If a parent raises a concern about their child, point them in the direction of the teacher in charge of SEND. Spelling is a small part of dyslexia, but not the one and only marker. And we need to be careful of pronouncing every child who can't spell, or who mistakes b's for d's, a dyslexic student. A label can help support a child, but an incorrect label can be a shield to hide behind, stopping the real issue from being fixed.

Accuracy should be the classroom's air freshener. You might need it more sometimes – especially after Y9 PE – or you might turn it down occasionally if it risks becoming overpowering, but it is always there. In some form. In some manner. In some way.

Three spelling choices

This strategy plays an active role in helping students get better at spelling and addresses the error blindness mentioned previously, making them take more responsibility for their spellings.

First, the student identifies the word they struggle to spell – this can be done during or after

writing. Then, on a scrap bit of paper, the student writes down three possible ways to spell the word. The student looks at the three alternatives and decides which one looks right:

implys / implies / implis

More often than not, they select the right one. I've seen students improve their spelling overnight with this approach. It won't work for students with poor visual memory, but does help some. Students often think that spelling needs to be an

automated or quick process, and don't like using a dictionary because it slows them down when they want to be seen to keep up with the rest of the class. This approach allows them to do things quickly, and save face in the classroom

Draft in threes

I love drafting in lessons. Mainly because there is less lesson to plan, but also because it gets you to the heart of the writing process



and the problems students have with specific parts. I will often insist they draft in threes:

- **Draft 1** will check they understand the task
- **Draft 2** will check that they have addressed any writing issues
- **Draft 3** will be the polish

This repeated process is really handy, because each draft is flagged as a different task and has a different impact on different students. The good writers use the drafting process to refine and hone their work and the weak writers make large leaps in progress. Draft 1 contains no punctuation, whereas draft 2 contains some secure use.

Writing is hard. Students get things wrong. It may seem that punctuation, for example, is obvious, but 11-year-olds can get so involved in the moment and their ideas that they forget about its existence.

I like to simplify the marking sometimes and will use a mark out of 10. Take this example, for a student writing a paragraph of a horror story:

- **Draft 1** – 3/10 Target: Add more ambitious and effective vocabulary
- **Draft 2** – 7/10 Target: Vary how you structure your sentences
- **Draft 3** – 9/10 Target: Be more creative with how you present your ideas – steal ideas from the examples in the lesson

This example shows improvement as a process, and teaches students to see it as such. Writing is

“We must articulate when effort or attention to detail is not good enough”

too often seen as merely the product of learning; as a form of communication that happens when it is assessment time. Drafting several times is really helpful to me and the students. You see the students who don't listen and who won't make progress. You see the impact of your instructions.

Refusal

Students need to know that we have high expectations of them. If I mark a piece of work that doesn't use punctuation, it tells them they can hand it in like this again. It is amazing how much of an impact you get from telling a student that you are not going to mark their work until they have done X.

We must articulate when effort or attention to detail is not good enough. A lack of care shows a lack of respect. The student should be working harder than the teacher.

I always think that the way we respond to work is important. Praise everything,

VISIBILITY

A lot of students get the words 'a lot' wrong. In my time I have seen several versions, but the preferred option is usually 'allot' or 'alot'. Why is it that students make this mistake over and over again?

Well, it is relatively simple. Say the following sentence out loud: 'A lot of gardeners own or rent an allotment, and the owner allots a fixed amount of space for each person.'

Did you notice how you say 'a lot' in the same way as you say the opening of 'allotment' and 'allots'? You say it without any pauses. In fact, we all do it. Is there any wonder why students write it as one word when this is how it is spoken?

To combat this, every time I come across it while reading aloud, I place emphasis on the gap and put a pause between the 'a' and the 'lot'. There are lots of mistakes that students make, and I think we have to be explicit about drawing attention to them.

ideas are more important than the style when you are in the flow of creativity. Students rush because they are worried that those really good ideas, like mice running around in their brains, are going to escape and disappear.

Build time in for students to forget what they have written. The next lesson isn't enough, to be honest – it needs to be at least a week. Coming to their text as a new reader will give them fresh eyes: students can then spot their own mistakes from a mile off.

They are quite happy to spot your typos on a PowerPoint or worksheet from 10 paces with glee and pride. We are attuned to the errors of others. Many times I have been tempted to write to a publisher when I spot an error in a book. Of course, to speed things up you can get students to proofread each other's work; however, I think it is important that they each understand their mistakes.

and we devalue both the work and praise itself. I tend towards being sparse with praise. Regarding the effort put into a piece of work, praise should be worked for and punishment must be clear. Refusing to mark or read something until the student has done a bit more work sends a message: *I think you are capable of more.*

Time and distance

We want students to write with accuracy, but they often get the wrong view of writing. They assume, incorrectly, that accuracy just 'happens', and that the quick two-second look they did will spot everything.

Of course, we live in an age where people want things done quickly. We want their writing to be fluent by the end, but students need training for accuracy. A quick five minutes at the end of the work is not enough. Accuracy is improved by repeated reading.

Students write in the moment. That's why they can write whole paragraphs without using full stops, or whole stories without using paragraphs. To most, the



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Chris Curtis is an English teacher – this article is based on an edited extract from his book *How to Teach: English* (£16.99, Independent Thinking Press / bit.ly/ts106-accuracy1); follow him at @Xris32 or visit learningfrommymistakes.english.blogspot.com

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Bridging the gap

Hannah Rix looks at how schools can support students in moving from the reading they're required to do at primary to what's expected of them at secondary

School teachers and leaders are acutely aware of the 'language leap' pupils encounter between primary and secondary. How can we make the transition less traumatic for them, and equip teachers with the tools they'll need to help bridge the gap?

Despite all the efforts often made by secondary schools, such as transition days and 'settling in' periods, the step up from primary to secondary remains huge. For some children, it's less of a leap and more of a pole vault – only without a pole, across a cavernous ravine, and with nowhere to land.

Volume and difficulty

Not only are there new pastoral needs to be met, but also increases in the volume and difficulty of curriculum content to take account of. According to a report by OUP and the Centre for Education and Youth (see bit.ly/ts106-gap1), "In an average day at secondary school, pupils are exposed to three or four times as much language as at primary school."

It follows that with secondary students studying a range of discrete subjects throughout the day – where a typical timetable might

include geography, physics and computer science – they'll be exposed to a considerable amount of language they may have no prior knowledge or experience of.

If our lower performing pupils are to therefore appreciate the curriculum in its entirety, we need to adopt a whole school approach to addressing the reading gap, beginning with 'disciplinary literacy'. It's important for all secondary school teachers to feel confident in teaching some degree of reading, writing and language development within their subjects, since there will be a bank of vocabulary that students have to understand in order to progress.

If less able students can't read the basics, then there's little chance of them being able to understand the subject overall (see bit.ly/ts106-gap2).

Early assessments

Schools need to identify any related issues early on. Whether via initial reading assessments or simple writing tasks, it shouldn't take long for teachers to identify those Y7 students needing additional support. Providing them with targeted interventions as early as possible will give them the best chance

of thriving as they progress through KS3. If left unaddressed until they reach KS4, it will be far too late.

There should be some targeted vocabulary teaching in every subject, involving teachers and subject leaders identifying words and phrases students aren't likely to encounter in everyday speech. Specific guidance and instruction pertaining to these words can then be provided, which might include learning about their etymology and morphology in a way that helps students better understand the connections between them.

It's also advisable to chunk complex texts. Reading books one paragraph at a time might feel time-consuming, but it will save you teaching time in the long run. This method can be beneficial for all learners, too – not just those needing extra support.

Finally, make time for 'reading talk'. A large portion of our text comprehension happens when we express our views and opinions on the material we've read.

Whether it's a passage from a book or a case study, model critical

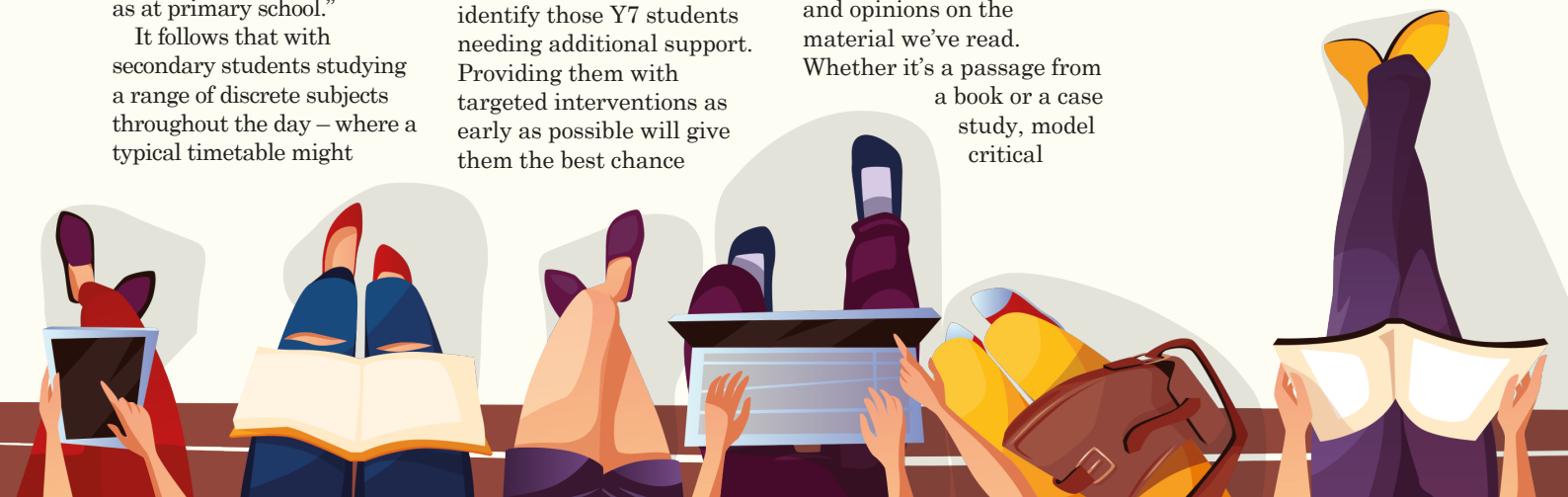
thinking and expression to your students in a way that's accessible to them.

The difficulties underpinning the reading 'catch up' schools have to do can be variously attributed to the six-week summer holiday – a desert of literary stimulation for some – as well as the inherent challenge of getting to grips with an unfamiliar secondary curriculum. However, by ensuring their teachers are confident, and equipped with the right skills to deliver lessons that contain considered and targeted literacy practice, schools will quickly find themselves with the most powerful tool there is for tackling the literacy gap.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Hannah Rix is a SEND English teacher and has taught in both secondary and SEND schools for over eight years. This experience led to her co-founding Readingmate Ltd, producer of the Readingmate app – a free resource designed to help parents develop their children's love of reading. Find out more at readingmate.co.uk



The greatly exaggerated death of poetry

Those fearing that the study of poetry at secondary school may have been read the last rites, courtesy of Ofqual, can rest easy, says **Zoe Enser...**

Earlier this year, just as people were dealing some of the most significant issues of COVID, Ofqual issued a consultation on the exams for 2021. They had been tasked with considering how assessment should reflect the learning that had taken place during this difficult period of time, and how students could be given opportunities to demonstrate their learning in the fairest possible way.

One proposal put forward in this consultation was the removal of certain topics from the final exams – including the possible removal of the seen poetry aspect from the English Literature GCSE exam. Shakespeare, it seemed, would stay. But all other options, including poetry, were potentially off the table.

No more Blake?

When this suggestion landed in the public domain, few seemed to bemoan the loss of the modern prose or drama text, but there was significant outcry regarding the poetry option. Many parents, teachers, writers, and poets – including the Poet Laureate, Simon Armitage, no less – declared that poetry must be saved, and that its disappearance from these assessments could spell its demise. No more Duffy. No more Blake. No more Owen, and certainly no more Angelou.

Others, meanwhile, appeared to welcome the possibility. Reflecting on their own relationship with poetry at school, some expressed a sense of relief that students may no longer need to struggle through dusty tomes in order to create meaning from a tangle of nonsense.

Whatever your own personal preferences regarding poetry, I would like to reassure you here that, to paraphrase Mark Twain, rumours of its death have been greatly exaggerated. It is very much alive and well, and embedded in the curriculum at KS3 and KS4.

Poetry remains a key unit in the learning sequence of many schools. Poetry units dealing with family, relationships, identity, conflict and everything in between provide perfect opportunities to hear from a range of different voices.

Regardless of whether specific poems, or even the poetic form itself are explored in an exam at the end of Y11 (and again, to reassure people, *poetry is still very much part of the literature syllabus*), English teachers are fully aware that the study of poetry remains an important aspect of our subject. This means you will continue to find Duffy, Owen, Blake, Angelou and a whole host of others on today's curriculum.

A link to history

There are many reasons for

this, perhaps the first being that teachers of English are well aware that poetry is one of our earliest forms of expression, with links to oral traditions and narrative development going back centuries. Stories of Gilgamesh, a hero of ancient Mesopotamia, were collected in an epic poem which was subsequently translated and transformed by different cultures over time. Elsewhere, the poems of Ovid and Homer helped to ensure the heroes and villains of old

still inform today's modern world. Poetry provides a link to the history of our language, as well as a path we can trace back to our earliest understandings of the world and of art.

That's not to say that all English teams are studying Gilgamesh or Homer, but in every English curriculum you will find poems that seek to help young people explore different aspects of our



humanity, while also being enjoyable for their simple aestheticism. Just as we may like looking at a painting or watching a singer perform, poetry is an expression of our artistic natures – which is something that many teachers continue to value, and wish to pass on to their students.

Poetry also provides students with opportunities to explore language in a way that's less constrained by the standard rules of grammar and syntax that can accompany the crafting of a prose text. With poetry, they can play around with the explicit and implicit meaning of individual words, without necessarily having to worry about right and wrong or how long the redrafting is likely to take.

Students can further experiment with the order in which words are presented, and consider how meanings may

“The opportunities presented by poetry are immense, and English teachers know it”

change through the repositioning of punctuation, by breaking off lines mid-way through or simply running into the next idea. It's somehow less threatening to examine different language possibilities through poetry, where there will usually be fewer worries around corrections and richer possibilities for crafting meaning at a micro level.

‘Incidental’ uses

We should also remember that while units exploring

individual poets or themes are still included in most curriculums, so too are more ‘incidental’ uses of the poetic form. Poetry can be used in myriad ways, so that even if a scheme doesn't include the word ‘poetry’ in the title, teachers can still be enriching, challenging, and scaffolding students' learning via the medium of poetry in their lessons.

Poems can offer a great deal, due to their brevity. Opening a discussion on themes or aspects of language with a poem is an excellent method by which to prepare students for the study of a longer text. Poems often contain rich examples of metaphors and symbolism, or patterns of language and rhythms that exemplify elements of literature that appear elsewhere.

Seeing examples of these will enable students to carefully consider the language choices a writer makes, including their use of punctuation and internal rhymes. The more students are exposed to great literature, the better.

For some, the idea that poems aren't part of a distinct unit will continue to ring alarm bells. The assumption can be that unless poetry is given a specific place within the curriculum or on the final assessment, its importance will be lost – nudged out in favour of more high-stakes content and becoming merely a conduit for other things, if it even appears at all. Yet the space we have at KS3 means teachers can make the most of those

opportunities, just as they do with spoken language.

A simple joy

Let's also not forget that there are many teachers sharing poems for the simple joy it brings them, and that they're often keen to gift this to their students. Equally, a number of students will be seeking their own poems to share with their peers and teachers, using them as a form of expression just as so many great writers have done before them.

The opportunities presented by poetry are immense, and English teachers know it. Visit their lessons, and you'll find poetry strutting its stuff on stage alongside Shakespeare, woven into the pages of narrative prose, and flowing daily from students' mouths and pens.

That said, the future of poetry looks set to be a topic that will come to the fore again, particularly around Ofqual's consultation on topic selections for the 2022 exams, and the possibility that poetry could once more become a least preferred option.

Don't worry, though – poetry is far from dead. Instead, it's in very safe hands, its mutable form continuing to delight, sadden, enrage, frustrate, confuse, and enlighten students in schools everywhere. And that's unlikely to change any time soon.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Zoe Enser is a specialist advisor for English at The Education People; for more information, visit theeducationpeople.org or follow @greeborunner



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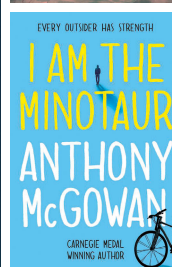
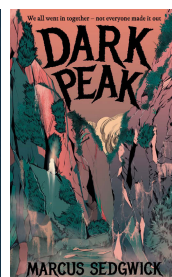
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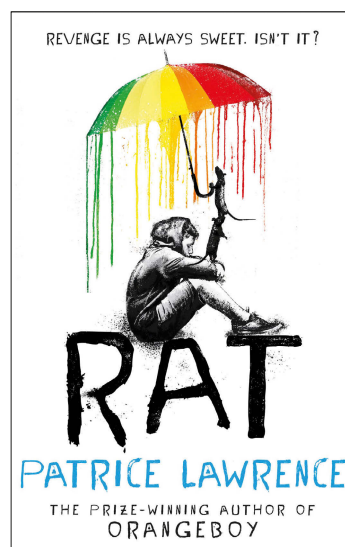
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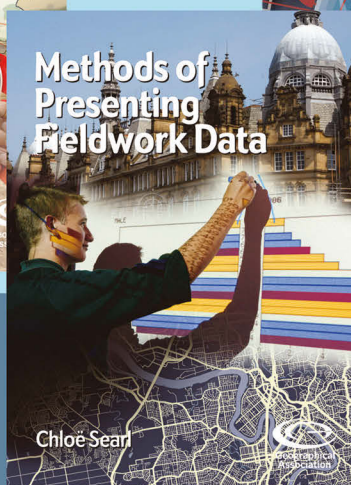
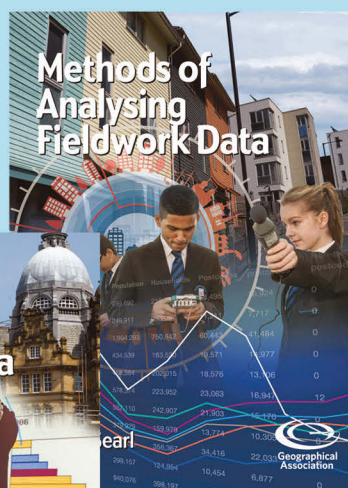
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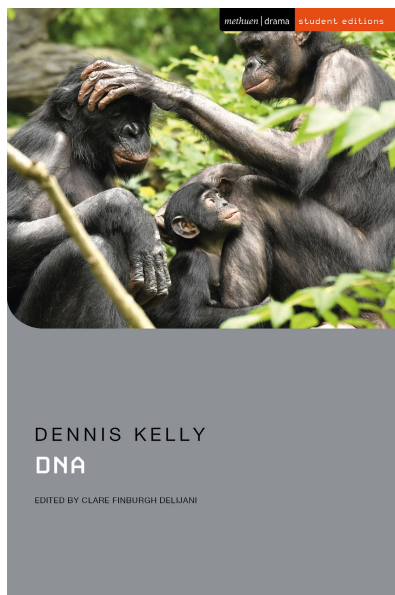
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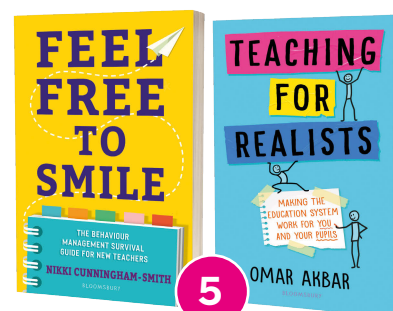
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To ban or not to ban?

Online platforms and social media can cause security and content issues within schools – but banning them altogether isn't necessarily the answer, says **Bob Drummond**...

Digital solutions and social media have been the 'winners' of the pandemic – exploding in use in schools and among students to help everyone keep in touch and enable remote teaching whilst social distancing. Recent research from The DfE (see bit.ly/ti8-tech1) reveals that the majority of schools have invested in new or upgraded technology in response to COVID-19 to enable remote teaching and learning.

With the UK government currently working through its 'COVID catch-up plan' to help students plug gaps in their education caused by the pandemic, we can expect schools to continue relying on digital, asynchronous learning solutions and social media to support their students for some time yet.

However, implementing such solutions requires far more than simply switching the technology on. Large scale technology use in school settings involves weighing up a series of considerations and implications. For instance, there's a pressing need in every school for digital policies that can help manage students' use of social media. In response to what seems to be a perceived absence of existing policies, the Education Secretary, Gavin Williamson, has said he wants a ban on mobile phones in schools.

This isn't about trying to prevent children and young people from accessing major online platforms and technologies that could be distracting or host harmful content; the real solution



lies in schools and teachers understanding how to ensure that students know how to use these technologies safely and securely, and building protections around that.

Clear rules – for everyone

When implementing a digital solution within any school, it's crucial to establish clear rules and expectations around its use – not just for students, but also teachers and parents. Settings must prevent pupils from muting each other, for example, removing teachers from meetings or interfering with files stored online.

It's also important to advise pupils and their parents or carers on continuing live lesson etiquette and expectations. Should a responsible adult be nearby to support the child where needed? Should video feeds be turned on or off?

Many school-age children are already incredibly adept

at using technology, but their ability to use it wisely and keep themselves safe online remains very much in development.

At Kami, we're supporters of how the latest PSHE curriculum incorporates digital literacy across all Key Stages. The purpose of this is to educate children in an age-appropriate way about what type of personal information to avoid sharing online, how to ensure their privacy and security settings on social media platforms are sufficient, and understanding that not everyone and everything online is necessarily reliable and trustworthy – all vital in helping young people navigate the digital landscape safely.

The disruption factor

Of course, educating teachers and students on best practice with respect to technology use won't mean they'll always be secure, or accessing content that's safe for consumption.

For this, schools must look to technical solutions that can act as a practical defence against malicious material – preventing access to certain sites, or withstanding potential data breaches. Foremost among these are the content filters that help shield students from the kind of sites that can lead to malware being installed onto personal devices, as well as sites showing inappropriate and/or hateful content and social networking sites that may impact upon classroom productivity.

Placing administrator rights firmly in teachers' hands is important – as is giving them full oversight and control of students' devices that are out and being used in the classroom, or connected to the school's WiFi network. They can then use this ability to delete inappropriate comments left on collaborative workspaces, and restrict access to individual users.

To make the most of their technology in the post-COVID world, schools must adopt a digital and holistic approach to managing it. Rather than relying on the devices and content filters themselves, teachers should consider giving students and parents the chance to learn about online etiquette, digital skills and behaviour. This will not only keep their children safe in school, but also help prepare them for a workforce that's becoming ever more digital by the day.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Bob Drummond is chief privacy officer and co-founder at Kami – visit kamiapp.com or follow @usekamiapp

First things first?

Colin Foster suggests rethinking the order in which we do things when supporting teachers at the start of their career...

A beginning teacher needs to build up an enormous amount of knowledge and skill in a very short time. How can schools best support this process and scaffold a beginning teacher's professional learning?

It might seem natural to 'begin at the beginning', and for the beginning teacher to try emulating how an experienced teacher goes about things. The first stage in the teaching process is planning the lesson, so the first thing the beginning teacher may be asked to do is to have a go at planning a lesson – and then try teaching it. But is this a sensible approach?

Backward chaining

If you're learning to fly an aeroplane, the first thing you learn is *not* how to take off.¹ Taking off is extremely advanced. In your first lesson, the instructor will take off and fly the plane to a safe bit of airspace, get everything nice and level, hand over the controls and then let you try controlling the plane for a bit yourself. Afterwards, they will take over again and land the plane safely. Learning to take off – and learning to land – both come much later.

In the same way, we shouldn't assume that the best order for beginning teachers to learn in is necessarily going to be the same as the order in which those learned skills will be

performed. Learning things in chronological order is often a much longer and harder process than learning things in a more psychological order.

When teaching their students, many teachers will employ *backward chaining*², where a multi-step task is broken down into separate elements, which are then taught in *reverse* order.

If there are five steps to a task, the teacher will therefore initially perform steps 1 to 4, with the student then completing step 5 by themselves. Next, the teacher performs steps 1 to 3, and the student does steps 4 and 5, and so on.

This way, the student repeatedly experiences the success of completing the task, as they acquire more and more of the necessary skills. Eventually, when they first attempt the task in its entirety for the first time, the new part they have to remember is performed *first*, and then they fall back on rehearsing the skills they've already developed – which can make for a much smoother and less stressful learning experience.

Apprentices in practical subjects are commonly taught in this way; an aspiring potter will learn by finishing off the master's pot first.

Teaching first; planning later

What could this kind of approach mean for the beginning teacher? I think it means *not* starting by trying to plan a lesson! Until the beginning teacher has taught many successful lessons, they're unlikely to be in a position to plan their own lessons successfully.

When a novice teacher plans their first lesson it's

very unlikely to be a good one, and chances are it will be hard to teach from. I've sat at the back of many lessons taught by beginning teachers, with their lesson plan in my hands, thinking that the plan I'm looking at has some serious flaws, and that I'd find teaching a good lesson from it extremely difficult.

In a sense, their lesson is a bit doomed from the outset. Because they're



using a plan that has serious problems baked in, it can be hard to later tease out which problems stemmed from the plan itself, and which came about due to how it was implemented.

As well as trying to learn how to plan, the beginning teacher is also learning how to teach from a not-that-good plan, all at the same time, making for an extremely demanding task. Would you attempt learning to drive in a car with a dodgy gearbox, or learning how to cook with a temperamental oven? Some people may have to, but it isn't ideal – the job is hard enough without that extra degree of difficulty! The beginning teacher doesn't yet have the experience to adapt to using a bad plan,

“When a novice teacher plans their first lesson it's unlikely to be a good one”

and so is doubly disadvantaged.

Positive early experiences

Wouldn't it be much better to instead focus on one challenge at a time? The first such challenge could be 'Teaching from a sound plan' and only later – when you have a feel for what a good lesson might be like – might you take on 'Devising your first lesson plan'.

This way, the first lesson the beginner actually teaches is based on an expert-produced, tried-and-tested plan that has been used repeatedly by

beginning teachers over multiple years and 'cannot fail'. There's already more than enough to think about and try to get right when teaching your first lesson, even when working with a plan that's virtually faultless. We should be placing beginning teachers in the best possible position to have a successful first experience, and also in the best possible position to learn from that experience.

The 'curse of knowledge' means that the experienced teacher overseeing things is likely to underestimate just how challenging it is to plan your first lesson. An experienced teacher might be able to come up with a perfectly good plan in the time it takes them to

walk from the staffroom to their classroom, while *en route* asking three children to tuck their shirts in!

The beginning teacher, on the other hand, might spend hours searching the web for lesson ideas, and still come up with things that are unlikely to work well in practice. It's far better to provide them with a high quality plan and for them to spend that time unpicking the details – perhaps even improving on it, if they can – but mainly so that they can understand how the pieces fit together, and perhaps practise any tricky parts by working them through in their head.

Autonomy and personality

At this point, some readers may be worrying that this approach doesn't respect the beginning teacher's autonomy and personality, treating them instead like a robot or a technician, merely following someone else's instructions.

However, I think it's a pity that we feel there's something undignified about teaching from someone else's plan. Doctors don't make their own medicines (unless they are quacks!); the best actors don't necessarily write their own lines, and yet they show limitless creativity on the stage. Teachers shouldn't be ashamed of borrowing from one another, and making the most of other people's good ideas and materials.

I hesitate to disagree with Julie Andrews, but the beginning isn't always 'A very good place to start'. It might seem logical to do that, even to the beginning teacher themselves, but imitating what an experienced professional does is rarely the optimal way for a novice to gain that same experience. Relying on beginning teachers to 'learn from their mistakes' is a slow and often discouraging process – and learning to teach is hard enough without this!

¹Sangwin, C. (2019). The mathematical apprentice: An organising principle for teaching calculus in the 21st century. In *Proceedings of the Conference on Calculus in Upper Secondary and Beginning University Mathematics*, University of Agder, Norway: MatRIC.

²van Merriënboer, J. J., & Kirschner, P. A. (2017). *Ten steps to complex learning: A systematic approach to four-component instructional design*. Routledge.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Colin Foster (@colinfoster77) is a Reader in Mathematics Education at the Mathematics Education Centre at Loughborough University. He has written many books and articles for mathematics teachers. foster77.co.uk





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THE TEMPEST

Helen Mears' tour of lesser visited Shakespearean works alights upon the Bard's fantastical and dreamlike swansong...

When should I teach it?

The play could be taught in KS3, but as it's on the list of Shakespeare plays for GCSE English Literature for both AQA and Edexcel, it could also be taught at KS4. Teaching *The Tempest* could be a useful precursor to a study of *Romeo and Juliet* at GCSE, with Miranda and Ferdinand offering a less dangerous take on teenage romance. There are also links to *Macbeth* in its supernatural elements.

How should I teach it?

At KS3, teaching of the play can focus more on the relationships than the revenge plot. As well as the aforementioned romance, there's the father and daughter relationship (a recurring feature of the Problem Plays) between Prospero and Miranda, which can be interesting to explore – particularly for how Prospero engineers her meetings with Ferdinand as part of his grand plan.

Then there are the master/servant relationships Prospero has with Caliban and the spirit Ariel. There's much to explore in the exchanges Prospero has with these characters, particularly the ways in which he trades insults with Caliban. There's been a lot of recent research into teaching the play with younger age groups, so you may find that there are many resources available.

For GCSE students, the revenge plot is a good starting point. It highlights the dichotomy between revenge and forgiveness, while also allowing for deeper examination of the parallels between Prospero and Caliban. We are encouraged to sympathise with Prospero for having been usurped by his brother Antonio, and yet Prospero has himself usurped Caliban as 'ruler' of the island.

Why should I teach it?

In addition to multiple thematic approaches, the play also offers rich and varied language. Caliban is an excellent character to explore here, being another of Shakespeare's code-switchers – veering between the plosive, monosyllabic insults he throws at Prospero and Trinculo, and the beautiful verse he uses when extolling the virtues of 'his' island. This may suggest an inner nobility, while hinting that he's the island's rightful ruler.

Our post-COVID world could potentially give our students a greater understanding of isolation and how it might feel for Prospero and Miranda, trapped as they are on the island. Studying *The Tempest* also provides excellent opportunities to study historical performance practices. Written late in Shakespeare's career, the play was likely intended for performance at the indoor Blackfriars Theatre, which Shakespeare's Acting Troupe acquired in 1609. His later plays reflect this change of location, with more intimate staging and a greater use of music and song. *The Tempest* is one of a few plays in the First Folio to feature contemporary stage directions by the company's scribe.



About the play

The Tempest is probably Shakespeare's last solo authored play. It's traditionally placed amongst the so-called Problem Plays, and therefore hard to pin down to a single genre. It tells the story of Prospero, who after being usurped as Duke of Milan by his brother now lives with his daughter Miranda on an isolated island peopled by spirits and Caliban – the only indigenous inhabitant. He has raised a storm that has left his enemies shipwrecked on the island, and at his mercy...

How does it link to the rest of the curriculum?

A study of *The Tempest* will have strong links to history, PSHE and current affairs. Prospero's reign over the island and displacement of its sole indigenous inhabitant links with issues of colonialism – both at the time it was written and to more recent history – and raises questions around identity and the master/slave dynamic. Is Caliban justified in his revenge plot, merely wanting to take back the land he feels was stolen from him? These questions of identity can lead to discussions concerning the Black Lives Matter movement and its resurgence following the murder of George Floyd.

How can I watch it?

The play is frequently performed, and both The Globe and The RSC have recent productions available on DVD. For an introduction for younger students, there's the recent CBeebies version (see bit.ly/ts106-tempest1), as well as the ever-popular *Animated Tales* version (bit.ly/ts106-tempest2).



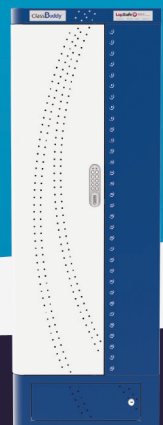
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Lessons from everywhere

Susan Popoola makes her case for why the time has come to develop a curriculum with a genuinely global worldview

After a turbulent year that's seen much debate around racial injustice, discussions around decolonising the National Curriculum are now firmly back on the agenda.

The notion of decolonising the curriculum can open up interesting conversations around what's being taught, how and by whom. Different people will define the term differently, opening up a whole other topic for discussion. Often, however, talk of decolonising the curriculum can alienate people who believe it to mean taking something out, rather than adopting a wider viewpoint of past events. We should therefore perhaps first unpack what 'decolonising' actually means.

Lack of immersion

There's something more engaging in stating that we should create a curriculum that has a global worldview. A curriculum which represents a post-Brexit Britain, while enabling young people to better understand the wider world around them and

broadening their views.

Devising a global worldview curriculum will help us develop our mindsets and better understand the richness of other countries and cultures. I once judged a school competition involving students who had been to Ghana to help with some construction work on a school project. When I asked the students what they had learnt from the experience, they struggled to answer.

They hadn't immersed themselves in the culture they found there, thus representing a lost learning opportunity. The rural community they visited may have lacked the modern infrastructure we have here, but if you're going to visit such an environment, then you should at least be going with a sense of curiosity about its people, and their lives and backgrounds.

These trips are partly about the practical help you can offer these communities, but also

about what you can learn from them. By perceiving ourselves as the 'lucky ones' in the rich Western world, and therefore duty-bound to help poor, underdeveloped countries whose people have nothing, we're effectively starting the conversation on an uneven footing. That can hinder the dialogue in any interactions setting out to understand these communities, and also carries with it the risk of being perceived as 'white saviours'.

A good example of this shift in mindset and approach is a school I spoke at soon after the murder of George Floyd. For the first time, they had recognised the need to approach the subject of Black History, but didn't want to do anything that appeared superficial, such as suddenly focusing on Black History Month. We discussed how the students could benefit from embracing the diversity of their own cultural backgrounds by researching the national days for each country represented in the school – learning what it represents for that culture, and the history around it.

A different approach

Across all subjects, from literature to technology, we can talk about what's been done in other parts of the world, in addition to what was historically achieved in Britain. We can explore other people's experiences, examine educational material and speak to other people with a truly open mindset that's ready to appreciate their achievements and global contributions.

Being a school governor for 10 years showed me the challenges schools face when it comes to having to strictly follow the National Curriculum while under pressure to get results. That said, I've also seen some truly great approaches from teachers who have helped students develop a wider understanding of the world by being creative when it comes to mindset, network and reference materials, and by encouraging students to research a diverse range of environments. It's this different way of approaching things that I believe can truly make a difference in the long-term.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

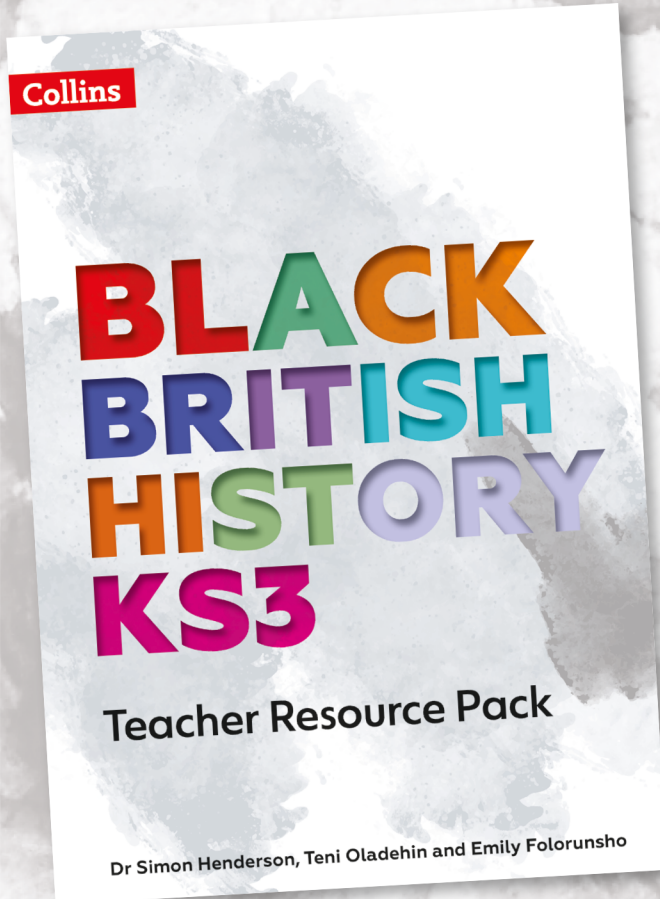
Susan Popoola is an award-winning HR specialist and public speaker, and regularly works with schools to help them initiate discussions between students and staff around diversity and inclusion; for more details, visit mosaicwise.com

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- **Hannah Cusworth**, teacher and history education consultant

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NEED TO KNOW- Q&A

“Black history is British history”

Dr Simon Henderson and Teni Oladehin explore how you can integrate Black British history into your KS3 curriculum



30 SECOND BRIEFING

The Black British History Teacher Resource Pack from Collins supports students to engage with the events of the past in an accessible, inclusive and thought-provoking way, enabling you to weave these pivotal lessons into your existing KS3 curriculum.

Why is it crucial that all students learn about Black British history?

Teni Oladehin: Any study of British history today must account for the rich diversity encapsulated in the phrase ‘British history’, and Black history is a fundamental part of that. As history teachers, it’s our duty to provide students with a rounded understanding of the ways that the history of the African diaspora has shaped the nation – from the presence of Black Romans who led conquests in Britain, to popular Black British figures who led the British Civil Rights Movements in the 20th Century.



Why is now the right time to start teaching Black British history?

Simon Henderson: It’s always been the right time to teach Black British history, but the importance of understanding the role played by Black people in the nation’s past was brought into stark focus in 2020. The accelerated momentum injected into the fight for racial justice, as a consequence of the murder of George Floyd, raised questions about the structures that shape injustice. Students need to understand the past if they are to help build a more equitable future.

Why is it important to integrate teaching Black British

history into my existing curriculum, rather than teaching it separately?

TO: Black history is British history – to teach the two as mutually exclusive timelines is to do a disservice to that reality. It also encourages the narrative that the presence and contributions of Black people in British history are not of the same significance as those who feature in a ‘traditional’ history curriculum. This is often evident in the topic of transatlantic slave trade and its abolition.



Teni Oladehin is a teacher of history at Brampton Manor Academy



Dr Simon Henderson is a historian and Assistant Headteacher at Teesdale School and Sixth Form

I want to teach more Black British history but I’m not sure where to start...

SH: The Black British History Teacher Resource Pack from Collins is designed to show how Black British history can be integrated into existing KS3 curriculum models. Think of strands and themes that run through the history of Britain. The construction of race is one of these, and so it should be taught as one element of the history of the country.

How have your students reacted to the Black British History Teacher Pack?

SH: During the development of the teacher pack, I tried out some of the lessons on some KS4 students. One student reacted to a lesson on the Notting Hill riots, saying, “We have never studied anything like that before, but I really think we should have.” It was really powerful, and highlights how much students are intrigued and inspired by stories like this.

Contact:

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BRAIN FOOD

Nutrition has a vital role to play in fuelling young minds - which is why at least one MAT is taking its catering very seriously indeed...



L-R: Richard, Joanne and Luca

From 1950s tales of midnight dorm feasts featuring forbidden delicacies, to the iconic banger in the opening credits of *Grange Hill* and more recent news coverage of parents passing burgers through the gates for their twizzler-deprived offspring – school catering has not, it's fair to say, had the best reputation over the years. If you're looking for fine dining your local secondary is the last place you'd start your search – right?

Well, not necessarily. Because as it happens, top chefs who would normally be putting their skills to use in fancy restaurants are increasingly choosing to work in education instead. Why? How better to find out more than by speaking to three outstanding

representatives of the profession who oversee the catering at Bishop Wilkinson Catholic Education Trust (BWCET), which has 29 schools in the North East. Richard Bell, Luca Tomassetti and

working in a professional restaurant kitchen means long hours, split shifts, and few nights off; this is not the case when feeding schoolchildren and staff. There's also a great pension and good holidays, of course.

“You need to keep the menu varied as you have the same customer returning every day”

Joanne Stoddart are all catering cluster managers there, having previously worked at the top of their game in the restaurant world.

There are many benefits to working in school catering. The obvious one is an improved work-life balance. Traditionally,

Pressures and rewards

The catering team at BWCET is passionate about providing pupils with exciting, nutritious, varied food that ensures they're eating healthily and fuelling their bodies and minds for education.

Joanne Stoddart has

worked at high end restaurants including the Roux brothers' La Gavroche and later for Roux Fine Dining, covering many prestigious events including the BAFTAs and Henley Regatta. Her first move into education catering was as head chef of Bassett House School, attended by the children of celebrities including Sean Connery and Sophie Ellis Bexter. Despite all of this, Joanne says she's never been happier since coming on board at BWCET.

Having worked in some high-pressured restaurants and kitchen environments in the past, Joanne says, “You still have the pressures in school, but the rewards are far greater than when working in a Michelin star restaurant, as you get to educate students and staff about foods they may never



have tried before. It is a great, friendly environment for everyone, not just the children.

“The role is quite demanding and varied, but I certainly wouldn’t have it any other way and the hours are so much more sociable. I have been given a unique opportunity to be part of a great team and I love to interact with the children and continue to help develop the trust’s catering services.”

Keeping it fresh

Richard Bell, who previously worked in contract catering at large venues including the Sage in Gateshead and at Durham Cathedral, says: “While the better hours are certainly a bonus, I also enjoy the freedom of creating exciting nutritional, balanced dishes for students and teaching staff. Having control of what’s on the menu and ensuring the food is current and trendy is important, as pupils all eat out on the high street at weekends.”

Richard also says job security is a perk; during the pandemic none of his 20 staff were furloughed or made redundant. That said, working in education does bring different challenges to those faced in the hospitality sector. “You need to keep the menu varied as you have the same customer returning every day,” Richard says, “but I try not to treat the students any differently from customers

frequenting a high street restaurant. If they are not happy with the food or customer service, they can always bring a packed lunch, so it’s important to stay engaged with the pupils.”

Focus on wellbeing

Luca Tomassetti, originally from Rome, joined the trust in summer 2020 having spent most of his career working in hotels around the world, including the Waldorf Astoria’s Rome Cavalieri. He specialised in fine dining for big events but got to the stage where he wanted to get a better work-life balance. By moving into school catering, he was able to cut his working week in half.

Luca says that on paper there isn’t much of a difference for him between school catering and his previous career. “Our aim is to make the best food we can. That’s the same as before.

BWCET’S CATERING TEAM’S TIPS

- Always try and keep evolving. If you stand still, then things start to deteriorate. Keep things fresh and interesting.
- Be patient; you will be working with some staff that have a lower skill level. They are all extremely hard working but may require a little more training or coaching to reach your goals.
- Get students and staff involved. At some schools, sixth formers work on the tills and are paid with catering credit. They also help serve at events such as the governors’ AGM.



The biggest difference is the financial aspect. The hospitality industry aims to be as profitable as possible but here in schools our priority is the wellbeing of the pupils. There is still the expectation to make sure the school catering is financially sustainable though, which is one of the reasons the trust employs professionals like myself, with experience in hospitality rather than education.



“Weekends, evenings and bank holidays used to be times when I was inevitably working,” concludes Luca. “Now they’re an enjoyable time I can spend with my loved ones, instead of our busiest days in the kitchen. I love being able to use our experience and knowledge to try and educate pupils’ taste for food – it’s incredibly rewarding.”



What's New?

Our pick of the latest solutions and innovations for secondary education

1

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The new content includes video, quizzes and infographics that students will find compelling, as well as interactive games for history and science. To find out more, visit bbc.co.uk/bitesize and click on secondary.



BBC Bitesize

2



Earthly knowledge

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The unit can hold up to 80 litres of waste with an optional steel or plastic liner, while the double-sided oval aperture can accommodate a 4-litre washer bottle. Bespoke colours and personalisation of labels and units are available upon request, and an integral ballast cartridge comes supplied as standard. For more information on the new Leafield's EcoArc recycling bin, call Leafield Environmental on 01225 816 541, email recycle@leafieldenv.com or visit leafieldrecycle.com

5



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6



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MyLearning covers the whole curriculum, from KS1 through to KS4. We're a non-profit, funded by Arts Council England and have been established 16 years. To find out more, visit mylearning.org or drop us a line at info@mylearning.org



7

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8



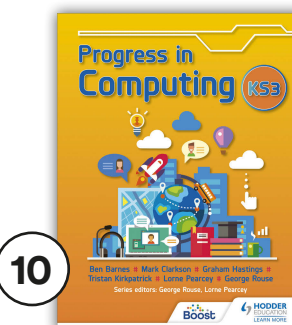
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Plan to Succeed

Effective revision undoubtedly leads to better exam results – but what should it look like?

Claire Gadsby has some suggestions...

Did you know that 88% of students who revise effectively exceed their target grade? Interestingly, most young people do not know this; failing to realise how exactly how much of a game-changer revision really is. Sitting behind this apparently simple statement, though, lies the key question: *what is effective revision?*

In my work with thousands of pupils around the world, I have not met many who are initially overjoyed at the thought of revision. More often, it is perceived as an onerous chore to be endured, in solitude, before facing the trial of the exams. It does not have to be this way, however – and I am passionate about taking the pain out of the process.

Revision can – and should be – fun. Yes, you read that right. The following strategies may be helpful for you in motivating and supporting your students on their revision journey.



1. Timer challenge

Reassure your students that not everything they've learnt needs revising: lots is actually still alive and well in their working memory. Put a timer on the clock and challenge them to see how much they can recall about a particular topic off the top of their head in just five minutes. The good news is that this is 'banked'; what pupils need to do now is to focus their revision on those areas that they did not write down. It is only at this point that they need to start scanning through notes to identify things they had missed.

2. Bursts and breaks

It is quite common for young people to feel overwhelmed by the sheer amount of

revision ahead of them. Be confident when you reassure them that 'little and often' really is the best way to tackle it. Indeed, research suggests that a short burst of 25 minutes of revision followed by a five-minute break is the ideal. Make the most of any 'dead time' slots in the school day to include these short revision bursts.

3. Better together

Show students the power of collaborative revision. Working with at least one other person is energising and gets the job done quicker. Activities such as 'match the pairs' or categorising tasks have the added advantage of also promoting higher order thinking and discussion.

4. Remove the scaffolds

It is not effective to simply keep reading the same words during revision. Instead, 'generation' is one of the key strategies proven to support long-term learning. Tell pupils not to write out whole words in their revision notes. Instead, they should write just the first letter of key words and then leave a blank space. When they look back at their notes, their brain will be challenged to work harder to recall the rest of the missing word which, in turn, makes it more likely to be retained for longer.

5. Playful but powerful

We know that low-stakes quizzing is ideal, and my 'Lucky Dip' approach can be helpful here. Keep snippets of revision information, such as key terms and concepts, 'in play' by placing them in a gift bag or similar. Every so often, mix these up and pull one out at random to check for understanding. Quick, out of context checks like this are a type of interleaving, which is proven to strengthen recall.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Claire Gadsby is an educational trainer, author and founder of Radical Revision – a comprehensive online revision programme launching with its first cycle in January 2022, which will offer sustained support and structure to students in the lead-up to their exams. Sign up for a FREE introductory session at clairegadsby.com/radical-revision

DOWNLOAD

A 'Getting Organised Checklist' for your students at

teachwire.net/ts106-revision



Desperately SAVING SARAH

Too many SENCos feel isolated, misunderstood and undervalued, says **Hannah Maloney** – and until this changes, it's vulnerable young people who will be paying the price...

I sat next to my best friend Sarah all through primary and secondary school: brilliant at maths and art but hopeless at spelling, she had her heart set on becoming an architect. She managed her GCSEs well but started to falter at A Level. By the first year of university, and without any additional support for her dyslexia, the studies proved too much for her. Architecture is undoubtedly the poorer for it. She would have been great.

Almost everyone who works in special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) has a drive to help because they know someone who lost out from an unjust system; one which has caused so many like Sarah to fall short of their dreams. If you don't have the parents, the private tuition and the perseverance, it is very difficult for students to reach their full potential. And not only is this tragic news for over a million young people each year, a lack of investment into the system maintains perpetual immobility. It also fuels a self-fulfilling prophecy:

why fund SEND when the pupils rarely get good outcomes?

This (un)conscious bias plays out at both the macro and micro level, in Government strategy and in day-to-day teachers' decisions. It's something that I, and the other researchers of the 'National SENCo Workforce Survey: time to review 2018-2020', want to change through the upcoming SEND Review.

No time

As a SENCo by day and researcher by night, I have experienced the frustration of a system stacked against SEND both personally and professionally – and witnessed it, too, through the data we have captured over the last three years of SENCo surveys. Did you know that there are only two roles, by law, that a school is obliged to have – the headteacher and the SENCo? Did you know that, despite this, the SENCo does not have legally protected time to fulfil their role? The SEND Code of Practice (2015) states that SENCos should have 'sufficient time.'

However, in reality we know that such ambiguity leads to the vast majority of SENCos being desperately under-supported.

Back in 2018, we reported that the most common time allocation for secondary SENCos was between 3 and 3.5 days a week (although more than a third had less than this, and 5% of secondary respondents said they had no time at all for the role). Overall, a staggering 91% of these respondents said that they didn't have enough time to ensure children at SEN Support could access the support they needed.

In 2018, 77% of SENCos across all schools stated they didn't have enough time to ensure that children with an EHCP were accessing the support to which they are legally entitled. Although this had improved by 2020, the proportion of SENCos without sufficient time to meet the needs of children and young people with SEND still remained too high: 81% and 71% for those at SEN Support and those with EHC plans respectively.

An exhausting fight

Thousands of SENCos have taken our surveys and each time we've asked, 95% agree: we need to have our time protected by law. Not only would having a standardised approach to protected time across the country mean that SEND provision becomes less of a postcode lottery – vital for changing the devastating statistics above – it would also mean that individual SENCos wouldn't have to fight both for the pupils in their school and for their own professional time to do the role, a fight that can be emotionally exhausting. SENCos consistently tell us how much they enjoy their role, but that the workload is unsustainable. Turnover, therefore, is high.

In 2018, the vast majority of SENCos felt isolated and misunderstood. Only 19% of SENCos in secondary schools felt their colleagues understood the role; only 26% felt the role was manageable for one person, and only one in five SENCos were on the Senior Leadership Team, despite the SEND Code of Practice stating that SENCos will be

"I love my job, but I hate that I feel almost complicit in not being able to offer all the support I believe our students need."

SENCo – anon.

more effective if they are. In essence, because SENCoS rarely have administrative support, and the world of SEND is so heavily centred on paperwork, most SENCoS are very expensive, over-qualified administrators, often hidden behind closed doors in meetings or filling in endless forms. Given that SENCoS often aren't invited

to the important meetings which could enable them to drive strategic inclusion, and don't have enough time to do the parts of the role which really make a difference – is it any wonder that the role is currently so isolated, misunderstood and undervalued?

'Completely inadequate'

I'm aware this might sound like a staffroom moan, though trust me – if the SENCo had enough time for a coffee with colleagues to share the burden, that would be a lot better than the current

THE NATIONAL SENCO WORKFORCE SURVEY: TIME TO REVIEW

Published by nasen and Bath Spa University in July 2021, this report examines the responses to two SENCo surveys in 2018 and 2020, in an effort create a clearer picture of the national SENCo workforce. Find out more at bathspa.ac.uk/projects/senco-workload

circumstances! I'm also aware that COVID-19 has exacerbated an already strained system. Yet managing SENCo workload, time and support is a major national issue that affects the wellbeing of millions of children, and their academic outcomes. Lack of SENCo time is also a seminal factor that causes local authorities to bleed cash for tribunals over special school places; places which all too often simply don't exist.

Even when the DfE has announced additional funding for SEND, like the £780 million given in 2020, this money rarely makes a positive difference at place-level, being either gobbled up by LA overspenders or inflation. In fact, the government itself, in its Education Select Committee review, stated that SEND funding is 'completely inadequate' with more than a billion pounds worth of shortfall by 2021 (and this was before COVID).

The DfE is due to publish its Review of the Code of Practice (2015) soon,

and as a research team we have made several recommendations, which we feel are vital to improving SEND provision. Our top two priorities are the following:

- First, that SENCo time must be specified and protected by law. Once our SENCoS can actually do the job the law expects them to do, we should see hundreds of thousands of children better supported, improving progress and outcomes at GCSE and beyond, with fewer children needing specialist provision.

- Secondly, that SENCoS must be part of their school's Senior Leadership Team. Influencing strategic decision making should help to reduce exclusion rates, and enable the school environment to be more systematically inclusive.

And, of course, funding is absolutely key. But if schools, rather than local authorities, were given the funding to work with, and the law was tighter around its expectations for the SENCo role, real and meaningful support for children and young people with SEND will follow. The hopes and futures of millions of young people like Sarah are all depending on it.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Hannah Moloney is a SENCo, SEND Researcher and co-author of the National SENCo Workforce Survey: time to review 2018-2020.

Practice from great schools

As schools prepare to commence the new academic year, we highlight some inspiring advice and forward-thinking ideas leaders shared with us by leaders and practitioners across the country...



“Some teachers taught with their doors locked”

Richard Brown – headteacher at The Urswick School, Hackney

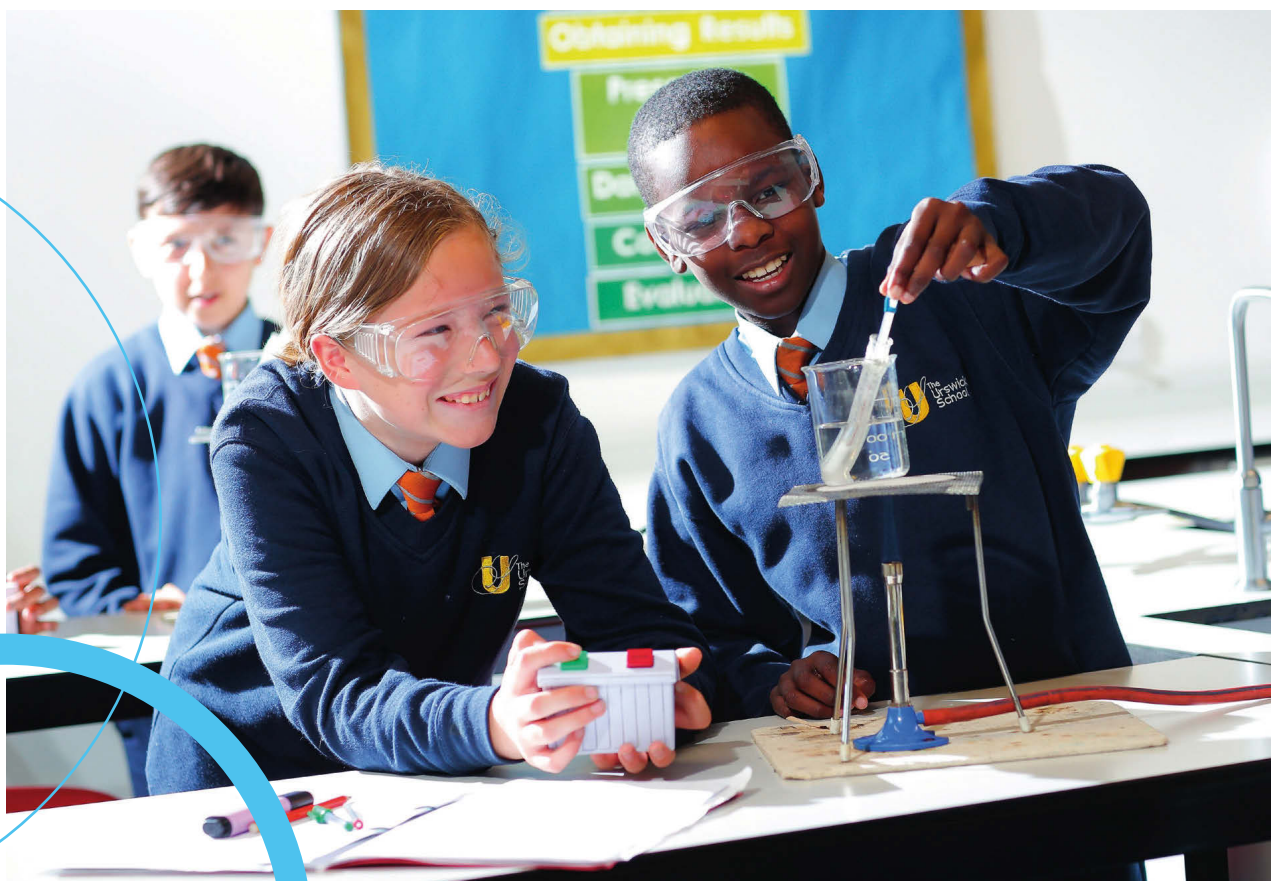
The school was in a pretty sorry state when I was appointed. Its local reputation was poor, and the building was deemed sufficiently bad enough to warrant a complete rebuild, so I was appointed knowing that we'd be getting a new building. I'd have been less confident about my ability to change the school without that.

My approach to school improvement has always been to try and make things slightly better every year, rather

than go in for some sort of revolutionary change. I've certainly not gone for any so-called 'quick fix wins,' which always seem to unravel a few years later.

The most important thing was to address the kids' behaviour. When I first arrived at the school, I'd see colleagues walking down corridors almost with blinkers on, not wanting to see this antisocial behaviour surrounding them. Some teachers taught with their doors locked, as it was the only way to prevent the noise and chaos from intruding on what they were doing.”

“I became involved in the new building's internal design, which is why here you'll see glass everywhere. If a child is misbehaving in a classroom, we can look through a set of internal windows and see it. If you want to be a school that's seen as outward facing and willing to welcome people in, let them see what's going on inside.





“We asked staff to record every lesson”

Jonathan Parkinson – headteacher at St Thomas More Catholic School (Bishop Wilkinson Catholic Education Trust), Tyne & Wear

During the pandemic, we asked staff to record every lesson they taught. At the base level, it's possible to use Google Hangout's built-in 'record' button, but a few of us geeks in the school discovered OBS Studio (obsproject.com) – a form of open source broadcast software that enables livestreaming to YouTube.

As I was teaching, I'd identify certain sections of the lesson, be it a Q&A or a five-minute explanation, and note down the time when I reached them. When I later come to edit the recorded lesson, I could scroll through, quickly find my explanation point and cut it out to form a separate clip very easily.

That way, I was able to convert a lengthy lesson into a concise series of clips that could be used in a Google Assignment, and essentially go from teaching live, to editing the lesson down into something more accessible for children unable to be there, to sending it out, all within 15 minutes.



“Teachers can sometimes be their own worst enemies”

Mark Deans – deputy headteacher at The West Bridgford School, Nottingham

Teachers can sometimes be their own worst enemies, in that they'll do everything in their power to try and improve outcomes for children, working above and

beyond the call of duty. Our approach was to explain that instead of taking in 30 essays and writing extensive feedback on each, they could get better outcomes from using interactive quizzes via a new learning platform.

They would need to invest effort upfront in building the quiz and drafting the feedback students saw for correct, close or incorrect answers – but they'd then have a resource that could be used annually to give high quality feedback and provide students with a great learning experience.

Some teachers found the idea of getting good or better outcomes by doing less work a little difficult to get their heads around, at first, but if you have the right tool and appropriate staff training in place, you can deliver.

We introduced the new provision in years 7 and 10 at first, so that our teachers wouldn't feel overburdened by it. Our thinking was that if we could secure that gain in the first year, our teachers would then feel encouraged by our expansion of the platform to other year groups.





“We’ve seen everyone’s wellbeing improve by spending time outside”

Barny Sandow – head of school, ACS Cobham International School, Surrey

A key thing for us has been our outdoor education provision. We’re fortunate enough to have on-site woodland that we use for our Forest School offering, but we also try and get students across the school outside as much as possible.

Beyond the expected PE lessons, we’ve endeavoured to hold classes outside, where appropriate. Take

humanities, for example – a lesson on early man involving a classroom exploration activity was made into a safer and richer learning experience by being held outside.

We don’t simply encourage going outside for the sake of it, though. We’ll always carefully consider beforehand how the students’ learning can be made better by going outside and using our different outdoor spaces. On the whole, however, we’ve seen everyone’s sense of wellbeing improve by spending time outside and being more active. The pleasant weather we had during the initial lockdown seemed to help everyone reconnect a little more – I suspect things would have been more challenging for us, had we not been able to do that.



“There will often be a restorative meeting”

Victoria Hearn – principal at Impington Village College, Cambridge

At the heart of our pastoral system and behaviour policy is the International Baccalaureate learner profile. The philosophy of the IB is centred on developing students who are knowledgeable and inquiring, but also caring, principled and open-minded.

We’ll remind students when they might not be

demonstrating those attributes, but also recognise when they are. A big part of the IB philosophy focuses on reflection; making sure that students are reflecting on their actions, and that they understand the consequences of those actions.

If a student does something that results in some form of sanction, there will often be a restorative meeting where they sit down, reflect on their behaviour and are given an opportunity to talk things through with a member of our pastoral team.

We operate a vertical house system, with each house having a deputy head who predominately supervises Y7



“Bin the labour-intensive ‘silo’ interventions”

James Mitchell - deputy headteacher at The Gilbert School, Essex

Pupil Premium funding has been a critical ingredient in our improvement but there has been no

secret weapon in our expenditure. We already know what does and doesn't work – there is a wealth of literature out there that points the way to best practice. Two things are a stand-out must: first, focus efforts on 'quality-first' teaching and secondly, cultivate a whole school culture of high expectations.

Bin the labour-intensive 'silo' interventions, stop chasing a statistical gap you have little control over and instead take a

closer look at what the consistently good schools have been doing for years. Better still, ask parents why they want to send their children to those good schools. It's not just about academic results or the Ofsted grade. It's the feel of a place, the manners the students display and the opportunities afforded to them. These qualities spread by word of mouth and the school's media presence, and are just as important as league table positions.

and Y8, and a head who looks after Y9 to Y11. They're given a fairly generous allocation of time, so that at different points throughout the year, when different year groups might need additional support, that time and knowledge is available from the house team.



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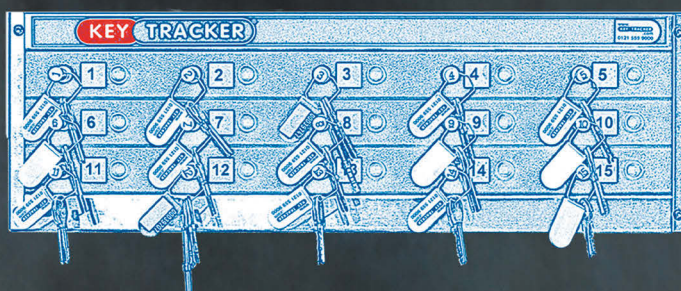
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IN THIS ISSUE

- + Three objects that shaped the modern world
- + The importance of consistency when it comes to consequences
- + The NFER shares leaders' views on the pandemic
- + A brief guide to effective visualisation
- + The persistent inequalities of home learning
- + Make life easier for your NQTs
- + Jekyll and Hyde stick to the script
- + How students can recognise resilience

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How to teach...

THE PUBERTY LESSON

I used to hate delivering puberty lessons. The children would just giggle and laugh every time you used the word 'penis' or 'breasts', and I spent most of the lesson asking them to calm down.

Then I realised that it was the way I was approaching the session that was the problem – not the kids in the class. Puberty is funny. It is the weirdest, oddest thing that ever happens.

Mother nature certainly has a sense of humour. You've never been interested in anyone 'that way' before, and yet as soon as you start to fancy people, your body suddenly explodes with grease, spots and hairs in places you had never even imagined. You become all gangly and awkward, and desperate to fit in and be like everyone else. Simultaneously, others in your class instead become six feet tall and muscly, or start to develop breasts and curves. Others still appear to remain as children.

It is ridiculous, and not fair, and there is no rhyme or reason to it. Puberty is scary – when you're left in the dark. Instead, what I found worked best was to not take it all so seriously; to make children laugh at how silly it all is. They then start to laugh with you (and at you) because you're highlighting the absurdity of it all, rather than laughing in embarrassment.

Quickly, puberty sessions became some of my favourites, because if you get the tone right, children will open up, share their worries and stories and proceed to ask you the best questions – better than you could ever hope to imagine. If you can get this right – whether you're coming at the topic as a teacher, parent, carer, family member or youth worker – it will not only help set the children in your life up for a much easier and less scary transition into puberty, but also help build the foundations for more honest and open talks in future.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Jonny Hunt is an independent relationships and sex education (RSE) consultant, regularly training professionals who work with children in all aspects of sex and relationships; this item is an edited extract from his book *Sex Ed for Grown-Ups* (Routledge, £18.99); for more information, follow @littlerubberhat

HOW HAS STEM SHAPED THE WAY WE LIVE?



Get your students to think more deeply about the inventions, tools and processes that made modern life possible with these ideas for discussion starters from The Science Museum Group...

Over the course of the last 250 years, science, technology, engineering and maths have shaped our society, with a whole host of fascinating discoveries and inventions paving the way for how we live our lives today.

The Science Museum's 'Making the Modern World' gallery is home to a range of remarkable objects, including the Apollo 10 command module, Babbage's Difference Engine No. 1, Crick and Watson's DNA model and the first Apple computer, taking visitors from 1750 right through to the present day.

This month, we thought we'd highlight three objects from the museum's collection that could open up interesting conversations around the

impact of STEM on how we live now.

DNA MOLECULAR MODEL

WWII enabled a number of rapid scientific advances, and not just in the field of defence. New discoveries were being made about the human body that would change the future of medicine forever. Visit Francis Crick and James Watson's DNA molecular model and find out how they pulled off one of the most profound scientific triumphs of the 20th century – you'll find it in the 1939-1968 zone of the 'Making the Modern World' gallery.

LOCOMOTIVES DURING THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION

The Industrial Revolution ushered in a wide range of new inventions intended for industrial applications. The rise of steam power led to new methods of transportation, while the introduction of heavy machinery and factory spaces revolutionised the speed and cost at which goods could be manufactured. Don't miss the Puffing Billy locomotive

– the oldest surviving steam railway engine in the world. Find it in the 'Making the Modern World' gallery's 1750-1820 zone.

CHEMICALS AND SYNTHETIC DYE

Advances in the production and use of chemicals during the 1800s helped dramatically shake up the manufacturing processes. Discover a sample of the first synthetic dye, originally made in 1856. This tiny bottle of mauveine turned fabric a beautiful purple colour and quickly became popular throughout the textile industry, after being accidentally discovered when William Perkin used it the process of experimenting with malaria treatments. Find it in the 1820-1880 zone in the 'Making the Modern World' gallery.

You can discover these objects and many more at collection.sciencemuseumgroup.org.uk

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THE SCIENCE MUSEUM GROUP OPERATES FIVE MUSEUMS ACROSS THE UK, INCLUDING SCIENCE MUSEUM IN LONDON, SCIENCE AND INDUSTRY MUSEUM IN MANCHESTER, NATIONAL MEDIA MUSEUM IN BRADFORD, RAILWAY MUSEUM IN YORK AND LOCOMOTION IN SHILDON

TRY THIS CONSEQUENCE

EXERCISE BETTER CLASS CONTROL WITH THESE TIPS FROM ROBIN LAUNDER...

Always (always, always, always) follow through with consequences. Whatever the consequence might be – if it's stipulated in your school behaviour policy or in your classroom contract, or if you've said it's going to happen – be sure to make it happen.

That means no idle ultimatums, no empty words, no false promises. What you say and what you do must be one and the same. If they are, then what you say will carry the weight of what you do. If they're at odds, then you're lost.

Something else to consider. Some teachers believe that the power of a consequence lies in its severity; that the more severe it is, the more powerful it is – but that's simply not true. The power of a consequence (to quote Bill Rogers) is in its *certainty*. Always keep the consequence certain, but also keep it proportionate.

Finally, make sure you follow up the consequence with a conversation. Not a telling-off, not a finger-wagging, not an ear-bashing, but a conversation. It doesn't have to be long – a minute or less is often sufficient – but keep it focused on the student's behaviour and how it needs to be different from this point onward.

Robin Launder is a behaviour management consultant and speaker; find more tips in his weekly Better Behaviour online course – see behaviourbuddy.co.uk for more details

55%

of parents would not wish to see school days extended to give children an extra half-hour of academic catch-up

Source: Parentkind

The National Foundation for Educational Research has issued a policy briefing highlighting the views of school leaders on the implications of the pandemic on pupils' education within mainstream schools across England. The research was based on interviews with 50 senior leaders in mainstream primary and secondary schools serving predominantly deprived areas, from which emerged the following findings:

- Most confirmed that some pupils within their settings suffered from COVID-related anxiety; a substantial minority reported an increase in incidents of self-harm
- Some reported difficulties in obtaining support from external providers, such as CAMHS and specialist speech and language services
- Views on behaviour were mixed, with some interviewees believing their pupils' behaviour to be as good or even improved compared to before the pandemic, while others reported increases in poor behaviour and lack of self-control
- Most said that social distancing had presented challenges, including limits on teachers' ability to provide feedback and fewer interactions between pupils
- A sense shared by school leaders that current government efforts aimed at aiding learning recovery were 'misconceived and inadequate'.

The full briefing can be viewed via bit.ly/ts106-LL2

YOUR GUIDE TO ...

VISUALISATION

Using visualisation in your classroom can significantly reduce the cognitive load demanded by new topics, while notably increasing the retention of information among your learners. Don't let the VAK fad ruin visuals for you by assuming they're off limits – they actually have an important and valuable role to play in learning.

Dual coding is an exceptionally effective way of helping learners link ideas, and gives them additional tools for encoding and revisiting learning. Dual coding is the method of combining words (verbal or written) with visuals such as pictures, displays, diagrams and graphic organisers.

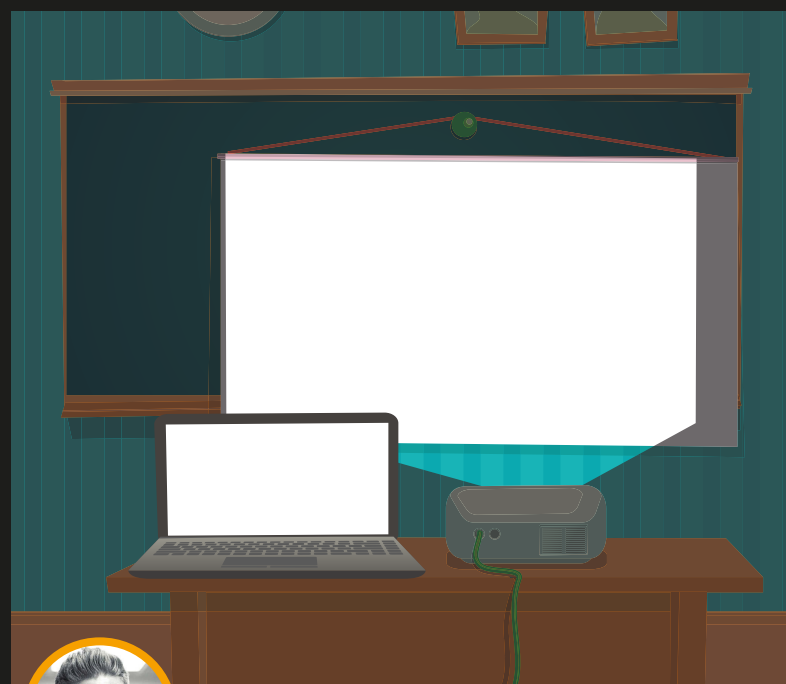
This approach provides two different ways of representing the information. Research suggests that when we combine representations, it's easier for students to learn and understand the material in question. Dual coding is about far more than just 'adding pictures' though – the graphics you use need to be both relevant and consistent if they're to work as learning aids. If not used appropriately, dual coding can in

fact increase cognitive load, and we definitely don't want that.

We don't need to just see visuals as an 'addition' to our planning, though; we can also work to practically incorporate visuals into our lessons from the outset, thus making learning more effective and efficient.

Using a visualiser to model examples of work on the board can be an excellent way of helping learners contextualise what's expected of them. By using a visualiser, we're able to take abstract concepts and make them much more concrete with the aid of metacognitive discussion. Not only that, visualisers can be a great tool for zooming in on details – particularly in practical subjects, where it may be hard to see the intricate details contained within a classroom demonstration.

Using visuals in your classroom shouldn't be a taboo subject. VAK has unfortunately left the term 'visuals' with something of a negative stigma, when it's important to remember that they can and do have a place in the classrooms of all learners.



ADAM RICHES IS A SENIOR LEADER FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING; FOLLOW HIM AT @TEACHMRRICHES

31%

of students worry that bad exam results will impact their chances of earning enough money in the future – a fear felt more acutely by female students (33%) than males (27%)

Source: FutureLearn

Need to know

A study carried out by researchers at the University of Southampton has shown that despite more remote lessons taking place during the second period of COVID-prompted school closures compared to the first, inequalities of access persisted between advantaged and disadvantaged households.

The researchers analysed data gathered on home learning from the families of 2,300 primary and 3,000 secondary school children between April 2020 and February 2021. This revealed a rise in the total number of offline and online lessons per day, and that the volume of schoolwork completed at home by secondary students increased from 2.6 hours per day to 4 hours per day.

However, the researchers also noted that secondary students in disadvantaged families spent around 45 minutes less time per day learning at home than those in more advantaged families during both closure periods.

According to the study's lead, Dr Nic Pensiero, "Provision targeted at the most disadvantaged should include more and better guidance for parents on using the IT resources provided ... Parents in such circumstances are less familiar with and less adept at navigating the wide array of resources that the government has properly provided during the pandemic."

The study can be read in full via bit.ly/ts106-LL1



IMPROVE YOUR... SUPPORT FOR NQTs

Let's rewind to a discussion I had with a friend back in January 2020 about New Year's resolutions. She was weighing up whether to train to become a teacher and I, in my wisdom, said, "2020, mate – nice, round, even number. Go for it. I mean, what's the worst that could happen?" In my defence, how was I supposed to know...?

Whilst her time navigating life as an ITT and then NQT during a pandemic was difficult, it wasn't impossible, which I put down to the amazing ways in which schools responded to the pandemic at every level. The nature of my work meant that I was lucky to work and liaise with various schools, all utilising different ways of supporting and enabling NQTs to become part of their teams.

I'm aware of schools that have extended their induction processes, so as to provide adequate support opportunities and realistic timelines for individuals with the potential to hone their craft and thrive, even in the event of contracting coronavirus and enforced absence. Trainees no longer have to have worked in two schools, though this hasn't taken away the need to quickly gain experience of different school environments. Some schools have set up cross-school NQT networking opportunities that provide access to staff training,

departmental meetings and CPD sessions outside of the NQT's main placement.

To the NQTs among you – when it comes to approaching schools for interviews, be sure to get some research done. Your access to schools may be limited, though, so get digging. Social media presences, school trips, theatrical productions, current staff, governors' meeting minutes, CPD certificates, details of feeder schools and even appearances in the local press can all give strong indications as to a school's spirit and ethos. Use that information to figure out if it's the right school for you, and to prep you for the interview.

Once you've secured your spot, insist on receiving the support that's available to you. Frequent contact opportunities are your right, whether face-to-face or virtually. Your NQT meetings shouldn't be abandoned, so be proactive in ensuring you get the support you need to make it through. Your mentor can help with plugging any gaps due to pandemic restrictions, signposting you to other options such as subject area networking with other NQTs in a similar position.

The landscape may have changed, but the option to build solid foundations for your foray into teaching is still very much on the table.



NIKKI CUNNINGHAM-SMITH IS AN ASSISTANT HEADTEACHER BASED IN GLOUCESTERSHIRE



A tale of two halves

The independent theatre arts company Ginificent is set to launch a feature film adaptation of *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, specifically made to support students studying the famous Robert Louis Stevenson novella for GCSE English Literature.

The film aims to hew much more closely to the source material than the numerous theatrical and media adaptations made to date, and provide a means of helping students advance in their studies following the disruptions to their education caused by the

pandemic. Ginificent previously produced a faithful stage adaptation of the story that toured more than 500 schools between 2017 to 2019 before COVID-19 restrictions resulted in the tour's cancellation.

The family-run, Southport-based company was able to retain its staff throughout the pandemic via a grant issued by the Culture Recovery Fund, and was able to fund the film's production after securing a bounce-back loan, with the family's own home serving as a shooting location.

The 83-minute feature film is due for release exclusively to schools on September 8th 2021 and is available to pre-order, priced at £50.52 for a 1-week streaming window or £144.37 for perpetual streaming access. Schools will also receive a set of accompanying educational resources, including lesson plans, videos recorded by the cast and crew, revision sheets and character cards.

FOR MORE INFORMATION AND DETAILS OF HOW TO ORDER AND VIEW THE FILM, VISIT [GINIFICENT.COM/JEKYLLANDHYDE](https://ginificent.com/jekyllandhyde)

TRENDING

Our pick of the recent resources and launches teachers might find useful...

KNOWLEDGE RICH

The Greater Manchester-based MAT Focus-Trust has launched a new website enabling teachers across the country to access its library of professional development and teaching resources. learning.focus-trust.co.uk

ROCK ON

Social mobility charity The Talent Foundry is holding its annual Rock Assembly on 30th September 2021 as a virtual event, featuring online workshops hosted by employers from a range of sectors and industries. talentfoundry.org.uk/Rock-Assembly

PROMISING FUTURE

Entries are currently open for the Future 1000 programme – a free music production and media course for up to 1,000 students identifying as female, trans or non-binary. future1000.org

STUDENT WALKTHROUGH

HOW TO SPOT RESILIENCE

HELP YOUR STUDENTS BECOME BETTER LEARNERS WITH ZEPH BENNETT'S VISUAL EXPLAINERS...



EMPATHETIC

Comfortable helping and working with others



INDEPENDENT

Can work on their own to solve problems



RESPONSIBLE

Takes on roles, such as handing out or collecting equipment



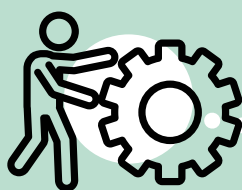
ACHIEVE

Sets and achieves aspirational targets



POSITIVE

Likes a challenge and has a positive mindset if they fail



ASSERTIVE

Takes on challenges and leads from the front



INTERESTED

Always enthusiastic and engaged in their work

ZEPH BENNETT IS A PE TEACHER AND SCHOOL ACHIEVEMENT LEADER WITH 25 YEARS' TEACHING EXPERIENCE; YOU CAN FIND MORE OF HIS EDUCATIONAL ILLUSTRATIONS BY FOLLOWING @PEGEEKSCORNER

Got a great learning idea? Email editor@teachsecondary.com or tweet us at [@teachsecondary](https://twitter.com/teachsecondary)




A hub website hosting FREE learning resources from arts, cultural and heritage organisations

- National curriculum linked
- Real stories, real people, real objects
- No fees, no marketing



Dive into a world of learning resources at
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BRITISH SIGN LANGUAGE ONLINE COURSE




- ✓ Beginners
- ✓ 20hrs CPD
- ✓ Study from home
- ✓ Staff training
- ✓ Learn at your own pace


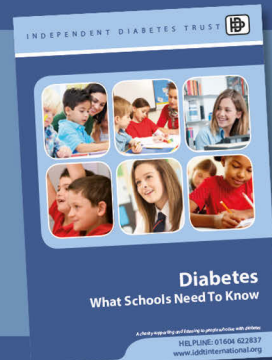
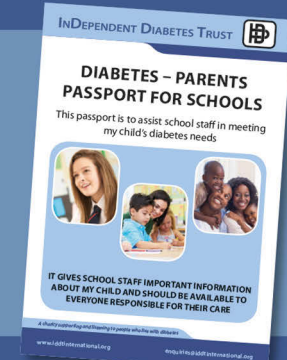
Sign up at:
british-sign.co.uk

£3

Pay what you can: To enable more people to learn British Sign Language we are asking people to pay what they can for this course (minimum contribution of £3).



INDEPENDENT DIABETES TRUST

DO YOU HAVE A CHILD IN YOUR CLASS WITH DIABETES?

DIABETES – WHAT SCHOOLS NEED TO KNOW
DIABETES – PARENTS PASSPORT FOR SCHOOLS

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EMAIL: martin@iddtinternational.org
or TELEPHONE: 01604 622837

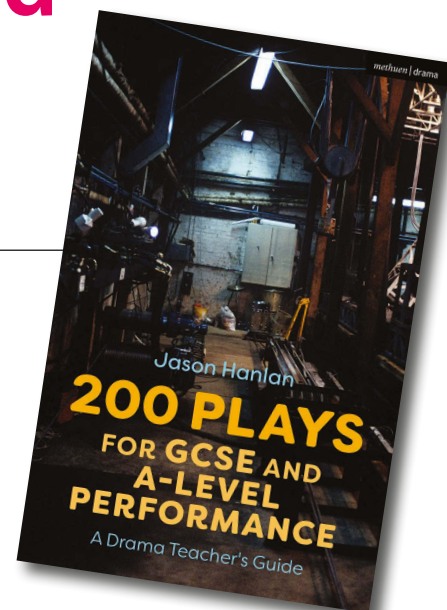
InDependent Diabetes Trust
P O Box 294, Northampton NN1 4XS

www.iddtinternational.org
Charity Number: 1058284
Registered Number: 3148360

→
DRAMA

200 Plays for GCSE and A-Level Performance

An easy-to-use guide to finding and staging the best performance material for 15 to 18-year-olds.



AT A GLANCE

- Suggested materials that work for 15–18-year-olds for the scripted performance of their exams
- Pieces ranging from 480 BCE to material of the moment
- Theatre from around the world, and many cultures and religions
- Laser-sharp insights into what examiners are looking for
- Gold-standard guidance and notes

REVIEW BY JOHN DABELL

Finding the best material for meeting the needs of super-diverse student populations asks a lot of educators, and can be very time-consuming.

But drama teachers can call off the search, thanks to a new guide by the highly experienced teacher and moderator/examiner Jason Hanlan, offering privileged insights about what works and why. Titled *200 Plays for GCSE and A-Level Performance*, it provides us with a list of plays that enable talent, ignite imagination and challenge all abilities.

Of course, the book isn't going to do all the work for you, as drama teachers have to know their plays, the specification and their students inside out. What it will do though, is steer learners in the right direction, provide you with the best advice possible and help young people succeed in their exam performances.

The first part of the resource contains eight chapters and begins by emphasising the importance of knowing everyone's individual abilities. The author encourages us to do a skills audit, so we can find out what energies and passions each student can bring to the table, helping us ensure their talents are fully utilised in new and creative ways.

The book then moves into the crucial aspect of guiding students with their chosen performance pieces that dovetail with their skill set and the bottom line of making the right text and extract choices.

There is an excellent chapter that focuses on the important decisions involved in design options, reminding us how fundamental these are to a successful production. Other

highly informative and insightful chapters include preparing your students for performance exams, performance spaces, Shakespeare, and the language of the theatre.

The meat of the book centres on 200 carefully selected plays that should cover all bases, and explains how you can help students discover what is best for them. It is designed as a tool for guiding teachers towards selecting the best fit; the suggestions are the result of the author's 30 years' teaching, training, moderating and examining drama and so tap into a wealth of experience.

The plays are categorised as female-only, male-only, mixed cast, flexible casting and ten of Shakespeare's works, and are presented in clear and easy to read tables that focus on the title and publisher, playwright and date, casting, and sections or scenes.

The most useful parts of these charts include detailed notes, guidance and considerations that also contain warnings to be mindful of, so you can be sure that you are making the best match and choosing appropriate materials. These are brilliantly succinct, and provide a description of the play, a summary, where and when, themes covered, pointers and design/tech notes, along with workshop and rehearsal notes with further ideas.

Let's not beat around the bush with this stage whisper: this book upstages anything else out there and would be a hard act to follow. You don't have to make a drama out of exams but this book will certainly help your students make the grades.

teach
SECONDARY

VERDICT

- ✓ Perfect for guiding students in their choices of the material best suited to their talents and passions
- ✓ Something for every student and suitable for all abilities and requirements
- ✓ Avoids the overdramatic, sensational and unsuitable
- ✓ Sound and sage advice for ensuring you are working in students' best interests
- ✓ Easy to navigate charts for at-a-glance suitability and appropriateness

UPGRADE IF...

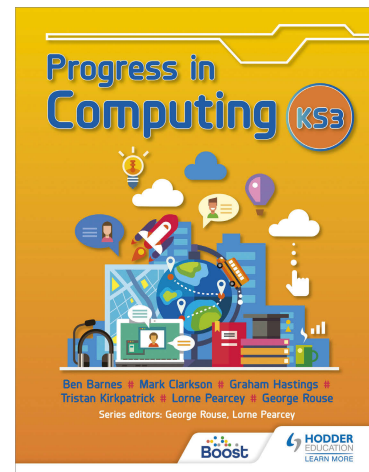
You are looking for a resource full of trusted material that will inspire and guide you and your students in selecting the right material, the right group and the best design concepts.

200 Plays for GCSE and A Level Performance is published by Methuen Drama, an imprint of Bloomsbury Publishing; paperback £18.99, ebook £17.09: bloomsbury.com/9781350146624



Progress in Computing for KS3

Bolster your computer science provision with this appealing package of resources, ready for both online and offline use



AT A GLANCE

- A solid base course for KS3 learners
- Designed by industry experts and teachers
- Holistic, clear coverage of KS3 National Curriculum
- Packed full of exemplars and models
- Integratable with Google Classroom and Microsoft Teams

REVIEW BY ADAM RICHES



With computing becoming increasingly popular at KS4, Hodder Education's *Progress in Computing* is the perfect course to set learners up to excel at GCSE, Cambridge Nationals, BTECs and beyond.

What's striking from the outset is the level of detail Hodder Education has paid to the design of the course. Using teachers and industry experts, *Progress in Computing* ensures that students are inspired and supported through their learning.

At its core, *Progress in Computing* focuses on building confidence and computer literacy. Through delivery of content on the underlying principles of computing, digital media and IT, learners are quickly exposed to the intricacies of technology they engage with every day. Understanding is built around linking real life experiences to technology, further embedding the importance of computing in our modern digital era.

From a planning perspective, *Progress in Computing* has it all. The link between the textbook and Hodder Education's brand new Boost platform means that teachers (and learners) are able to access the resources digitally. The lessons are comprehensive, and the resources fully editable. The *Progress in Computing* textbook is designed to work in sync with the online resources, to form a holistic learning experience.

Pedagogically, the lessons are well contained and clearly presented. Learners are encouraged to build self-efficacy and

the regular revision opportunities through KS3 mean that retention is well catered for. 'Knowledge check-ins' allow teachers to effectively track understanding, while the visually appealing summaries and key term lists mean that learners can quickly overcome any misconceptions they may have.

One of the best things about *Progress in Computing* is that elements of the course can be taught 'unplugged'. This means that from a timetabling perspective, the curriculum can be taught using machines only part of the time. In schools where computers are in short supply, the result is that learners can still have access to the knowledge and understanding required to succeed.

Computing can be a difficult subject to get one's head around, but Hodder Education has struck a good balance in terms of this resource's design. Consideration of interleaving and interweaving content is evident with the clear Progress Pathway (which also helpfully covers the KS3 National Curriculum.) Also, the Hodder pedigree is evident throughout, in that the resources contain no gimmicks – just clear, classy examples with sustained formatting that aids memory.

The online Boost platform meanwhile allows teachers to give their learning experiences more of interactive flavour if that's their preference, and if their context allows for it. The platform can also be used by teachers to gain access to a plethora of additional learning functions.

teach SECONDARY

VERDICT

- ✓ Inspiring and interesting content
- ✓ Well-formatted and carefully designed with learners in mind
- ✓ Key terms and summaries make for brilliant recap resources
- ✓ Sophisticated and detailed, offering an appropriate level of challenge for all learners

UPGRADE IF...

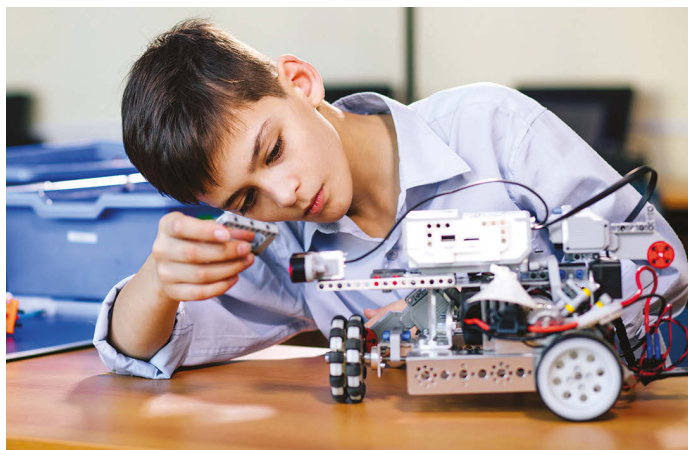
You're looking for a course that's ready packaged and all good to go. Also worth considering if you have a growing uptake of computing students at GCSE, Cambridge Nationals or BTECs and are looking to bolster your KS3 offer.

Find out more at hoddereducation.co.uk



BCS Robotics

A course that aims to help students make the link between programming abstraction and real-world robotics



AT A GLANCE

- **Extensive online learning material**
- **Teacher notes available online to help plan for and accompany each lesson**
- **A huge range of themes and topics to explore***

REVIEW BY ADAM RICHES



The BCS Level 1 Robotics Award introduces KS2/3 learners to the incredible world of robotics, covering the skills and knowledge required to understand, programme and build robots.

As automation becomes increasingly prevalent in our lives, the technical aspects of fields such as robotics become ever more important for us to understand. Although the curriculum has become more technological, in terms of personal IT and computing, there's still a gap when it comes to industry- and context-specific applications of the knowledge.

Level 1 Robotics has been developed to engage and introduce young people to the fundamental concepts of robotics. The first phase of the qualification can be delivered within collaborative working groups or individually, giving schools the flexibility to offer it as additional provision, or as a standalone course within the wider curriculum.

Pupils are taught everything they need to know to build and programme a robot. Say the words, 'Let's build a robot' to a class of keen students, and they'll be sold! The course is designed to consist of 37 teaching hours, within a total qualification time of 51 hours. The intended outcome is that learners are able to set up a robot and implement robotic motion.

Throughout the course, learners will build their confidence in assembling and programming a robot using widely available robotics kits and visual programming

language. The lessons aim to impart understanding of key concepts relating to robots and robotics systems using clear examples of robotic applications, with explanations of a robot's core components and their functions. The content is incredibly insightful, and really opens your eyes to the power and importance of robotics in our lives.

Practically, learners are taught to understand the elements of a simple control system and how to test it, as well as basic programming concepts and visual programming language. What the course does is take abstract technological concepts and highlight how they're put to use within industry. All of a sudden, coding becomes much more interesting to those students who might have dismissed it previously, making its purpose and function much more vivid and real. To me, that's what makes this course so valuable.

The qualification is assessed within a BCS-approved centre or school in two stages. The first assessment is conducted offline, and involves a teacher or independent assessor verifying that the student has demonstrated the required skills. Learners must achieve a pass grade in this offline robotics skills demonstration test before progressing to the second stage – a 45-minute online robotics test comprising 28 questions.

BCS has succeeded in developing a practical solution for engaging learners in the technology of tomorrow, and empowering teachers to deliver relevant learning content in a standard classroom environment, with no prerequisite knowledge of robotics.

teach SECONDARY

VERDICT

- ✓ **An impressive set of resources with which to engage learners**
- ✓ **Direct links to prior learning in IT and computing**
- ✓ **Clear and supported outcomes for each session**
- ✓ **Compelling topics for those interested in technology and its various applications**

UPGRADE IF...

You are looking for a way to teach children about the power and importance of industry specific technologies. Also consider if you are looking to build in more collaboration and teamwork into your curriculum.

Find out more at [bcs.org](https://www.bcs.org)

teachwire.net/secondary

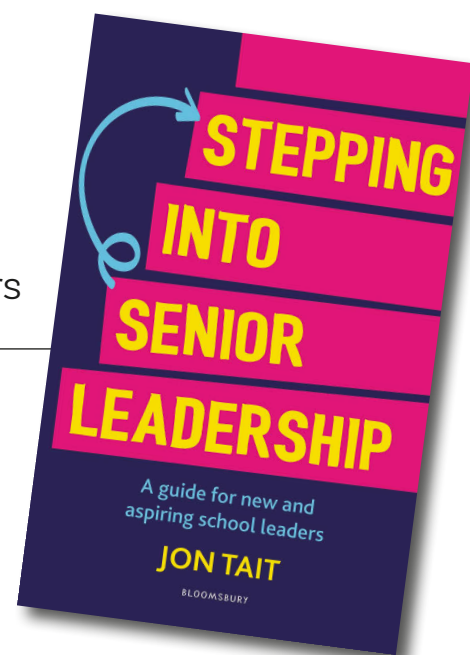
LEADERSHIP

Stepping Into Senior Leadership

A practical pocket handbook filled with expert guidance, tips and advice for new and aspiring leaders

AT A GLANCE

- **Written by a highly credible leader, Multi-Academy Trust Deputy CEO and Director of School Improvement**
- **Invaluable tips for leading staff, pupils and parents**
- **Find out what leading, organising and managing a school really involves**
- **Thoughtful analysis and guidance rooted in reality**



REVIEW BY JOHN DABELL

Could you cut the mustard as a senior leader?

Some people step into senior positions, some fall into them and others find themselves there by accident; whichever route you take, leadership often gets a bad press. The truth is, it's a great thing to do – but only with the right support. Jon Tait's new book, *Stepping Into Senior Leadership*, offers just the kind of support that's needed; it's an easy-to-read resource that's filled with practical wisdom, personal insights and intelligent guidance fostering healthy reflection.

This book will inspire and encourage leaders of all levels, because it combines authentic experience and key insights from someone who has been on, and is still on, a leadership journey. This is a work of action, not rhetoric.

There are four parts to it, comprising 20 concise chapters that focus on a range of key areas such as preparing for senior leadership, transitioning from middle to senior leader, leading people and developing people.

Each chapter gets to the heart of the matter and provides a set of fascinating insights into what leading a school actually entails and just how diverse the job is.

The author begins by talking about selecting the right leadership pathway, plugging knowledge and skills gaps, picking the right school, planning applications and getting ready for interviews.

These then lead into understanding the contextual factors affecting leadership, how to ease into your new position and getting a firm grip on planning for school improvement.

A number of chapters then explore what is surely the most critical part of being a leader: relationship management and how to build strong personal bonds. These discuss and

nudge us to think carefully about leading change, having difficult conversations, holding others to account and getting the most out of meetings.

At the end of each chapter, you will find a takeaway summary section with opportunities to stop, pause and reflect with ideas for further reading, suggestions for connecting with colleagues, personal reflection prompts and to do lists. These act like a practical companion for supporting, nurturing and encouraging you in your role so that you make continuous improvements.

The book ends with five chapters devoted to developing others and what we can do to develop ourselves, including delivering innovative professional development and creating a climate of wellbeing, belonging and the conditions for growth.

Leaders should be judged by how many other leaders they develop, which is why this book is also suitable for those new to the job, as it shows you what distributed leadership looks like.

Senior leadership isn't for everyone; but if you do want to step up and have a pivotal influence on the school and its community, and help others to become the best they can be, then this fabulous guide will support you. It's a high-quality professional development resource for driving school improvement through a leadership lens.

In short, Jon Tait's book is wonderfully clear, engaging and practical with constructive guidance on every page. It acts like a cheerleader, coach and critical friend and would be an immensely useful resource for any colleague keen to develop their leadership skills.

**teach
SECONDARY**

VERDICT

- ✓ **Written in crystal clear prose, full of wisdom and insight**
- ✓ **A friendly and accessible read with guidance based on day-to-day experience**
- ✓ **Guides your vision, organisation, motivation and personal accountability**
- ✓ **Demystifies the complex art of leadership and teaches you to handle ambiguity**
- ✓ **Develops a bioteaming and swarming mindset**
- ✓ **Inspires energy, encourages bravery and builds personal capacity**

UPGRADE IF...

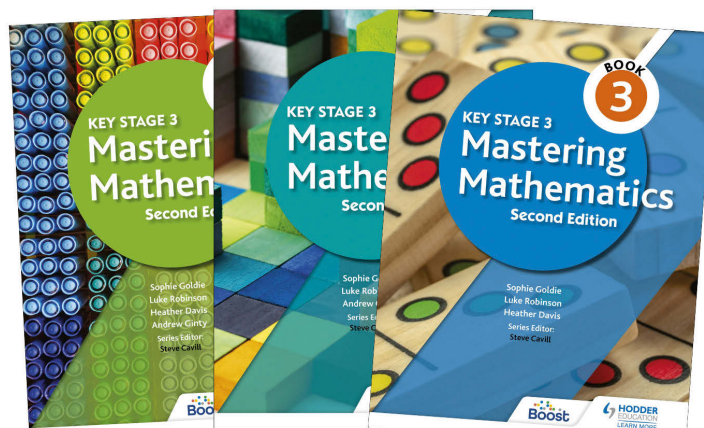
You are looking for a leadership resource that blends practical in-school experience with personal insights and tried and tested strategies for helping you achieve your goals and drive self-improvement.

Stepping Into Senior Leadership is published by Bloomsbury; paperback £19.99, ebook £17.99

MATHS

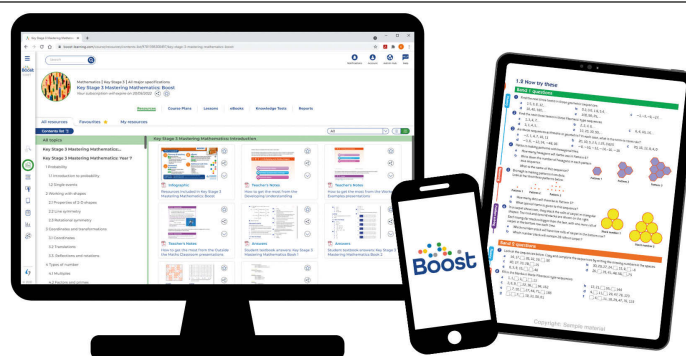
Mastering Mathematics

A comprehensive Key Stage 3 maths resource for schools



AT A GLANCE

- Loaded with lesson plans, resources and teacher walkthroughs
- Fully integrates with Hodder eBooks
- Built-in assessment and quizzing functions
- Simple, functional data reporting and gaps analysis tools



REVIEW BY ADAM RICHES

Hodder Education has moved with the times. The publisher's books have long been a staple in many schools, but as we rely less on print media and more on technology, it has become apparent that the possibilities for teaching can be enhanced significantly. The most recent maths offer from Hodder Education, Key Stage 3 Mastering Mathematics, is a one stop shop for planning, resourcing and teaching the maths required for years 7, 8 and 9, with updated textbooks, differentiated practice books and everything teachers require to deliver the curriculum available via a convenient digital platform.

Boost is the name of Hodder Education's innovative online learning environment that acts as the interface for its resources, integrating lesson plans, schemes of learning, tests and reports, and presenting them in an intuitive, accessible manner. It's hugely user-friendly; you don't have to spend much time exploring it to realise that Hodder Education definitely knows what teachers need.

The course plans for Mastering Mathematics are well presented and easy to follow - there are no frills or complications, they just do the job, and they do it well. The resources can be accessed in a few clicks, with lessons and units ordered in a logical way. In addition, teachers have the ability to share, 'favourite' and download resources at the press of a button. You can log in and be teaching in seconds.

Mastering Maths is an inclusive resource and it is a forward-thinking one, too. Each

lesson comes with resources, worksheets and notes to help the teacher, as well as the answers to any of the questions that are set. Not only does this add huge value for non-specialists, it also acts as a tool for learners to build independence. The presentations are offered as PowerPoints, and cleverly available in mobile format, too - another example of inclusivity and adapting to the modern classroom.

The teacher is at the forefront of the functionality. 'Favourited' lessons are added to your own personal library, meaning that you can pick and choose the content that suits your learners best. In addition, all resources are fully editable, so you don't have to use them out of the box if you do not wish to.

One of my favourite things about Mastering Mathematics is the fact that each topic and every lesson correlates to the Hodder Mastering Maths eBooks. These are included in the package and allow teachers to direct students to access different parts of the books electronically.

To assess learners using the knowledge tests, simply set the tasks and wait for the results to roll in via the platform. This avoids extra marking, while allowing for progress tracking over time and gaps analysis as required. Teachers can also track learners through the task completion report, making for effective, data-informed decision-making.

Once more, Hodder has thought carefully about what teachers need, and has delivered. Mastering Mathematics is an impressively comprehensive offer that will increase the quality and efficiency of teaching and learning and hugely reduce teacher workload.

teach SECONDARY

VERDICT

- ✓ Brilliant workload reducing tool
- ✓ Fully loaded with resources and tests that work
- ✓ Hugely functional and easily adopted
- ✓ Everything needed in one place
- ✓ Fully editable

UPGRADE IF...

You are looking for a brilliantly considered KS3 maths offer. Also consider if you have inexperienced teachers who could do with some additional SKE on the job.

Find out more at hoddereducation.co.uk/ks3-mastery-maths



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

John Lawson is a former secondary teacher now serving as a foundation governor and running a tutoring service; for more information, visit prep4successnow.wordpress.com or follow @johninpompano



THE LAST WORD

Honour the past, envision the new



John Lawson offers some words of encouragement, advice and wisdom for those new to the teaching profession, and about to take on classes of their own for the first time...

Dear new teachers...

On behalf of *Teach Secondary* and teachers everywhere, I welcome you, new sirs and ma'ams on the block, to our global staffroom. 27 years ago I was first handed my class lists containing the names of 300 unique individuals, all searching for acceptance, and (hopefully) a little book-learning. Delivering wise and weighty education, whilst simultaneously helping students to accept and respect both themselves and each other, remains an exacting responsibility that I still appreciate to this day. Sharing pedagogical truisms with new mentees also remains an enjoyable pastime.

There's a life-changing adage from Confucius that's indelibly wired into my soul – *'Tell me and I will forget; show me and I may remember; engage (and motivate) me and I will learn.'* The rules of engagement never change. Students won't commit to education until they respect their teachers, enjoy the process of learning and discern its purpose. If students are unable to map out the connections between pursuing a career in environmentalism, hairdressing or coding and the classes we teach, then we can't simply expect them to diligently search for whatever the value of their classes might be.

Igniting fires

Schools exist to hold mirrors up to children, inviting them to consider who they are and what they might become. To paraphrase W.B. Yeats, teachers should be fostering self-worth and igniting fires, not filling empty heads. The greatest gifts we can share with children are knowledge, good manners, durable study skills and the courage and confidence to think for themselves.

Even in a system that does its best to encourage a one-size-fits-all approach, every child's unique identity will inevitably become ever more distinct with the emergence of each learning discovery. It matters to teenagers that teachers respect who they are, as they grow through their various stages of development.

You're about to undertake a challenging journey alongside hundreds of children – so don't be afraid to tell them who you are and what makes you tick. Were you an exemplary student? Personally, I was once expelled for setting fire to a church, and yet I went on to teach RE!

There are two questions that all children will seek the answers to from you at some point – why school, and why your particular subject?

What drew you to your discipline?

Tell them, and try to make time to listen to their life stories. Skilful listening is as crucial to teaching as presentation skills. Hold fast to your excitement, your dreams and ideals, as these priceless assets will help sustain you through your greatest teaching challenges.

Passionate apologists

When it's stated in Ecclesiastes that, *'There is nothing new under the sun,'* it may as well have been directed at teachers. We might work in high-tech classrooms brimming with wall-to-wall technology; our students may be decanted daily from the rears of 4x4 vehicles equipped with halogen searchlights and matching rocket launchers (possibly), but the bare necessities of life – self-preservation (the drive stay alive), procreation (the need to have sex and produce children), and the pursuit of wisdom (the study of higher truths and philosophy) never change.

If we're to honour the past and envision new learning vistas for our students, then we need to regularly refresh our mission statements. Almost every social good will have originally emerged from some form of education, so be a passionate apologist for the teaching profession, rather than apologising for schools.

Children will rarely listen to teachers who only seem to function from the neck up.

If we do anything without love, then we're just making noises. Throwing down a welcome mat and being friendly doesn't mean that you'll be walked over – though if you are, assert yourself without **YELLING!!!** (because it rarely helps). None of us should belong in the 'friends zone'; but most teens will warm to friendly teachers – so don't wait until Christmas to smile.

Make your first class first-class and save the rules for another day. This will help you showcase your talents and reassure everyone – especially yourself – that you aren't an imposter. Great lessons may take hours to craft, but they're gifts that will keep your star shining. Don't shirk from hard work; that which is produced without effort is generally received without pleasure.

Above all, though, remember that teenagers are attracted to joyful, confident, and energised people who love what they teach. So welcome aboard, and enjoy the journey...

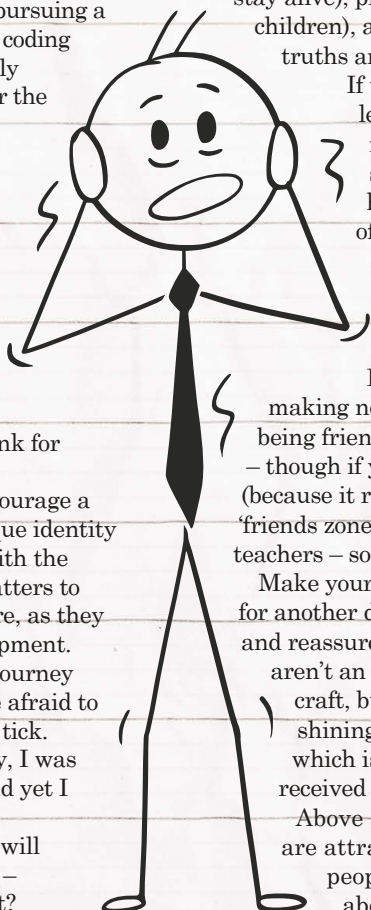




Image: BFI Film Academy participants



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Find out more and how to apply at **bfi.org.uk/filmacademy**

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Geography, Media
and Physics**

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- Great for your Professional Development



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