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INTERVIEW



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MCGILL**

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change how we teach"*

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## FROM THE EDITOR

### “Welcome...”



Should I? Dare I? Opening this issue's leader by welcoming our new Education Secretary, Gillian Keegan, feels a little like tempting fate at this point.

I'd venture that we can ultimately thank the current volatility of Conservative Party politics for a rate of turnover that's seen no fewer than five individuals hold the post in 2022, rather than a deliberate downplaying of the DfE's importance. Lest we forget, the Treasury – arguably the most significant ministry of them all – has seen four Chancellors over the same period. The country's been witness to a Black Swan leadership event which, fingers crossed, will hopefully give way to a little more stability from here on out. Unless a general election gets called, of course...

Whatever the reasons for the ministerial musical chairs, though, the fact remains that education policy in England has essentially been locked in a holding pattern for months, amid continuing uncertainty as to whether a series of grand policy plans announced earlier in the year will still come to pass, be heavily amended or shelved and replaced with something else altogether.

Take the SEND Green Paper issued back in March which, as John Galloway notes on page 73, calls for the creation of national standards to help clarify which students will and won't qualify for SEND support and places at special schools. One has to assume that a decision on whether to still pursue that direction will be made at some point – but when?

At the same time, November is finally here, and with it, a chance to see for ourselves just how accurate all that gloomy summer talk of prohibitive heating bills will be. In the worst case scenario, numerous schools across the country will find themselves teaching students in cold classrooms in the depths of winter. As Nikki Cunningham Smith notes on page 28, that's an unprecedented state of affairs in the modern era, and one that could have a very real, and highly unpredictable impact on student behaviour.

That's something of a downer to leave things on, so let me instead conclude with a recommendation to read Phil Naylor's thoughts on page 34 concerning the good that can be achieved by restoring the pastoral element to tutor times, and to check out the winners of this year's Teach Secondary Awards, starting on page 51. Will our judges have chosen your new favourite resource?

Enjoy the issue,

Callum Fauser  
callum.fauser@theteachco.com

## On board this issue:



Hannah Grace is a KS3 English lead



Matt MacGuire is an assistant headteacher



Rebecca Leek is CEO of the SEAMAT trust



Gordon Cairns is an English and forest school teacher



Nikki Cunningham-Smith is an assistant headteacher



Daniel Harvey is a science teacher and pastoral lead

## KEEP IN TOUCH!

Sign up for the weekly TS newsletter at [teachwire.net/newsletter](https://teachwire.net/newsletter)

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Is there any actual benefit to the notes students take in class?







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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...



### YIPS

Not to be confused with the yuppies (young, upwardly mobile professionals) of the dim and distant 1980s, the 'yips' of today are a very different proposition. That's because we're talking about 'young illiberal progressives' – a subsection of 13- to 24-year-olds who are as progressive, tolerant and sensitive as can be with respect to matters of multiculturalism, gender, sexuality, climate change and the like, but paradoxically hostile towards anyone else who doesn't share their values.

According to a recent survey and report produced by Channel 4, under the banner 'Beyond Z: The Real Truth About British Youth', a quarter of Generation Z express having "Very little tolerance for people with beliefs that they disagree with", while just under half agree that "some people deserve to be cancelled".

Ah, yes – the 'c' word that strikes fear into the hearts of politicians and journalists who'll happily tell the microphones of BBC News, Sky, ITN, Channel 4, Channel 5, GB News, Talk TV and/or *Question Time* audiences, Radio 4's *Today*, Laura Kuenssberg, Jeremy Vine or indeed Robert Peston that they can't say anything anymore and are being effectively silenced by the young...



**DON'T SAY**

**"Yeah, but not that"**

## BEAT THE BUDGET



### What are we talking about?

Classroom Wellbeing Toolkit

### Who is it for?

Secondary school staff



### What's on offer?

An evidence-based toolkit produced by the Anna Freud Centre, in partnership with the Early Intervention Foundation, aimed at helping secondary school staff take steps to improve students' mental health and wellbeing through everyday practices.

### How might teachers use the resource?

As a reference when building supportive relationships with students, creating an inclusive environment, acting to prevent bullying and harassment and when supporting students experiencing, stress, low mood and/or anxiety.

### Where are they available?

[bit.ly/ts118-NL1](https://bit.ly/ts118-NL1)

## DON'T QUOTE ME...

"She will be a ship that passes in the night"

*Jamie Oliver describing the then current Prime Minister Liz Truss on October 11th, during an interview concerning the government's child health policies*

## Think of a number...

**57%**

of headteachers and business leaders are considering reducing their teaching staff and increasing class sizes, in the absence of additional funding

Source: ASCL survey

**56%**

of UK adults believe that teachers would be justified in taking industrial action if given a pay rise below inflation

Source: Savanta ComRes polling commission by the NASUWT

**4 million**

The number of children living in households that have experienced food insecurity within the previous month

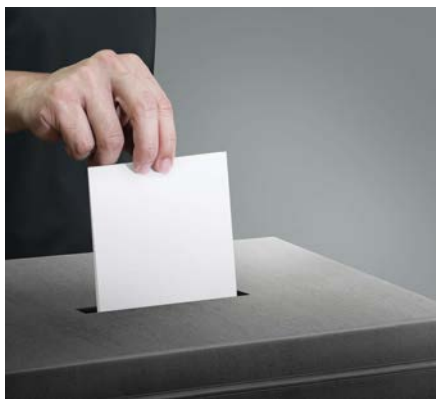
Source: The Food Foundation

## ONE FOR THE WALL

"Past thinking and methods did not prevent world wars. Future thinking must prevent wars."

*Albert Einstein*





## NEU ballots members

The National Education Union is currently in the process of nationally balloting approximately 300,000 teacher and support staff members across England and Wales for strike action over pay.

The formal postal ballots are due to close on Friday 13th January 2023. The union has yet to confirm any dates for potential strike action, but has so far hinted that they are likely to be from the week commencing 30th January 2023.

According to a series of indicative ballots carried out earlier in the month, 98% of its members believe that all teachers should receive a fully funded, above-inflation pay rise, and 86% of its teacher members are willing to take strike action to demand that rise. The same balloting further found that 78% of support staff would similarly vote yes to strike action.

In a statement, joint NEU general secretaries Kevin Courtney and Dr Mary Boustead said, "The Government believes that a starting salary of £30,000, promised at the 2019 election and introduced this September, will be generous enough to stem the flow. But they ignore the fact that inflation since 2019 has already wiped out its value.

"Our members are reluctant to strike – they want to be in school teaching children – but they have been undervalued for too long."

▼ **SAVE THE DATE** ▼

## SPEECHES AND CORRESPONDENCE

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



THE LETTER:

### ASCL criticises speech by former Education Secretary Kit Malthouse

**WHO?** ASCL general secretary Geoff Barton (pictured) and president Evelyn Forde

**WHAT?** Letter to then Secretary of State for Education, Kit Malthouse

**WHEN?** 5th October 2022

We are writing to express our dismay at some of the comments you made in your speech at the Conservative Party conference yesterday, and our concern at what they might presage.

We spent a constructive, we thought, two days at the conference – speaking at a number of fringe events, sometimes alongside one of your ministerial team. At all of those events we highlighted the major challenges currently affecting our schools and colleges. These are the inter-related issues of a severe and worsening lack of funding, a rapidly growing staff recruitment and retention crisis, and the impact of our high-stakes accountability system.

In this context, we were frankly appalled to hear you talk about people leading and working in our schools and colleges as 'hanging on to mediocrity', and claim that education needs 'constant attention and constant pressure' in order to 'drive it forward'.

Schools rated as less than good, according to recent research by the Education Policy Institute and University College London, often face a combination of 'unusually challenging circumstances', including high teacher turnover, high pupil mobility, more disadvantaged pupils, being located in disadvantaged neighbourhoods, and having higher levels of pupils with SEND.

These are not schools which are choosing to be 'mediocre'; they are schools battling against the odds to do the very best they can for some of our most vulnerable children and young people.

THE STATEMENT:

### NASUWT calls for end to gender pay gap at TUC Congress

**WHO?** NASUWT general secretary, Dr Patrick Roach

**WHEN?** 18th October 2022



"The ongoing systemic injustice of the gender pay gap is felt by women teachers long after they leave the workforce and throughout their retirement. Equal pay for equal work and security in retirement is not a radical demand; it is a basic right that every woman teacher deserves.

"Women teachers are working for longer, giving more but are being paid less both in real-terms and compared to their male colleagues. Gender inequality is widening year on year, and at the cost of pay and pension incomes for women teachers. The government must act to close the gap and end this injustice and ensure dignity and security for teachers throughout their careers and later in life."

16 NOVEMBER 2022 Education Evolution Conference 2022 | 7 DECEMBER 2022 Computer Science Education Week (11-16 years) | 29-31 MARCH 2022 Bett

#### 16 NOVEMBER 2022

Education Evolution Conference 2022  
HSBC Canada Square, London  
[bit.ly/ts118-NL2](https://bit.ly/ts118-NL2)

Notable names from the digital, corporate and education worlds will be converging at this year's Education Evolution Conference to debate how best to prepare young people for a rapidly changing world. Visitors can expect engaging keynotes, revealing case studies and plenty of valuable networking opportunities.

#### 7 DECEMBER 2022

Computer Science Education Week  
The National Museum of Computing,  
Bletchley Park  
[bit.ly/ts118-NL3](https://bit.ly/ts118-NL3)

A day-long programme of interactive and inspiring activities for KS3/4 students, intended to engage and inform any students considering pursuing a career in computing. The activities on offer will include a drone building workshop and a VR experience that will put participants' teamworking and computational thinking skills to the test.

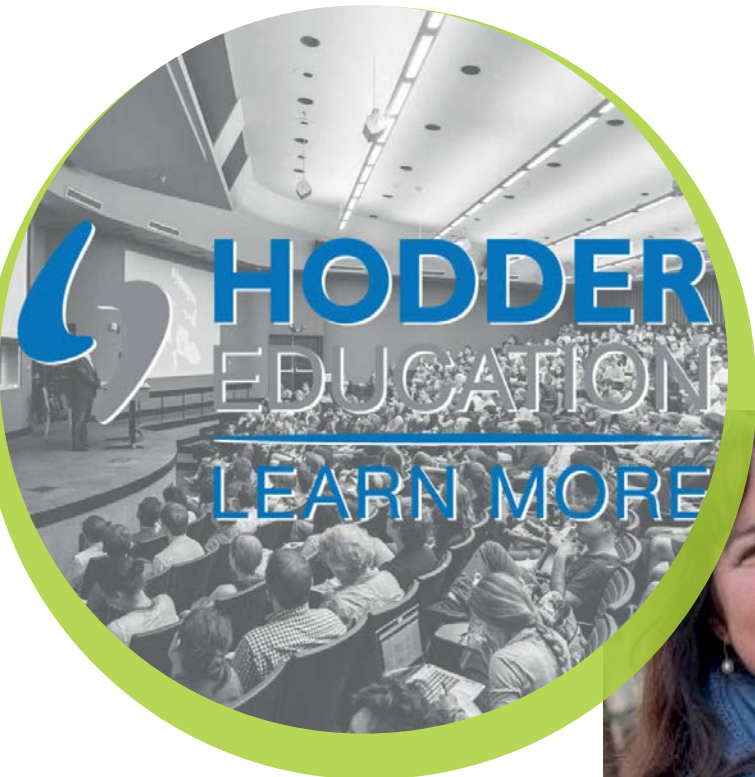
#### 29-31 MARCH 2022

Bett  
ExCeL London  
[bettshow.com](https://bettshow.com)

The organisers of the venerable edtech showcase are shaking things up a bit for 2023. It still promises the usual lineup of speakers, product/service exhibitors and seminars, but the big innovation is Connect @ Bett – an online meetings system enabling attendees and exhibitors to mutually schedule 15-minute onsite meetings ahead of time or during the show according to their availability.

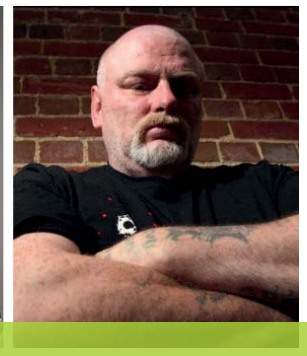
# THE WOW FACTOR

This year sees Hodder Education once again hosting a conference that no aspiring criminology student will want to miss...



The No. 1 criminology conference for A-level students is back. At The 2022 Criminology Student Conference, we'll be bringing together experienced criminologists to delve into ethnographic research, the criminal justice process and infamous murder cases, alongside detailed examinations of the life and crimes of Noel 'Razor' Smith and the Mafia Princess.

With its interactive activities and cutting-edge lectures, this unmissable conference will provide your students with the opportunity to get under the skin of one of the most popular undergraduate courses in the country.



## Contact:

[hoddereducation.co.uk/CrimConf](http://hoddereducation.co.uk/CrimConf)  
01295 222 777  
[events@hoddereducation.co.uk](mailto:events@hoddereducation.co.uk)

## MEET THE LINEUP

It's a different world since we last held this conference in 2019, but we are extremely excited to welcome you and your students back to hear from our panel of leading criminologists exploring contemporary themes, as well as spotlight interviews with Noel 'Razor' Smith and Marisa 'The Mafia Princess' Merico.

## ONCE UPON A CRIME...

Taking place at the end of November 2022 in London, Nottingham and Manchester, the conference is perfect for all students interested in studying criminology at undergraduate level, as well as all current Level 3 criminology and A-level law, sociology and psychology students.

## A CRIME TO MISS

We're offering one FREE teacher place for every 10 students booked on, though students can attend on their own if permitted by their centre. Student and teacher places are priced at £24 (incl. VAT) – we can put you in touch with nearby schools that are also attending to share transport and help reduce your carbon footprint.

## BOOK NOW, CONFIRM LATER

We recommend provisionally booking the maximum number of places you may require, giving you the time to gauge interest, complete paperwork and organise transport. To secure your seats, simply contact us four weeks before the event to confirm the exact number attending.





# Get Into Film



**HOLES**  
(2003, PG, 112 MINS)

## CURRICULUM LINKS:

Literacy, PSHE

Born into the perpetually unlucky Yelnats family, Stanley is always in the wrong place at the wrong time. After being falsely accused of stealing a pair of trainers, he is sent to a sinister correctional facility in the desert, named Camp Green Lake, where the hostile warden puts him to work digging holes with the rest of the kids.

Through a subsequent series of flashbacks and misadventures, the strange history of Camp Green Lake, and Stanley's own family mysteries are slowly revealed...

## Discussion questions:

- Do you believe in luck, fate or destiny? Why, or why not?
- How do the other kids treat Stanley when he arrives at the camp? How would you describe the way his character changes?
- Why is the story of Kissin' Kate Barlow so important to the film? What themes do you think she represents?
- Why is the relationship between Stanley and Zero so central to the film?

Head online to [intofilm.org](http://intofilm.org) to stream the film for free, and download our fantastic film guide where you'll find Teacher Notes on these discussion questions and much more. While there, visit our Anti-Bullying Week Theme Page, containing more films, information and resources around the theme of bullying



## Retweets

Who's been saying what on Twitter this month?

### Miss Hacker @MsHackerEnglish

Something I don't think is discussed enough - how important it is for middle & senior leaders to remember what it's like for a teacher 'on the ground' to teach full period days, often for 2-3 days back to back. Also, the accompanying markload, and inevitable cognitive fatigue.

### mrseddle1974@gmail.com @mrseddle1974

As a profession we need to remember we are not mental health specialists. The way we support damaged and frightened young people is by providing boundaries, consistency and ensuring everyone respects everyone else. The mental health professionals heal trauma.

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

# TEACHER TALES

True stories from the education chalkface

## Don't look back...

During a pre-inspection meeting with the head and members of SLT, an Ofsted inspector was focussed solely on gathering essential information. Sitting with his back to the window, only the assembled senior staff witnessed a dramatic turn of events taking place right outside the office window.

A student had brought a small gas canister into school and, for reasons unknown, released its contents in a lesson, unleashing a foul and obnoxious smell. Under the frenzied guidance of the young class teacher, panicked students streamed out of the room onto an adjacent grassed area.

It was thus fortunate that the double glazing of the head's office prevented those present from hearing the coughing and spluttering evacuees. Having discovered a sudden enthusiasm for

pre-Ofsted inspection dialogue, the senior team managed to keep the inspector engaged in an intensive, non-stop conversation that prevented him from witnessing the unfolding drama happening directly behind him.

That said, he was later made very much aware of the situation, after the local Fire Brigade arrived to determine what the gas actually was and dispose of the canister safely...

## Settling a score

A game of cricket was being played against a local prestigious independent school. We, the away side, batted first and scored an unexpected but creditable number of runs.

The home side then batted and began rapidly notching up runs. The umpire at the bowler's end was kept busy signalling to the score box, which was manned by a couple of the school's non-playing team members.

Upon yet another four being signalled by their cricket master, he noticed that the mobile score box wasn't where he expected it to be. Unbeknownst to both both umpires, several of our travelling spectators had locked the scorers in the score box and 'transported' them a good 50 to 75 metres around the boundary.

We never played that team again...

Find more true tales and amusing anecdotes at [schoolhumour.co.uk](http://schoolhumour.co.uk)

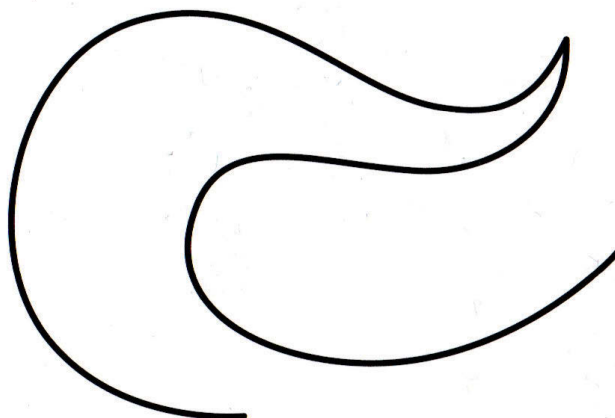
## A FEW MINUTES OF DESIGN

### #24 FINISHING WELL

Redraw or trace the shape opposite.

The shape is unfinished.

Finish it in a logical and pleasing way so that the outline is continuous.





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# Edtech TO THE RESCUE

Whether it's narrowing post-COVID learning gaps or imparting essential skills for students' futures, edtech is helping us address more problems than ever before, says **Al Kingsley**

**A** stark fact demonstrated by the COVID-19 pandemic was the extent to which digital participation can determine a person's ability to access education, participate economically, advance within their careers and communicate or socialise.

With digital transformation continuing to accelerate at an exponential rate, we must prioritise preparing children and young people with the skills, ability and understanding to fully exist within the digital world of tomorrow.

In recent months, the DfE has acknowledged the importance of digital access and skills by crystallising its commitment to edtech. Digital learning featured prominently in its March 2022 schools White Paper. Then Education Secretary Nadhim Zahawi pledged to invest £150 million in reliable broadband for all schools. The department also published a new research paper, 'Future opportunities for education technology in England' (see [bit.ly/T10-AK1](https://bit.ly/T10-AK1)).

## Personalisation

Despite a full and widely-welcomed return to 'normality', the pandemic continues to cast long shadows over many areas of society. With children in England having lost an average of 61 days of learning throughout the pandemic (see [bit.ly/T10-AK2](https://bit.ly/T10-AK2)), the personalised

feedback and assessment methods afforded by edtech can play a vital role in 'catch up' efforts by effectively identifying areas where children require additional support.

Beyond the post-pandemic present, enhanced personalisation and customisation has the potential to radically transform our whole approach to teaching and learning more widely. If implemented and used well, edtech can streamline teachers' workload at a time when this is urgently needed, obviating the need to carry out important but onerous administrative tasks, from photocopying and printing to marking.

Teachers' time and efforts can then be concentrated on supporting children's

learning and wellbeing, as well as the careful maintenance of their own work-life balance. The latter is especially important in light of the ongoing retention crisis. The NEU, to pick just one example, has reported that nearly half of the teachers it recently surveyed plan to leave the profession due to unmanageable workloads.

## Supporting a digital future

Despite our growing reliance on digital technology, more than 20% of employers describe their workforce as lacking basic digital skills, amid growing fears of an impending digital skills shortage ([bit.ly/T10-AK2A](https://bit.ly/T10-AK2A)).

Embedding technology in classrooms will enable students to gain vital computer and digital literacy skills, while also consolidating many 'soft' abilities such as creativity, problem solving, critical thinking and social skills. More often overlooked is the additional need for digital citizenship skills, whereby children are taught about internet safety and responsible online behaviour, ensuring they become safe and

respectful internet users. If children are to safely access the full potential of the online world, digital citizenship skills will have to be incorporated into all aspects of the curriculum.

Another important use of technology in the classroom is in the teaching of specific digital skills, such as coding. Edtech presents a genuine opportunity to invest in, and prioritise, our children's futures.

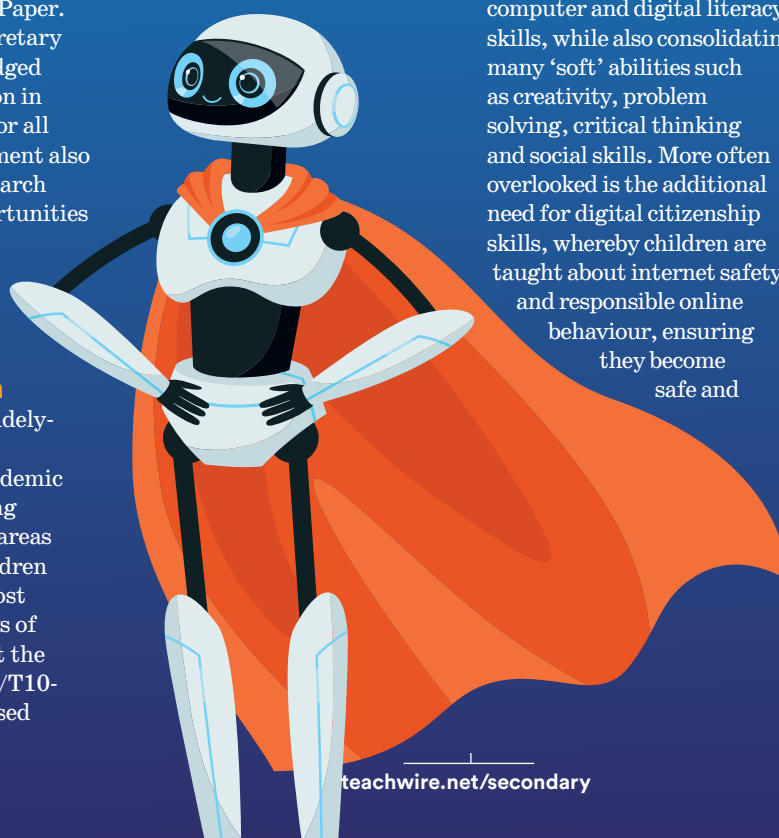
With the pandemic having disrupted their lives and learning, edtech is now helping children through the recovery and return to normality. It also holds the potential for unlocking entirely new modes of learning and development.

Access to technology and the internet is no longer a convenient luxury, but increasingly an essential right. Sustained and expanded investment in edtech will help to ensure fair and equitable access to technology, and the learning potential it offers young people – all of which is vital if we're to empower every child to grow and thrive in the post-COVID world we find ourselves in.



## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Al Kingsley (@AlKingsley\_Edu) is CEO of NetSupport, chair of Hampton Academies Trust and member of the Regional Schools Commissioner Advisory Board for the East of England & North London





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\*Orders must be placed and shipped between 1st October and 31st December 2022. For full terms and conditions, please visit [www2.PrometheanWorld.com/Win](http://www2.PrometheanWorld.com/Win)



## [ MATHS PROBLEM ]

# COMPLETING THE SQUARE

Many students find completing the square a difficult process to get to grips with

In this lesson, students make sense of completing the square by ordering the steps and explaining the process in pairs.

## THE DIFFICULTY

Give students the 13 statements below for them to cut out onto separate strips (a resource sheet for this is available at [bit.ly/ts118-mp1](https://bit.ly/ts118-mp1)).

Arrange some of these strips in order to show the 'completing the square' method. You won't need to use all of the strips!

If students find this too hard, you could remove some of the unnecessary strips. The red numbers indicate a possible order, although some of these might be omitted. The other ones are not needed at all.

You could ask students who complete this easily to design questions for which some of the unused strips would be needed.

$x = 5 \pm 2$	
$(x + 5)^2 + 4 = 0$	
$(x + 5)^2 - 25 + 21 = 0$	2
$x + 5 = \pm 2$	5
$(x + 5 - 2)(x + 5 + 2) = 0$	
$x^2 + 10x + 21 = 0$	1
$x = -7 \text{ or } -3$	7
$(x + 5)^2 = \pm 4$	
$(x + 5)^2 = 4$	4
$x = -5 \pm 2$	6
$(x + 5)^2 - 4 = 0$	3
$(x + 3)(x + 7) = 0$	
$x + 5 = \pm 4$	

## THE SOLUTION

Now find and order strips within this same set that demonstrate the 'factorisation' method.

There is a shorter and a longer way of showing factorisation:

	completing the square	factorisation	
		shorter version	longer version
1	$x^2 + 10x + 21 = 0$		
2	$(x + 5)^2 - 25 + 21 = 0$	$x^2 + 10x + 21 = 0$	$x^2 + 10x + 21 = 0$
3	$(x + 5)^2 - 4 = 0$	$(x + 3)(x + 7) = 0$	$(x + 5)^2 - 25 + 21 = 0$
4	$(x + 5)^2 = 4$	$x = -7 \text{ or } -3$	$(x + 5)^2 - 4 = 0$
5	$x + 5 = \pm 2$		$(x + 5 - 2)(x + 5 + 2) = 0$
6	$x = -5 \pm 2$		$(x + 3)(x + 7) = 0$
7	$x = -7 \text{ or } -3$		$x = -7 \text{ or } -3$

What is the same and what is different about completing the square and factorisation?

Students should be able to identify many differences. For example, factorisation depends on the 'zero product property', and so we begin by getting all the terms on the same side. Completing the square depends on 'isolating' a perfect square ( $(x + 5)^2$  above) and then square-rooting both sides. Students might think factorisation is shorter or easier than completing the square; they might note that factorisation works only for some quadratics, whereas completing the square works for all.

## Checking for understanding

To assess students' understanding, ask them to create their own set of strips like this, with a different starting equation – for example,  $x^2 = 3x + 18$  – and ask them to make sure to include some 'distractor' strips that don't belong!



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# First principles

Do young people have a right to free speech within the institutions set up to educate them? **Toby Marshall** isn't so sure...

Last month, I offered a lift to a good friend of mine who needed to get her two kids from Bermondsey to Tottenham on a Saturday afternoon for a family visit. She'd been ill, and there was a rail strike on, so my offer was gratefully received. But her eldest son, Hugo – a bright 12-year-old – had other ideas.

"I did not consent to this," Hugo declared defiantly, as we drove past the fabulous exterior of the Seamans' Mission Building on the East India Dock Road. We sailed serenely on. As we approached a leafy South Woodford, the mutiny within my battered Kia was starting to subside. By the time we started to tack through the crowded streets of Tottenham, all that could be heard from the back was an occasional oppressed sigh. We did pity the poor galley slave.

## Systematic dialogue

All of this got me thinking about the rights of young people, and in particular their right to free speech. This has long been an issue that's bothered me, since I am, by principle and personality, a libertarian. Yet as a teacher, my instincts have always told me that it would be wrong to extend this principle to education.

Systematic dialogue between the young and the old over concepts and knowledge seems to be the defining

feature of education. The vitality of this dialogue depends on there being a degree of intellectual freedom and openness, but only within the context of pedagogic boundaries set by the teacher.

Bringing some clarity to the issue of free speech within education seems to me especially important today, because young people increasingly see themselves as being in the possession of rights. The principal driver for this is probably the decline of traditional sources of external authority, but whatever the cause, long gone are the days when adults could simply assert control over the young.

At the same time, government is encouraging teachers to inform the young that they have rights similar to those of adults – from lessons on 'British values', through to the recently introduced RSE and health education curriculum. The message in schools and colleges is both consistent and constant: your voice counts, you must consent, you have rights.

## Self-interest

And yet, it appears we somehow expect young people to defer on the question of speech without explaining why. Educational institutions claim to embody reason, and to represent the interests of the young. They can therefore

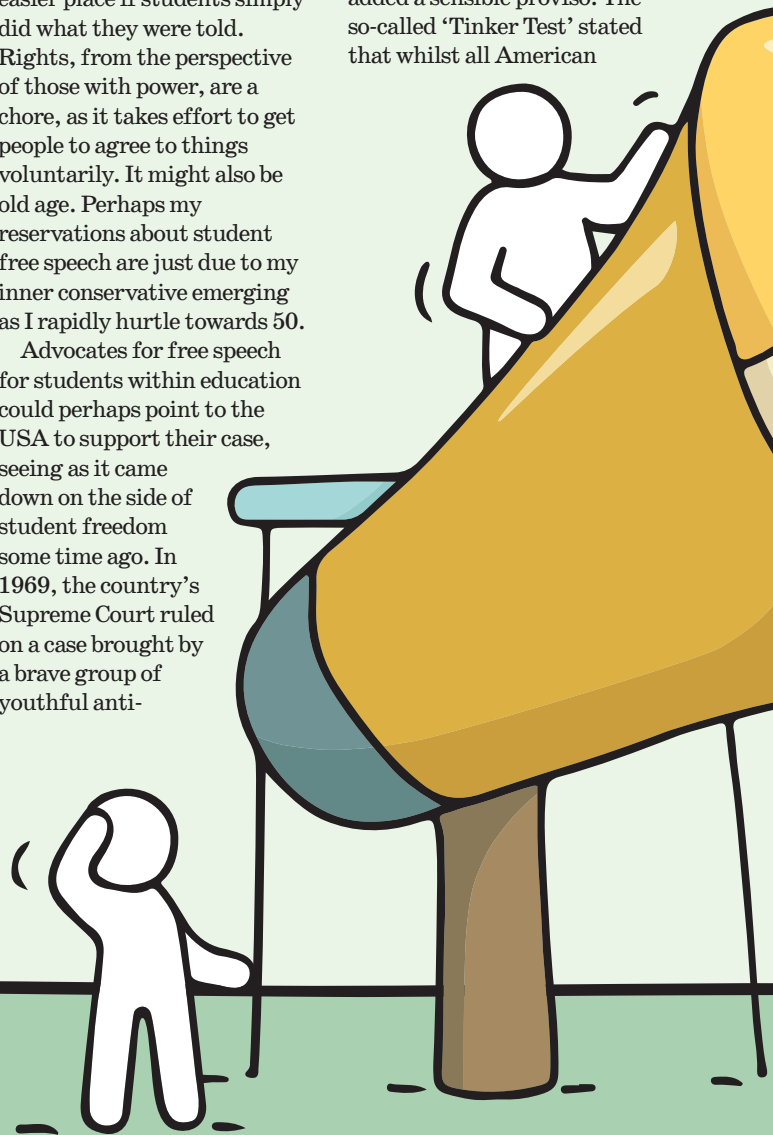
expect – indeed, they perhaps ought to hope – that students will challenge them over speaking rights, both positively in terms of their right to speak, and negatively in terms of preventing others from speaking. So we need to get our arguments straight.

My instinct on this matter is possibly no more than professional self-interest. The world would certainly be an easier place if students simply did what they were told. Rights, from the perspective of those with power, are a chore, as it takes effort to get people to agree to things voluntarily. It might also be old age. Perhaps my reservations about student free speech are just due to my inner conservative emerging as I rapidly hurtle towards 50.

Advocates for free speech for students within education could perhaps point to the USA to support their case, seeing as it came down on the side of student freedom some time ago. In 1969, the country's Supreme Court ruled on a case brought by a brave group of youthful anti-

Vietnam protestors headed by siblings John and Mary Beth Tinker. The group believed that it had a right to express its views on America's terrible war of aggression, and in its judgement, the Supreme Court agreed – the Tinkers did indeed have a First Amendment right to free speech within the classroom.

However, in making its judgement the Supreme Court added a sensible proviso. The so-called 'Tinker Test' stated that whilst all American





## Join the CONVERSATION

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students did have a constitutional right to free speech, that right didn't extend to speech that causes 'substantial disruption'. In the years since then, American education didn't subsequently collapse.

### Government oversight

More recently, England's then Secretary of State for Schools, Nick Gibb, was pressed on the matter in Parliament on 6th July 2021, when he was asked what steps the DfE were taking to promote free speech in schools.

Gibb stated that schools have a responsibility to "Actively promote the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those of different faiths and beliefs," concluding that, "Freedom of speech is relevant to, and could be considered in, the context of all these values."

Gibb was referring to DfE guidance issued by the Coalition government in 2014 – but as Rania Hafez, an associate professor at the University of Greenwich, acutely observed at the time, the values listed within said guidance didn't include the foundational freedom of free speech.

Was this simply an oversight from a government otherwise committed to liberal values within education? A government which, at least where higher education was concerned, actively sought to challenge those seeking to shut down, boycott and cancel debates?

### Open discussion

It could be that the government has remained ambiguous on the status of free speech within education because it shares my reticence about its applicability, while simultaneously fearing to appear authoritarian and not wanting to contradict its overall message on rights. Whatever the explanation, it seems unlikely that we'll be getting government-led clarity on the matter any time soon.

Here, then, is my attempt at explaining why students shouldn't have a right to free speech within education. There's no contradiction between being an advocate of liberal freedoms for adults, while being against free speech within education. Schools and colleges are specialised institutions with distinct pedagogic goals. Above all else, the principles governing educational institutions should facilitate the successful realisation of their internal objectives.

At the same time, however, there are important educational reasons for teachers to promote open classroom discussion, since intellectual diversity supports the development of student understanding. Maximising the diversity of viewpoints in this type of scenario is critical – up to and including views that are wrong and offensive. As John Stuart Mill reminds us, truth benefits from the collision with error. To fully appreciate truth, we must engage with untruth.

It seems to me that the value best suited to this context is that of tolerance. It's a concept that includes a recognition and valuing of

difference, while also retaining the sense that there must be a judicious agent – the teacher – who remains in overall control.

### Temporary freedoms

But why should teachers have the exclusive right to judge classroom discussions? I'd suggest that it's because they're uniquely expert in the methods by which subject knowledge is acquired. In this respect, the relationships between teachers and the taught are fundamentally unequal, which is why an individual student doesn't have the absolute right to speak, or any right to restrict the speech of others.

I propose that teachers be allowed to rightfully exercise their pedagogic control and judgement during classroom discussions. They should be the ones to select the topics, shape the structure of the arguments and provoke the discussion itself.

They should use their expertise to establish the necessary boundaries of any discussion while making live judgments about what's relevant; irrelevant; offensive but relevant; gratuitously offensive; or simply irrational. It's the expert teacher who takes responsibility for judging what is and isn't useful in relation to the subject of instruction.

The next time I see Young Hugo the Defiant, I may well explain to him that what he might be losing in temporary freedoms, he will more than make up for in future wisdom when he enters that benign dictatorship that is the modern classroom.

Well – on a good day, at least...



**ABOUT THE AUTHOR**  
Toby Marshall is an A Level film studies teacher

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# WHAT I LEARNT AT SCHOOL

**Professor Noel Fitzpatrick reflects on how a lifelong ambition to care for animals gave him the determination to study hard, despite the best efforts of school bullies...**

**D**id you know you wanted to be a vet when you were a child?

I knew from an early age that I wanted to become a vet, but when I was 10 a life-changing experience set me on this path forever. I was helping with the lambing on my family's farm one night, when a ewe became stuck in a ditch and subsequently lost both her lambs. I'd never felt such a profound and overwhelming feeling of despair, and resolved then to study hard so I could be the very best vet possible for any animals that came under my care.

I was intensely frustrated by the lack of options available to our animal friends. I felt powerless and helpless, but soon realised I could spend the next 30 years feeling like that, or do something to make a difference. In my little bit of the world I've always believed that the animals who are our friends and companions deserve superlative healthcare, and that the families of those animals have the right to choose access to the best medical and surgical options unfettered.

**How did you handle the move from primary to secondary school?**

I went to a small primary



Image courtesy of Marsha Arnold

school in Barnashrone, County Laois, and then on to Patrician College Ballyfin. School was rough. I wasn't bright and couldn't read or write very well. Of course, the boys spotted that I was different straight away – they threw me in a ditch, poured milk over my books and did anything they could to make my life a misery.

My salvation came in the form of my best friend – a sheepdog on the farm called Pirate. He was there for me and loved me. I found sanctuary with him in my imagination – I was fascinated by superheroes, and used

my vivid imagination to propel me into a world of endless possibility where neither Pirate nor I had any chains holding us back. In my imagination, my hero Vetman would save all the lonely kids and animals, and love would win.

**You recently published a book for younger readers, *Vetman and his Bionic Animal Clan* – what motivated you to write it?**

I've always loved comic books and wanted to write about my own superhero. Vetman has always been there for me, ever since I dreamed

him up when I was 10 years old, and I wanted him to be there for other people and all the animals too. As with any life goal, you can't achieve greatness without great effort, so writing it involved very late nights on Fridays and Saturdays, but I didn't mind. It was a little form of escapism. Vetman is my hero. He inspires me to be the best I can be, with compassion and creativity.

**What kind of student were you?**

I worked very hard, because I knew that I didn't know everything and was very keen to catch up. In spite of the bullies, I kept going and stayed true to myself and to the animals. I had only one focus – study, and then study more to get enough points in the Leaving Certificate examination so that I could realise my dream and go to veterinary school.

**Are there any secondary teachers you look back on with particular fondness?**

My physics and maths teacher, Brother Maurice, encouraged me when I was having a hard time at school. He knew I was a dreamer. He himself was a scientific artist, and could apply his genius to realising everything from a steam powered fountain, to an actual 'super computer' in the 80s! He taught me that science was a conduit for thought, but that you didn't need to think in a straight line; that in fact, it was often one's mistakes that taught one the most. We lost him last year, but everything he did and stood for lives on in all the people he inspired. Thank you, Brother Maurice.

Professor Noel Fitzpatrick is an orthopaedic-neuro veterinary surgeon and a professor of veterinary medicine at the University of Surrey, as well as a writer and broadcaster; for more information, visit [noelfitzpatrick.vet](http://noelfitzpatrick.vet) or follow @ProfNoelFitz.

*Vetman and his Bionic Animal Clan* is available now (Hodder Children's Books, £7.99)

# BUILD



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# SET THE STANDARD

**Daniel Harvey** checks off the areas teachers should be mindful of at this time of year if they wish to see their students progress and succeed by next summer...

**N**ow that we're well into the first term of the year, you'll have hopefully had the chance to enjoy a well-earned half term break.

In between the (probably much-needed) unwinding and recuperation, the break often provides an ideal opportunity to reflect on how well you have set up your classes at the start of the academic year – particularly if you're still at an early stage of your teaching career. In what ways have you sought to ensure that your pupils will be successful? How have you looked to maximise their learning time?

Those are both broad questions, so it can be helpful to break them down by devising a checklist and marking off what's been working well in your classroom as you go, while identifying the next steps you can take for improving students' capacity to learn.

Below is an example checklist that I would use when can looking to improve the foundations for learning in my classroom.

## 1. Entry routines

Do you have a welcoming and effective entry routine for your classroom? Many teachers chose to meet their students at the door, welcome them personally to the classroom and direct them to the first task.

## 2. Engaging starts

Do your students know how the lesson will start? You could use a retrieval quiz linked to previous work to begin the lesson. This could be either handed out or displayed on the board.



**“Take time to recognise those students who meet or exceed your expectations”**

## 3. Distribution of materials

Have you taught the students a simple routine for ensuring all books and other lesson materials are handed out effectively? Students should be taught to ensure that such items are distributed to everyone in the class as smoothly and as unobtrusively as possible.

## 4. Student register

What is your own routine for taking the class register, and is it as effective as it could be? It's important for every teacher to ensure that their register is completed accurately, consistently and on time.

## 5. Seating plans

Do you use seating plans for your classes? Have you learned your students' names? If your answer to the latter is 'no', seating plans

can be a useful aid to memory, as well as helping you check instantly whether every student is seated where they ought to be.

## 6. Awareness of need

To what extent do the aforementioned seating plans contain essential information that will improve your standard of teaching? Examples of this might include details of which students are in receipt of Pupil Premium or have SEND, as well as reminders of previously agreed personalised strategies or prior attainment information.

## 7. Check your position

When teaching, do you take up a good position in the classroom where you're able to see if all students are paying attention to you and are engaged? Scanning the class constantly, while

simultaneously teaching or speaking, is a crucial skill for ensuring that every student remains focused.

## 8. Clarity regarding participation

When teaching, do you make the means of participation clear to all students, so that they can meet your expectations? Always clearly explain to students if and when they should put up their hands, or when you're intending to use a 'no-hands technique' such as cold calling.

## 9. Class circulation

When the students are working, do you move around the classroom to see what work is being completed? This is a hugely important thing for teachers to do, and means that when you check students' work later, you are less likely to encounter any surprises.

## 10. Recognition and rewards

Take time to recognise those students who meet or exceed your expectations, and be sure to make regular use of your school's reward or recognition system. That way, you can start building lasting and positive relationships with students as early on as possible.



### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Daniel Harvey is a GCSE and A Level science teacher and lead on behaviour, pastoral and school culture for an inner city academy



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Rapid turnover of Ministers aside, there are now pronounced differences between the Conservatives' and Labour's competing visions for education in England

# Melissa Benn



**Where do the two main political parties now stand on education? The chaos of early autumn surely tarnishes our view of the Conservative offer.**

Since spring of 2021, there have been no fewer than five Secretaries of State, some with farcically short tenures. Michelle Donelan lasted 36 hours. James Cleverley served for one month and 30 days, while his successor, Kit Malthouse, was in post for just eight days less than that.

Of all the Education Secretaries since 2010, Michael Gove stands alone as having had a distinctive, if controversial legacy (unless you count the fiasco arising from Gavin Williamson's handling of exam grading during the pandemic).

The bigger picture looks pretty grim. Over the last decade, funding has dropped dramatically, teacher recruitment and retention are both at perilously low levels, school buildings are crumbling, morale across the profession is low, and as I write this, the likelihood of strike action by teachers this winter continues to grow.

Too often, big plans have been dropped at the last minute – see the recent Schools Bill. And what impact will Austerity Mk. 2 have on our struggling schools?

## The 'silver bullet'

Rishi Sunak has signalled to the media that education is his highest priority, the 'silver bullet' that will transform our nation, and now talks about introducing a British Baccalaureate.

Whatever he has in mind, he'll have to drop that 'British' qualifier, given that education policy is devolved across the UK. But Sunak's Baccalaureate will certainly differ from Michael Gove's version, which comprised a narrow range of academic GCSEs.

It's likely to instead draw on proposals that have emerged over the last five years from a range of influential bodies, including the Times Education Commission and the independent think tank EDSK, which are calling for more substantive and creative reforms of the upper secondary stage.

'Bacc' advocates differ on whether to preserve GCSEs and A Levels, but virtually everyone agrees (rightly) that secondary schools in the 21st century should offer parity between academic and vocational courses, and give students the chance to experience both up to the age of 18.

## Sound ideas

I'm rather sorry to not see Labour pushing its own version of the Baccalaureate. In one sense, it's natural Labour territory, with its more democratic and realistic take on how to provide rigour, variety and fairness within secondary education.

Keir Starmer and shadow Education Secretary Bridget Phillipson may be holding back, due to New Labour's botched handling of the seminal Tomlinson report of 2004, which outlined an early version of the Bacc model, only for then Prime Minister Tony Blair to resist ditching what he

saw as the 'gold standard' of A Levels. But that was almost 20 years ago, and the latest Bacc plans now specifically allow for the retention of A-levels.

Otherwise, Labour has some sound ideas for catch-up tutoring and Early Years provision, and has presented some bold proposals on private schools – including ending their charitable tax breaks, adding VAT to school fees and transferring some of the resulting income to a teacher recruitment fund. It's also pledged to reform Ofsted.

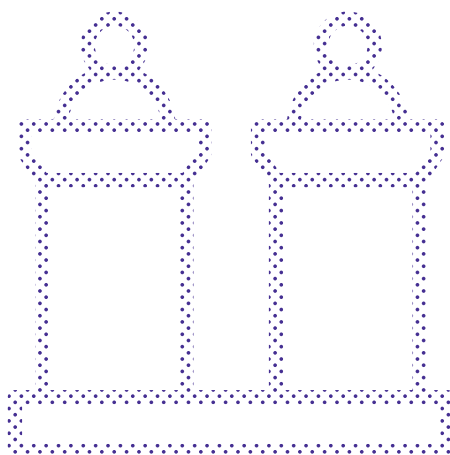
Yet whatever its policies entail, little in state education will change without a commitment to sustained and substantive investment in everything from Early Years (where the sector is largely for-profit and hugely expensive) to adult learning. No-one is under any illusion that a Labour government could easily rebuild state education after years of cuts, but that should certainly be a long-term aim for the party.

## Stark contrast

One area that may yet prove increasingly relevant as the next general election looms is the contrast in educational background between both parties' most prominent figures. The majority of Rishi Sunak's cabinet are privately educated, with many, including Sunak himself, choosing to send their own children to expensive independent schools.

In contrast, the vast majority of Starmer's front bench attended non-selective state schools and few, if any, senior Labour names now choose private education for their children (though this was not always so).

The contrast seems stark, prompting some commentators to start seriously pondering which party is best placed to understand and support a sector on which 93% of our country's young people depend.



# Amplify your activities

Supervising practical activities can involve navigating an array of challenges and complicating factors – so if you want to succeed, approach the task strategically...

**M**ost educators believe that their participants' learning can be deeply ingrained by giving them experiences. Whether you're looking to share knowledge, teach skills or develop behaviours, there is plenty of evidence to suggest that the act of 'doing' something will help – what's commonly described as experiential learning.

Experiential education is a craft that combines art and science. It takes practice and experience to develop, and often involves trial and error. There are few hard and fast rules, and it requires sound judgement in order to be effective.

Within vocational subjects, a craftsperson will start their journey with an apprenticeship that will see them build experience and learn the basics. They will then qualify to operate in their own right, before eventually building enough skills and experience to be considered a master. The journey to becoming a master experiential educator is broadly similar, but with less defined boundaries, and involves the following four hierarchical steps.

## 1. Early days

Before they even know the term 'experiential learning', the approach of most educators will be to provide open experiences with few goals or agendas, and trust that the act of 'doing' will provide learning for the participants.

The classic example of this is 'play time', where young students head out into the playground to invent games, roleplay and have a good time with their friends. No educational goals are set, but they will inevitably learn social skills such as negotiation and problem solving, and exercise their imaginations creatively.

The benefits of this approach are that it's participant-led and highly engaging, requiring little planning and often delivering unexpected, yet valuable insights to participants. The drawbacks are that you have little control over outcomes, and that participants can become disengaged from formal learning.

## 2. Refining the process

Next, we need to consider of how certain activities naturally support certain forms of learning. The educator sets the desired learning outcomes, then chooses those activities they feel will maximise the chance of attaining said outcomes.

Boosting the resilience of an army unit, for example, may entail taking them to a tough environment where they're challenged, and expected to develop the mental tools needed to deal with said challenges. For a more corporate example, we could look to the 'team-building' paintballing trip, often prompted by the belief that in order to succeed, staff must acquire key teamworking skills.

This more targeted approach allows for some steering of the learning towards a predetermined goal, but brings with it the possibility that participants can 'fail' in their learning by not reaching those desired outcomes. At this level, educators require a good understanding of both the expected learning and the activity in advance to ensure that they're well matched.

## 3. Basic facilitation

As experiential educators progress beyond the basics, the facilitation of learning experiences becomes more common. This is where teachers start assembling a toolbox of techniques, while simultaneously considering not just a lesson's learning goals and activities, but how they'll be set up and run, and the language they'll use.

They'll often use tools such as framing – where participants are told the purpose of an experience before they have it – reflection and review, where participants collectively explore and dissect the experience afterwards.

## 4. Strategic facilitation

Great experiential educators will eventually develop a wide range of tools and techniques, become more strategic in their approach and move beyond frame-do-review.

Your strategy, and the tools used to carry it out, will affect how the activity feels to participants and strongly influence the learning they draw from it. You'll have to start making decisions over

how involved you want to be in the learning experience, and how to balance levels of challenge and support.

You may, for example, choose to let students attempt a challenging activity with minimal input from you. Knowing it would be helpful for morale if they were to succeed, you provide the minimum amount of support they'll need at key moments to allow success – a metaphorical 'leg up' – allowing them to achieve more than what would have been possible through their efforts alone.

## Allowing for chaos

Depending on the activity you're running and the learning environment, you must also decide how much 'chaos' you're willing to allow, and thus how much freedom your group will have to operate.

If you allow a maximum level of chaos, participants will have complete freedom to operate as they wish during the activity ('Play Time'). Conversely, 'no chaos' will require the session to be clearly managed from start to finish ('Train Tracks'). Somewhere between the two lies a third strategy, whereby teachers are heavily involved helping the group formulate a plan, before then stepping back and letting them carry it out. We could call this the 'Drag and Drop' approach.

Having begun to think strategically about experiential education, you'll soon see how, by applying different strategies to the



same activities, the nature of the experience and the learning that participants come away with can be vastly different.

## Choose your strategy

Key to maximising the effectiveness of activities is choosing the right strategy, but developing this skill requires experimentation. What worked for one group or activity last time isn't guaranteed to work this time, and whether a strategy works at all can depend on many different factors.

First, you should obviously choose a strategy that matches the learning outcomes you want your participants to achieve. This is likely the first factor you'll be thinking about, and particularly important if your learning outcomes aren't directly related to the activity itself – such as a practical task intended to build confidence, for example.

Second, consider who the participants will be. A strategy that works for one group might not work for another, even if they're superficially similar. The number of participants you're working with will also strongly influence your choice of strategy, as will their age – though the latter relates more to maturity than calendar age. Some adult

groups can demonstrate startlingly childish behaviour, especially when under stress!

Other factors affecting your choice of strategy may include levels of physical fitness, cultural background, gender, emotional state and prior experience. Also bear in mind that the emotional state of your participants can have a dramatic effect on how activities run, and as such, should guide the strategy you opt for. The changing emotional state of participants can be the primary reason for a previously successful strategy not succeeding as well with the same group a second time, even if the activity itself and other factors remain the same.

Factors affecting a group's emotional state might include recent successes or failures, relationships between team members (and with you) and their previous experiences. A group's emotional state will be highly dynamic, requiring skill and practice to assess. Your approach to choosing a strategy needs to be similarly dynamic in turn.

## Everything in context

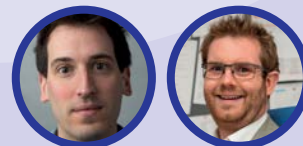
Finally, remember that learning activities don't happen in a vacuum. Your choice of strategy may be affected by what happened before your activity, what's happening afterwards or what happened last time your participants tried it. Even the

time of day, how good lunch was, and how the weather is doing can be major factors in an activity's success.

How well you understand the context will depend on how well you know your participants and the level of information you have, but it never hurts to talk to them and find out more. If your activity is taking place as part of a wider programme, the placing of your activity, the prior activities and what's coming next will also impact your choices.

Above all, be conscious, thoughtful and strategic about how you run your learning activities. Your participants will not only be more likely to

reach their learning outcomes, but also hopefully be more engaged, more thoughtful and ultimately care more about their learning.



### ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Sam Moore specialises in helping people develop themselves through challenge, having worked for two decades in adventure education and delivered personal development in corporate, educational and youth settings; Tim Hudson designs and delivers programmes aimed at helping people become the very best versions of themselves

Their book, *Amplifying Activities for Great Experiential Learning*, is available now (Routledge, £19)

## SELF-REFLECTION

Choosing a strategy to help maximise your participants' learning will always be more of an art than a science, but here are some questions you can ask yourself to help you make your choice:

- Is it important that my group 'succeeds' or completes the task at hand?
- Do I want my participants to be challenged, or allowed an 'easy win' to develop their confidence?
- Do I want my participants to have lots of freedom or limited freedom?
- How confident am I in my group's ability to undertake this activity successfully?
- Do I think my group will need lots of help with this activity?
- What are the consequences of my group performing poorly on this activity?
- Are my participants ready for this activity?
- What have my participants been up to before they got to me? What are they up to next?





## ASK THE EXPERT

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Martina Veale explains how ASDAN's Personal and Social Effectiveness qualifications can enable young people to boost their confidence

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Our Level 1 and 2 personal and social effectiveness (PSE) qualifications are for those young people for whom the standard diet of GCSEs and exam-based qualifications isn't enough to engage or excite them. These will be young people at risk of falling behind their peers without qualifications that provide opportunities to practice using personal and social skills in context. The qualifications are designed to meet the needs of these learners.

### How attractive are the qualifications likely to be for employers?

PSE qualifications are designed to equip young people with the core personal and social skills that are essential for work. Academic learning often provides learners with theory before they have opportunities to practice. In the real world, young people are quick to have a go, but might refer to an online video if something doesn't work. Our qualifications place practical learning at the forefront, supported by a fully resourced curriculum that practitioners can use to support young people in reflecting on, and learning from their experiences.

### Is there an 'emotional health' dimension to PSE qualifications?

To make sense of their education journey, young people need a secure understanding of who they are, their heritage, what motivates them and what holds them back. Employers need emotionally intelligent and resilient young people who can work collaboratively and effectively problem solve. PSE develops competencies in the key areas of communication, collaboration, emotional intelligence and resilience, providing a solid foundation from which young people can progress onto further learning and work. That way, they

can continue to learn new skills with those core competencies already in their toolkit.



### EXPERT PROFILE

**NAME:**  
Martina Veale

**JOB TITLE:**  
Education Director,  
ASDAN

**AREA OF EXPERTISE:**  
Senior leadership  
within mainstream  
secondary schools

**BEST PART OF MY JOB:**  
Leading the  
development of  
qualifications which  
make a difference  
to the lives of young  
people

### How are the qualifications assessed?

Our student-led portfolio structure is designed to support young people who struggle with exam-based approaches. They can demonstrate that they have met the learning objectives of the units 'Developing Myself and My Performance', 'Working with Others' and 'Problem Solving' at their own pace. Those seeking to achieve a certificate in Personal and Social Effectiveness then go on to undertake a project based on one of 12 challenge topics.

### What evidence is there that the qualifications work in practice?

PSE has been created with practitioners already delivering our existing personal effectiveness qualifications. We incorporated their ideas throughout development, and continue to involve them and other teachers in delivery, as part of our PSE evaluation project. One participant on the project told us, "The personalised aspect of PSE is crucial for learners' future development. The course is totally unique and valued by the learners, parents and staff delivering it. I value it immensely."

## ASK ME ABOUT

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# 3 things we've learnt about... TEACHERS' VIEWS ON THE EDUCATION SECRETARY

The DfE has had something of a revolving door policy when it comes to the role of Education Secretary of late – so what would teachers do if the role was theirs?

## 1 Chief Priorities

The job of Education Secretary is, among other things, to represent teachers and their profession. With that in mind, we asked the Teacher Tapp panel what advice they would give to today's aspiring Ministers.

Two common themes emerged. One was the suggestion to increase funding, and by extension, teacher pay – hardly surprising, given the cost-of-living crisis and the number of teaching unions considering balloting for strike action.

The second theme was an urging for Ministers to *listen more*. Few expressed wishing to see grand gestures and system overhauls. Instead, they want the Education Secretary to listen to teachers on the ground, respect their views and address the genuine challenges they're facing – especially levels of mental health among both students and teachers, and the suitability of Ofsted's current inspection regime.

## 2 What would you do?

If the shoe was on the other foot and it was our panel of teachers overseeing the DfE, what would they prioritise? This time, instead of an open-ended choice, we compiled a shortlist of policies based on various ideas and suggestions we've received in recent years.

Top of this list was the abolition of SATs, which 58% of teachers said they would enact if they could. This was predictably more popular among primary (74%) than secondary teachers (43%) – but it's a policy that doesn't currently feature in either of the main parties' manifestos.

Notably, half of all secondary teachers said they would look to remove charitable status from fee-paying private schools. This is actually something that Labour have repeatedly said they would do, should they be elected.

The least popular suggestion was opening new grammar schools. It may have been one of Liz Truss' flagship policies, but just 6% of secondary teachers we surveyed wanted to 'expand' the grammar system.

## 3 Communication is king

Above all, teachers are yearning for more government support. Fewer than 1% of teachers told us they felt appreciated by the government, though that figure's barely much higher in other countries where Teacher Tapp operates, with just 2% of Dutch teachers saying they felt appreciated by their government.

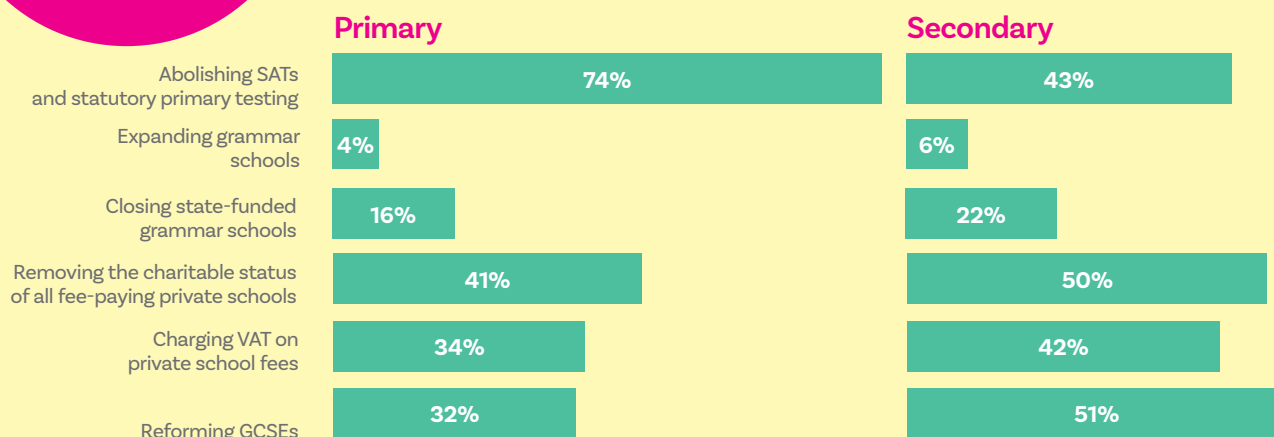
One area many teachers would like to see improved is government communications. The pandemic saw numerous last-minute announcements that were often leaked to the press, sowing doubt and confusion among school leaders. 57% of teachers and 63% of headteachers feel that any such messages should be sent in good time via email or similar means, or announced in Parliament by the Education Secretary. Secondary teachers seem less keen on email announcements than their primary colleagues – but then the former group do receive on average twice as many emails by comparison...

**YOU  
ARE THE  
EDUCATION  
SECRETARY –  
WHICH POLICIES  
DO YOU  
IMPLEMENT?**



Question answered by 7,334 teachers on 01/08/22 (results weighted to reflect national teacher and school demographics)

For more snappy insights like this, and to be part of the panel, please join in via the free Teacher Tapp app available to download for iOS and Android. You will learn something new every day.



# Action stations

**Adrian Lyons** considers what the emergence of hitherto non-public Ofsted training materials says about the regulator's memories of its own recent history...

**S**ome may be familiar with the term 'corporate memory'. This refers to how corporations and businesses will draw from all the areas in which they store knowledge when it comes to their sense of identity and purpose. This may include formal records, but also the knowledge embedded in its people, culture and the processes it has in place.

While Ofsted has a history dating back just 30 years, His Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) have a tradition stretching back for nearly 200. When I was appointed an HMI in 2005, a first-class induction process that lasted most of my first year inculcated in me in HMI traditions. This included remembering that whilst each inspection may be just another day at work for an inspector, it was a major event in the life of those we were inspecting.

## U-turns

In the years since then, the regulator has developed a practice of appointing Chief Inspectors (HMCIs) from outside the organisation, who have tended to surround themselves with trusted advisors unfamiliar with HMI traditions. This has sometimes led to those outside the organisation picking up on unexpected U-turns – as happened soon after Sir Michael Wilshaw's appointment as HMCI.

I remember driving to a hotel, ready for the following day's inspection, when I heard the start of a BBC Radio 4 programme featuring an interview with our then new HMCI. After arriving at the hotel I stayed in the car to listen, and let

out an audible 'What?' at a particular response. The interviewer has observed that some inspectors didn't have QTS, to which the HMCI immediately replied with words to the effect of, 'We can't have that.'

That response stemmed from a lack of knowledge as to why this was indeed the case. Ofsted's corporate memory could have filled him in on the history behind 'lay inspectors'.

## Rebalancing of power

Briefly, Ofsted was established in 1992 as part of the Major government's philosophy of transferring power in public services from providers to users. The rebalancing of power in education from teachers to parents was originally planned to go via Ofsted inspectors who didn't possess backgrounds in education.

That plan didn't materialise, but what survived was that up until 2005, every Ofsted inspection team contained one 'lay' inspector – somebody without an

education background, whose role was to apply the 'user's perspective'. Then in 2005, following a series of reforms that resulted in the shrinking of inspection teams, the designation of 'lay inspector' was abolished, with these sometimes highly experienced and skilled inspectors redeployed as standard inspectors. In 2012, an HMCI (who themselves lacked the background knowledge in question) decreed that inspectors lacking QTS could no longer be deployed.

More recently, we've seen a lack of corporate memory in Ofsted's refusal to make public the subject-specific training materials produced by its 'Curriculum Unit'. The resulting online furore saw several former HMI take to social media and declare that there should be no inspection materials that are not available in the public domain.

Like me, they remember a period during the reign of Sir Michael Wilshaw that saw Sean Harford become Ofsted's director of

education in 2015, and immediately decree a 'bonfire of guidance'. All the aide memories that had been built up over time were immediately withdrawn, on the basis that the only inspection materials to exist should be the publicly available Inspection Handbook and framework. This irked some of us at the time, since we had put a lot of work into those documents – but Sean was ultimately right.

Back to the present, and the leadership of Ofsted's curriculum unit wasn't happy to be told that the regulator had previously inspected subjects through its curriculum and dissemination division. The rather different focus back then had been on gathering information and evidence from schools through inspection and thematic surveys. Those subject reports gathered evidence of 'features of good/weaker achievement', with Ofsted simply disseminating good practice that seemed to work well. By contrast, Ofsted's recent subject research reports and those leaked training materials seem to indicate a highly prescriptive, and perhaps ideologically-driven shift from 'no preferred style' to 'very much a preferred style'...



### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Adrian Lyons was one of Her Majesty's Inspectors between 2005 and 2021, and now works with MATs, teacher training providers and LAs to support education; find out more at [adrianlyonsconsulting.com](http://adrianlyonsconsulting.com)





# Food for thought

**Paul Buckland** reflects on the task of getting students to eat more healthily – and how in the wrong hands, nutrition can become ammunition...

I've always had a keen interest in maintaining a healthy and active lifestyle, with good nutrition at the heart of it. I'll admit, I've not always managed to put theory into practice, but I'm still an enthusiastic trier.

That said, being married to a Food and Nutrition teacher (not, it should be noted, a food tech or, God forbid, cookery teacher) means I'm 'fortunate' enough to be regularly reminded of what I should and shouldn't be consuming.

That hasn't always been easy, particularly during stressful times at school – but after coming to terms with my fundamentally flawed nature, I'm at least allowed one bacon sandwich a week. Processed foods remain otherwise forbidden. (That said, I did once have an unspoken agreement with the catering manager at my last school that my Friday bacon sarnie before the staff briefing was strictly between us. Sorry, Carol...)

## A perverse decision

With the my students' best interests always in mind, I've consistently supported the promotion of healthy eating and lifestyles in every school I've worked at. Then, as now, I've fully observed the principle that what we put into our bodies impacts upon how well we work, in every sense. My colleagues and I engaged with different government programmes to try and acquire the status of a

'Healthy School', in whichever format was being recognised took at the time – be it the National Healthy Schools Standard; the Healthy Schools Rating Scheme; the Food in Schools Policy or simply the Eat Well Guide.

I expect I'm therefore not alone in feeling that the recent decision to delay the Obesity Strategy – in an apparent attempt to limit the impact of the cost of living crisis – is a retrograde step. It seems like a perverse decision to me; one that's likely to cost the country millions in future health costs, and sow health issues amongst children that will be with us for generations to come.

Leaving 'BOGOF' deals for sugary drinks and snacks in place and allowing the promotion of such foods to continue will only serve to undermine efforts aimed at improving children's wellbeing, but we continue to do our best in the face of absurdity.

## Getting the message

One incident during my final term at my last school reassured me, in a roundabout kind of way, that I was leaving the place at an encouraging point in its 'healthy eating' journey towards improvement.

After a fairly uneventful bus duty, I made my way towards the food and nutrition classroom to see the head of department, as I had some news for her. I found her restoring order to a roomful of Y8s following a practical activity.

"Good afternoon, Linda. How were the quiches?"

"If I never see another quiche again, it'll be too soon. What can I do for you?"

"I've come to congratulate you on the success of your push with the Eat Well Guide and the promotion of Healthy Eating."

"That's great to hear, but it's a whole school initiative – I hope."

I made a mental note to think things through before speaking next time.

"Of course, but I do credit you with this particular success."

Linda raised her eyebrows. I continued.

"We had an issue with two Y8 students at lunchtime today," I continued. Her eyebrows furrowed.

"I had a call from reception to say that a member of the public wished to complain about a couple of our students throwing food over the wall at passing cars."

"I'm not sure I see the connection."

I explained that with the help of our lunchtime supervisors and the photo-file, the culprits had been identified and reprimanded. The head of year, who had meted out appropriate punishments, had been to see me and explained the details. I concluded by saying, "It seems they were throwing some items from their lunchboxes. Slices of kiwi fruit and blueberries, mainly." I paused to let the words sink in. "So... the Eat Well message is certainly getting across..."

"I see," said Linda. "I guess the next step is to get them actually eating it."

I nodded. Small steps, I agreed, but progress all the same...



## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Paul Buckland is a recently retired secondary headteacher; for more information, visit [bit.ly/ts117-PB](http://bit.ly/ts117-PB)

# Lessons in a cold climate

Beyond the obvious budgetary concerns, the sharp rise in heating costs this winter will directly impact upon the behaviours and academic outcomes we see in our classrooms, says **Nikki Cunningham-Smith...**

**I**'m sure it will come to no surprise to anyone that amid a cost-of-living crisis and the spiralling energy bills we're seeing, some of the hardest hit will be sat in front of us in our classrooms.

As schools confront the prospect of having to foot previously inconceivable heating bills from non-existent budgets, I can't help but think back to the battles I've had with every caretaker I've ever worked with each September, when I've asked them if the boiler will be put on any time soon because I've felt cold. Regardless of where the mercury was sitting in the thermometer, I'd always be told, in no uncertain terms, that the heating wouldn't be switched on before the October half term.

I'd often be left wondering how I'd be able to get my planning done in such conditions, my hands chilled above my keyboard – wondering if the caretaker had refused because they were personally feeding the meter, and whether they were in the same competition as PE staff seeking to wear shorts for as long as humanly possible, claiming not to be cold even as their blue lips and chattering teeth betrayed them.

## Last in, last to leave

But where previously it was only the wariness of site staff I had to account for, the concerns we face today extend far beyond those holding the keys to the boiler room, to the extent

that they affect everyone.

As I consider my own home heating bills and opt for wearing an extra jumper over adjusting the thermostat, my thoughts have turned to what must be happening in the houses of our most vulnerable families, when feeding the meter simply isn't an option. The phrase 'heat or

these children start to leave one cold place only to enter another, what happens then?

## Basal temperatures

Cold school environments also have the potential to exert a heavy toll on staff. The winter months often see us battling through the germs to continue teaching at the best of times, but

clothing, such as a cardigan, slung over their chair, just in case they need it on top of what they're already wearing.

Research has shown that there are scientific reasons as to why women want to be warmer in the workplace, which come down to our basal temperatures being different, and women tending to perform better in higher temperatures than men. If men still occupy the majority of leadership positions, but teaching remains a female-dominated profession, who is going to win the battle of the thermostats? Those requesting that the heat be turned up – or even just turned on – or those in charge of the controls?

**“At school, there’s warmth – both mental and physical. But if children start to leave one cold place only to enter another, what happens then?”**

eat' has been bandied about a lot recently, and it's important to reflect on what impact it's likely to have on our teaching.

There will be some teaching staff who have yet to encounter the child who's difficult to get through the school gates, but once in, can barely be persuaded to leave. If they hate school so much that they initially don't even want to enter, why are they reluctant to go when the final bell rings? What's making them stay?

Well, it's sometimes the case that our children are leaving home environments in the morning that are less than ideal, and arriving in places that may not be what they want, but are what they need, once inside. At school, there's consistency, routines, boundaries and above all, warmth – both mental and physical. But if

being in a position where we're spending the majority of our days in the cold increases the likelihood of an even greater rise in staff illness.

We've all felt our moods start to adjust when the weather begins to change and the clocks go back. Colder weather can affect our energy levels, sleeping patterns and appetites. But what happens if, after scraping ice off their windcreens and driving into work, staff are then faced with walking into school and never having the chance to warm up? How many of us will be able to get into our stride, mentally and physically, in the absence of heating?

I've found that I can almost always tell when a classroom is occupied by a female teacher by the presence of an item of

## Levels of discomfort

How can we expect this to play out in terms of the optimum room temperature for pupils? Will we see female students struggling to engage because they're having to work in temperatures more uncomfortable for them, and how will this affect their attitude to learning? I'm not wanting to make excuses in advance, but how well do any of us perform in situations where we're uncomfortable, whether it's because we're cold, hungry or needing the



toilet? Any level of discomfort can lead to an unwillingness to engage with situations in the ways we ought to.

Could an impending lack of heating in schools bring

about a scenario where boys fare better in the colder conditions? I believe there's a strong argument for this, supported by a 2019 study by researchers Tom Chang and Agne Kajackaite (see [bit.ly/ts118-ch1](https://bit.ly/ts118-ch1)). They

determined that for maths and verbal tasks, consistent with their subjective temperature preferences, women perform better on both the extensive and intensive margins at high temperatures than at low temperatures. That is to say, women both attempt to solve, and correctly solve, more maths and verbal tasks at higher, versus lower, temperatures.

Men display the opposite pattern, performing better at lower temperatures. In contrast to maths and verbal tasks, however, temperature was shown to have no impact on cognitive reflection test performance for either gender.

## Sending a message

Throughout the Key Stages, children today are highly susceptible to outside factors and influences, and have access to a far greater volume of information than any generation before them. Social media voices will have no doubt already filled in many students on everything they could want to know regarding the cost-of-living crisis.

It's therefore worth considering the ways in which constant messaging around the sacrifices people are making this year to stay warm may affect how valued they feel. If they enter a school and find out that a decision has been made to keep the heating turned off, what impact will that have on them? It will inevitably send out certain signals around their school's priorities – including the fact that students' comfort isn't necessarily that high on the agenda.

As adults, we can of course see how and why such tough decisions may have to be made, and indeed sympathise with those having to make them. But that won't make the outcome any more palatable for the young people.

Some may argue that children come to school primarily to learn – and yes, they absolutely do. But part of what they're learning is how to function within wider society. If, at a young and formative age, they're being effectively sent subliminal messages that their comfort isn't important, how can we expect them to take appropriate steps towards managing their own health and wellbeing in future?



### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Nikki Cunningham-Smith is an assistant headteacher based in Gloucestershire



# Originality is OVERRATED

**Colin Foster** argues that planning a lesson from scratch should be an infrequent last resort...

**I** imagine sitting at the back of a classroom, watching a lesson being taught by one of your colleagues. It's a great lesson, no doubt about it. To be honest, you're hugely impressed.

Afterwards, you're full of praise and ask them, "Did you come up with that lesson yourself?" And they say, "No, I downloaded it off the internet."

How would you feel? A little disappointed? You'd hoped the lesson was your colleague's original creation, and now you've discovered that it wasn't, it seems to take something away from what they did.

## Quality matters, originality doesn't

I think it's a big mistake to feel this way. Originality is overrated. Pressure to plan lessons from scratch burdens teachers with an impossible amount of preparation that burns through what should be their downtime. It's far more important for students to have quality classroom learning experiences, than it is for their teacher to be the sole and original author of everything that's used in the process.

Samuel Johnson is purported to have once told an aspiring author that "Your book is both good and original. Unfortunately, the parts that are original are not good, and the parts that are good are not

original." Do we really want teachers to sit up late at night planning 'original' lessons that might be less good than something they could find on the internet, in a book, or indeed a magazine like *Teach Secondary*?

Surely, it's far better to spend that precious planning time adapting, improving or thinking through the details of something that someone else has already developed. Trying to come up with content that's original, simply for the sake of being original, is working to the wrong goal. After all, everything seems novel to students who are meeting it for the first time.

## Tailoring lessons

But if you take your lesson plans 'off the peg' in this way, are you really being a true professional? Isn't it selling your students short? And in any case, won't these 'lifted' resources clash with your teaching style and fail to meet your students' particular needs?

I've heard teachers sometimes assert that they have to develop their own lessons, because "*Following someone else's lesson plan is like trying to wear someone else's clothes!*" Let's unpack that simile. I wouldn't have

the first idea how to make my own clothes. But if you could, and opted to make all your clothes yourself, would they always be more comfortable to wear than the garments you could buy from a shop? That seems a touch unlikely.

The process of trying to 'tailor' lessons for our perceived needs as teachers, and the needs we identify among our students, can often be conflated with the 'learning styles' fallacy – the idea that everyone learns differently, and that we should try to make our lessons conform to every individual child's preferences. However, the research is clear that designing lessons to fit preferred learning styles doesn't improve learning.

Conversely, the notion that teachers should plan their own lessons has long been seen as a marker of professionalism. This can almost border on the moralistic, with the implication that you're somehow doing something wrong if you succeed with a lesson you didn't put the hard graft into planning yourself.

Yet this doesn't seem to apply in the same way for other professionals. Do the best doctors make their own medicines? Of course not, and the ones that do are typically considered to be 'quacks'! Real doctors rely on medicines manufactured and tested by the pharmaceutical industry, but that fact doesn't mean that doctors



are reduced in our eyes to technicians, merely 'handing out pills'.

By the same token, teachers who base their lessons on resources and plans produced by fellow professionals are doing nothing wrong. There is no point in reinventing the wheel every time.

Perhaps medicine is a poor comparison, given that the processes of

teaching tend to be seen as more personal than the dispensing of medicine. But when we consider professionals working in other fields, we find much the same thing.

Do the best actors write their own scripts? True, some actors are indeed also writers, but it would be a big mistake to think that when Judi Dench performs Shakespeare, she's being

less creative and less professional than she would be if she only performed her own material. An actor in possession of a great text is likely to have much more scope to express their creativity than they might with a weaker script that they wrote for themselves.

### Autonomy and creativity

Of course, teachers aren't actors or doctors, but I'd suggest that a teacher's role is thought about and understood in a way that overstates the individualised aspects of what they do. Possessing a degree of professional autonomy doesn't have to mean doing everything by yourself. Being creative needn't involve building all the resources and materials you use from scratch each time, without any help.

As fellow professionals, we can and do support one another. There may even be a case to be made for incorporating some level of professional specialisation into the role. Perhaps there are individuals out there

who are really good at writing lesson plans, but less good at implementing them, and vice versa? (Just as there are outstanding playwrights who can't act for

tuppence.)

Someone else might be much stronger at interpreting, adapting and implementing existing lesson ideas than coming up with their own – and that should be fine too.

The teacher who uses a well-selected, high-quality lesson plan produced by someone else shouldn't be treated as lazy, less skilled or any less professional in their approach to the role. We must prevent an impoverished understanding of autonomy from taking hold – the kind of attitude that calls on teachers to plan all their lessons, by themselves, from scratch.

Self-creation is just one route to ownership of something. A new jacket becomes our own over time as we wear it and become familiar with it, even though we almost certainly didn't make it ourselves.

In the same way, there's nothing inherently de-professionalising about finding, or being given a lesson plan to 'deliver'. Where necessary, the responsible teacher will take time to 'make it their own' and adapt it as needed – but if it ain't 'broke', there's no need to 'fix it'.

Let's therefore agree to respect the skills and efforts of our fellow professionals, and push back against the idea that teachers have to constantly undo and redo their work simply for the sake of it 'being theirs'.

Give credit where it's due, and borrow freely from the best you can find.

**“The teacher who uses a well-selected, high-quality lesson plan produced by someone else shouldn't be treated as lazy, less skilled or any less professional”**



#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Colin Foster (@colinfoster77) is a Reader in Mathematics Education in the Department of Mathematics Education at Loughborough University. He has written many books and articles for mathematics teachers. [foster77.co.uk](http://foster77.co.uk)



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### EXPERT PROFILE

**NAME:**  
Natalie Heys

**JOB TITLE:**  
NST Sports Tour Executive

**AREA OF EXPERTISE:**  
Creating tailor-made sports experiences for school groups

**BEST PART OF MY JOB:**  
Building the tour for schools and the excitement from teachers when they hear about all the things they can do!

representatives in many of our destinations and our 24-hour emergency cover. The handy MTM travel app and 'Locate My Trip' tracker can provide reassurance to both parents and teachers back at home.

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### What would you say is your favourite sports tour destination?

For me, Barcelona is the perfect destination as it's steeped in culture and history. Your group could enjoy a training session with FC Barcelona coaches and a tour of Camp Nou, before then tackling the steps of the Sagrada Familia. It's a beautiful city, rich with opportunities, and one we believe will continue to be a favourite with sports tours.

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# THE IMPORTANCE OF FORM TIME

The move to make form time less about pastoral support and more about administrative essentials has meant some students are now missing an important part of the day, says **Phil Naylor**

**F**or the majority of my long career, I have been directly involved in the pastoral aspects of a school. I have vast experience as a head of year, a senior head of a learning house and as a pastoral deputy. This is the aspect of the job I've enjoyed more than any other – from the heady days as a young teacher winning the best-decorated Christmas classroom with 9F, to leading 'we're all in this together' assemblies for the last ever year group of a closing school.

Whilst channel-hopping during a bout of isolation following COVID-19 illness, I happened upon an episode of the popular TV programme *Grange Hill*. This was the first episode, set in the late 1970s – a time before even my experiences of school. The plot follows the first day of first-year pupils as they navigate their way to school and attempt to settle into an unfamiliar environment.

Many positive changes and improvements have been made to the first-day experience since then, including transition days and summer schools, but something powerful struck me straight away. The role of the form tutor was pivotal to that first day, and in following episodes, to the entire school experience of the pupils.

At Grange Hill, this form time seemed largely unstructured and

relatively informal, with the tutor finding out some information about pupils and pupils about each other. There was often a visit from the omnipresent deputy head Mrs McCluskey, who never at any point asked to know what the pupils were learning or whether they were making any progress.

As I followed these episodes through, the form periods were punctuated regularly by opportunities

the pastoral care of students in favour of interventions.

As a result of the fear that any pastoral time is unmeasurable and unquantifiable, every conceivable opportunity has been taken to cram in academic content. The decline of form time is just one symptom of this move away from prioritising pastoral care, which has occurred over the past decades. However, from

***“Time with a form tutor does not deliver any immediate outcomes. Its impact cannot be assessed by a flight path or a data drop, but its long-term consequences can be huge”***

to get together as a year group for collective worship, singing and building of communities. What was noticeably absent from any of these fictionalised encounters was any discussion of interventions, catch-ups, one-to-ones and recovery reading.

## **Cramming in the content**

Times have undoubtedly changed and none more so than recently – but the importance of a teacher as the pastoral leader with a group of students seems to have diminished in favour of progress. Schools have sidelined and outsourced

the most recent conversations I've featured on my Naylor's Natter podcast, it is becoming evident that the COVID-19 pandemic has reminded schools of the importance pastoral care plays in the life chances of pupils.

Many schools are now rethinking their pastoral structure and recognising the value of time spent with pastoral staff. On an individual level, teachers will need more training on pastoral matters.

## **Form time versus subject time**

*“For me, the form tutor provides an important kind of buffer between the*

*non-school world and the school world. For some children, you know that's going to be an important sort of transition zone.”*

– Stephen Lane

My conversation with Stephen – who is an English teacher and head of year – was particularly fascinating, as it crystallised some of my thinking around the decline of form time in secondary schools. Since the controversial reign of Sir Michael Wilshaw at Ofsted, the time allotted to pastoral care has reduced significantly. Not as a direct result of Wilshaw's or Ofsted's dictate, but through a lethal mutation from statements such as this, from Wilshaw himself in 2013: *“As a head, my guide was always that if something wasn't going to impact on classroom performance, then I wouldn't introduce it.”*

Form time, or time with a form tutor, does not deliver any immediate outcomes. Its impact cannot be assessed by a flight path or a data drop, but its long-term consequences can be huge. That opportunity for connection in the morning can, as Stephen said, gently ease both students and teachers into the academic day ahead.

It has administrative



importance too, from a safeguarding perspective, via the register. Most importantly of all, it is an opportunity for community cohesion, team building and creating a safe space. The best form teachers know their students better than other teachers. This knowledge can be a vital support for the students, particularly when they might not have this at home.

The consistency of form time helps students prepare for the day ahead. It is the time to rectify and support with uniform and equipment; for chasing up absence and promoting good attendance. This is the opportunity to develop relationships that serve the whole school community. The form tutor should be the first port of call for any issues with the student. It is difficult sometimes as a school leader to have a full picture of a year group, let alone the whole school – which is where form tutors can be vital.

### Knock-on effects

The gradual erosion of form time and assemblies (which pleasingly appears to be receding) has been done under the auspices of ‘progress’. Form

time has been sacrificed for intervention or catch-up, or cut completely to the bare minimum of administrative necessity. The result of this is, of course, more time with subjects, which is certainly welcome and can have its own benefits – but there are knock-on effects.

Centralised behaviour systems are extremely effective and provide consistency, but they sometimes do not take into account the individual circumstances of the pupils subject to them. A student who has experienced a difficult evening or morning may not be ready to learn. With proactive pastoral care, this will be picked up by the form teacher. The pupil is assisted and staff are made aware.

Take a pupil who has misplaced their homework, as they didn’t stay at home last night. Their parents call into school, but are unsure who to get the message to and a detention is given. What about the pupil with a medical condition who needs a closer eye kept on them today? Or the brooding conflict between two Y11 students, or the withdrawn Y7 whose friends are worried about them? These are all classic

pastoral issues, but with the reduction in form time and diminished role of the form teacher, issues that quickly become those of the classroom teacher. Subject teachers have a great deal of content to cover, knowledge to impart and work to assess. They are not unsympathetic to such issues, but due to paucity of time and resources, they often either don’t notice the issues until they manifest as behaviour, or pass them on through an on-call system to senior staff walking the corridors.

Many schools now employ non-teaching pastoral staff who quite often are the heart of the school, and who will assist with any of these issues. It is my view that these pastoral issues will impact directly on classroom performance. Seen from this perspective, form time is not ‘wasted time’, but arguably the most important time of the day.



### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Phil Naylor (@pna1977) is deputy head at a Blackpool academy, having worked for over 20 years in secondary education as a classroom teacher and school leader. This article is based on an extract from his book *Naylor's Natter* (Bloomsbury, £19.99) – a compilation of teaching advice drawn from conversations featured on his Naylor's Natter podcast, which ran from 2019 until 2022.

## NAYLOR'S NUGGETS

- Form time is an essential part of the school day; it eases the transition between home and school, supports safeguarding and provides an opportunity for community cohesion and team building.
- Do not sacrifice form time for more time spent in subject lessons
- Use form time as a way for tutors to get to know students and to:
  - provide a consistent start to the day
  - support with uniform and equipment
  - promote good attendance
  - note pastoral issues relating to individual students and resolve these or inform colleagues





# Off the Shelves

Brilliant titles for you and your students to explore



## Year One: Lighting the path on your first year in education

(Michael Chiles & David Goodwin, John Catt, £15)

Mapping a text to government standards – in this case the Early Careers Framework – is risky, since there's always the chance of something changing at some point. For the most part, the standards are good, if at times a little pedestrian. Thus, the basis of Year One is sound, which is a good start. The book provides useful advice from the perspective of several teachers and other educationalists. One spread focuses on cognitive load theory and goes further than the Standards themselves, but for the most part, the focus is very much on practicalities within the classroom. The suggestions are very good, even if, like me, you find the concept of CLT somewhat dubious. The overall content, layout and presentation is of such quality, however, that even veteran teachers will find Year One a useful and engaging read.

Reviewed by Terry Freedman

Louise Willder  
**Blurb**  
Your Enthusiasm  
An A-Z  
of Literary  
Persuasion



"Very funny...  
a delight!"  
Nina Stibbe

## Blurb Your Enthusiasm: An A-Z of Literary Persuasion

(Louise Willder, Oneworld, £14.99)

Your challenge is to write approximately 100 words for a book's rear cover. Your blurb must summarise the book's themes and entice potential buyers, but not appear to be written by the author's mother. Take into account the need to avoid hackneyed phrases, causing offence and using words that simply don't sell, and you'll see how it's a harder undertaking than you might imagine. This book explores how 'blurb-writing' involves some key skills expected of English students, such as concision, awareness of audience and writing for different purposes. Given that blurbs are a form of marketing, a blurb-writing exercise might suit business studies students too. Or else, simply read it for pleasure. *Blurb...* is well-written, humorous, and very informative, with examples of good and bad writing, and provides an historical perspective. A must-have addition to your class or school library.

Reviewed by Terry Freedman

Rebecca Campbell & Anthony McGowan

**How to Teach  
Economics  
to Your Dog**



A Quirky Introduction

## How to Teach Economics to Your Dog

(Rebecca Campbell & Anthony McGowan, Oneworld, £12.99)

It must be a publisher's dream to have the economy tank, just as its book on economics appears! There's enough information here to help you make sense of Chancellors' budget statements, and try evaluating how effective their measures will be. Economics concepts can often be difficult to grasp, but the authors have done an admirable job of explaining them in plain language. Students taking citizenship, politics, sociology and perhaps even history may well benefit from its accessible introduction to the field. Even economics students will likely find it helpful. The 'conversation' conceit used throughout is slightly tedious, but it's a small price to pay. Newer terms, such as 'sub-prime mortgages' are explained well, as are older standbys like 'externalities'. This is one of the few books on economics that works as a textbook while remaining actually readable!

Reviewed by Terry Freedman

## ON THE RADAR

**Curriculum planning without the compromises and tribalism? It might be possible after all...**

### Curriculum Revolutions

(Martin Robinson, John Catt, £15, £16.99)

The process of devising a robust school curriculum has become one in which different sides can expect to bump up against each other – particularly those who reject the notion of being forced to teach in a way entirely prescribed from above, versus those who argue – with some justification – for the importance of consistency and continuity in what children are taught. And that's before you get to the vexed question of how a curriculum can remain dynamic and current with so many participants and moving parts involved.

In *Curriculum Revolutions* Martin Robinson presents readers with a tool – the 'curriculum revolution' of the title – that renders curriculum planning and design as a process involving three concentric circles. A management-level outer circle composed of aims, areas of focus and team selection gives way to what Robinson describes as the 'permanent revolution' of a middle circle – including what to teach and sequencing – and the finer nuance (content quality, progress) of an inner circle. It's a bold reimagining of what's arguably every school's core mission, unpacked in detail over the course of the book, persuasively argued and likely to give everyone from trust CEOs down to this year's ECTs plenty of food for thought.



## Meet the author

**ROSS MORRISON MCGILL**



### Why is the book about memory?

Most of us can drive a car, but we don't actually know how cars work. It's a similar situation in the classroom – we can set kids work, pose questions and make them behave, while not knowing how learning actually happens.

I've always been interested in the brain, and a question I've often asked is, if I know more about the brain and neurons, will it make me a better teacher? My conclusion is yes – knowing the brain can change how we teach. It's transformed how I approach all the pedagogical techniques I've used throughout my teaching career.

The teaching ideas in the book are nothing new, but I'm now revisiting them as a scientist. For example, I've done 'think pair share' for 25 years, but when I ask a student a question, how can I tell if they're if they're thinking about it? By getting them to write something down on a whiteboard – right or wrong – I can instantly check for understanding and decide what to do next. I'm approaching the strategy as a cognitive scientist might.

### Did you encounter any findings that particularly surprised you?

One thing that surprised me was a piece of research from 2007, on how taking naps can boost memory. Obviously, I can't just let the kids in my class go to sleep, but it reminded me of how my son's nursery would encourage all the children to sleep regularly. The researchers, Lahl, et al., specifically looked at the benefits of sleep on retention, and found that after students had naps of between six and 30 minutes, their consolidation of memory improved. Those naps had actually boosted their memory recall, which was something I found really interesting.

### What advice would you give to other aspiring research-informed teachers?

Use Google Scholar. Within 30 seconds you can enter a key term using quotation marks for exact matches, and quickly narrow down the studies returned to those focusing on a particular area of research. If you see a PDF link, grab it, read the abstract and the conclusion, and if you think it's on point in terms of what you're looking for, read it in full. If you're then inspired to share it with your colleagues, my advice would be to produce a written summary that takes 70 seconds to read through, equating to around 300 words.

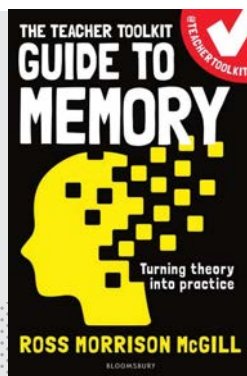
For more information, visit [teachertoolkit.co.uk](http://teachertoolkit.co.uk) or follow @TeacherToolkit



### Chess for Schools

(Richard James, Crown House Publishing, £16.99)

If you or your colleagues have even the slightest inclination to encourage or hone the playing of chess within your setting, this book is a must-read. After kicking off with a brief spot of myth-busting in terms of how chess should and shouldn't be perceived, followed by a potted history of the game itself, we reach the main meat of the book – a forensic critique of how chess is typically used as an extracurricular activity in both primary and secondary schools. As an experienced chess tutor, James makes some astute points about how the chess experience differs between the two, and why the growth of competitive chess at primary in recent years has had a detrimental effect on chess take-up at the latter. Having diagnosed the problem, James then mounts a convincing case for how schools can go about things in a more constructive, affordable and above all enjoyable way.



### The Teacher Toolkit Guide To Memory

(Ross Morrison McGill, £12.99)

With nine authored or co-authored books now under his belt, the popular teacher turned education blogger Ross Morrison McGill has become a practised hand at producing exhaustively researched, yet practically-minded 'how tos' for teachers. *The Teacher Toolkit Guide To Memory* continues in that lineage, taking readers on a whirlwind tour of neurological, cognitive and psychological theory, while impressing upon them at all times how the latest research into brain plasticity, cognitive load theory and a host of other areas can be translated into engaging classroom activities and exercises. The book's 10 main chapters are structured using a mix of historical overviews, key terms and thoughtfully put together practical ideas, ensuring that readers never get lost, and making for a book that any teachers keen on pursuing the pedagogical bleeding edge will be delighted to dive into.



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# THE TS GUIDE TO... **OUTDOOR LEARNING**

Students and teachers alike have much to gain from occasionally leaving the classroom – be it to take inspiration from nature, bond with peers or even build resilience by confronting their fears...

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## IN FIGURES:

**HOW OFTEN ARE YOUNG PEOPLE ABLE TO GET OUTDOORS, AND HOW MUCH TIME DO THEY SPEND THERE?**

# 1,137,820

The estimated number of children in England who lived through lockdown in homes without a garden

Source: YHA (England & Wales)

# 5.5

The number of daily 'screen hours' experienced by the average young person; the same group experiences barely one hour of time spent outdoors each day

Source: The Outward Bound Trust

# 45%

of UK teachers cite the pressures of curriculum work as the main barrier preventing them from taking lessons outdoors

Source: 2018 Outdoor Classroom Day report by Project Dirt

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### GETTING BACK TO NATURE

What good can come from taking a group of Y9s wild camping in an environment they're often completely unfamiliar with? Quite lot, as it happens, explains Steve Priday...

[bit.ly/118special1](https://bit.ly/118special1)

### THE FEEL-GOOD FACTOR

Encouraging students to take their learning out into nature can improve wellbeing – and Sam Goodfellow has the research to prove it...

[bit.ly/118special2](https://bit.ly/118special2)

### LEARNING OUTDOORS IS AN ENTITLEMENT – NOT AN EXTRA

Justine Lee makes the case for why every child and young person should enjoy learning beyond the classroom walls as a matter of course

[bit.ly/118special3](https://bit.ly/118special3)

# Residential planning

**Daniel Harvey** reflects on how residential trips often involve double the work compared to other school visits, but can deliver four times the reward...

Ask any adult of working age about their school days, and it's a certainty that the majority will mention with real fondness a residential visit – either in the UK or abroad – that they took part in.

For some, it might have been their first real time away from home. For others, perhaps it was a chance to cement friendships or pursue extra-curricular activities, such as sport or music, with like-minded peers.

One thing's for certain, however. No residential trip ever takes place without the time investment and efforts of committed school staff going the extra mile to make it happen. So how should one go about planning and delivering a successful, enriching and rewarding residential visit, alongside all the other things you have to attend to in a normal teaching term?

## Forward planning

Key to making the overall experience positive for all involved is thorough planning. This takes time, so start thinking about things at least a year in advance – especially for trips abroad which can be significantly more expensive.

Life is becoming more costly for everyone, and for parents of school-age children, the arrival of the 'school trip letter' can be a stressful experience. A long lead-in will give parents time to potentially pay the asking price in instalments, while also giving you the space to sort out the required admin.

That said, if you're using a travel company (more on which later), remember to check that the price you're quoted won't change before you're due to depart.

It's also a good idea to consider partnering up with another department in the school. This will not just create opportunities to cross the great staffroom divide

trip and a wealth of local experience and knowledge regarding your destination.

School travel companies can offer advice, book tickets for visits and excursions, and provide help and support if and when things don't go quite to plan. As anyone who has tussled with a budget airline helpline will tell you, getting students to where

this area, so be mindful and sensitive throughout the process. Ask for photocopies of all passport information pages early on, so that you can check how long students' passports will be valid for. Be aware that the rules around this have changed post-Brexit, so you need to check. Some countries – including Germany, for example – require travellers' passports to be valid for at least three months after the day they plan to depart. The last thing you want is for a child to be refused entry on a technicality.

Be sure to issue travel documentation reminders to all staff who will be coming with you. A colleague of mine once had to pull out of a skiing trip at the 11th hour, having been unable to locate his passport, causing much unnecessary stress and anxiety.

## Special requirements

Another important area to consider when it comes to domestic or foreign residential visits are dietary and medical concerns. More children than ever are now affected by food allergies, and while most school kitchens and restaurants in the UK are well-placed to cater for special dietary requirements, you can't assume the same applies everywhere.

Using a school travel company can help with this, as they'll usually

**“No residential trip ever takes place without the time investment and efforts of committed school staff going the extra mile”**

and make more friends, but also help get 'double bubble' for the students and greater economy for their parents.

The potential combinations are endless. Spanish language and art in Barcelona. Skiing and French in the Alps, D&T, German and history in Munich – you get the idea. Real life isn't conducted via discrete, timetabled chunks. A trip abroad can vividly help students to understand that.

## Enlist the experts

These days, most of us are content to arrange our own personal holidays without using a travel agent, by booking flights and accommodation online. There can be the temptation to do this for school residentials in an effort to save money, but using a bespoke school travel company can provide genuine peace of mind, flexibility for those teachers planning the

they're going can be stressful indeed – even moreso when you have 30 students in arrivals and only 25 items of luggage.

In this context, at least, effectively outsourcing elements of your planning phase shouldn't be seen as a sign of defeat. Instead, see it as positive effect that will give you more time to focus on your core job of looking after the children.

Foreign residentials also require an extra level of planning in the form of organising travel documents. Your letters to parents should make it clear exactly what will be required of them and when. It's a good idea at this stage to double-check the children's nationality and ensure that no additional visas or other travel documents will be needed.

Parents can sometimes require help and support in



insist on the need for UK standards to have been met by any given food venue, thus helping to allay any concerns. Similarly, halal or kosher food may not always be available, so devise a plan for meeting the dietary needs of your group ahead of time if you can.

Indeed, you may decide – especially with older students – that full board simply isn't the way to go. If you want them to buy their lunch, for example, check ahead of time that there will be affordable food options available to them and make these arrangements clear to parents. Again, any medical or dietary will need to be planned around carefully.

Unfortunately, it's sometimes the case that complex medical needs may mean a residential trip isn't suitable for a student to join. While all teachers will naturally want to be as inclusive as possible, the demands of a school trip are very different to those of a family holiday, where parents will be best placed to offer the care required.

As a trip leader, it's necessary for you to consider the needs of the whole group, including staff, and make decisions accordingly in the interests of keeping everyone safe. That may mean, sadly, that for one reason or another, an individual student won't be able to take part. If that's the case, it's best to be upfront and explain your reasoning to parents at the outset.

### What's the risk?

The final piece of the jigsaw in terms of planning is the completion of a risk assessment. A quick survey of colleagues seems to indicate that just mentioning those dreaded words is enough to elicit a heartfelt groan, but risk assessments are important because we're working with children.

Hopefully, the various decisions you'll have made in the course of planning the trip will mitigate against a disaster. Yet as illustrated by the case of the three British teachers recently acquitted in a French court, following the death of a student in their care during a swimming trip in 2015, the tragically unforeseeable can, and sometimes does happen.

That's why it's vital to ensure that all staff members accompanying the trip have had input into the risk assessment, and understand their own responsibilities with regards to it. Remember that it's a working document, and that situations can change, so don't be afraid to suggest amending certain elements while you're out there if you need to. Just make sure that everyone else knows.

So, there you have it – a well-planned residential that works for everyone. Next time: how to lead your residential on the ground...



#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Daniel Harvey is a GCSE and A Level science teacher and lead on behaviour, pastoral and school culture for an inner city academy

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# Nature-based LEARNING

**Dr Alexia Barrable** highlights five benefits you (probably) didn't know about the practice of incorporating the natural world into your teaching and learning

## 1

### NATURE ACTIVATES OUR RELAXATION RESPONSE

We humans have evolved to live and develop optimally in natural environments. Our brains and bodies have been in sync with nature for thousands of years, as can be seen in our physiological responses. Put simply, something rather magical happens when we find ourselves in natural environments. Our heart rate and blood pressure stabilise, and our parasympathetic nervous system (i.e. our 'relaxation response') is activated. I often talk about 'rest, digest AND learn', because when we're in that relaxed state, optimal learning can take place.

## 2

### YOU DON'T NEED THE WILDEST NATURE

While we know that natural environments such as parks, forests and coasts activate that response, research suggests that a similar physiological response can be activated just by suggestions of nature. Pictures of natural environments (even when displayed on a computer), natural soundscapes, such as waves or rainforest ambience, and sharing our room with plants or flowers can have a marked effect on our bodies.

## 3

### NATURE CAN SUPPORT THOSE WITH ADHD SYMPTOMS

Several studies now suggest that time spent in nature, including walks in parks and other green spaces, can have a positive effect on children's attention. In studies examining children with ADHD, researchers have found that time in nature was as effective as medication in reducing ADHD symptomatology in children (see [bit.ly/ts118-NBL1](https://bit.ly/ts118-NBL1))

## 4

### RELATIONSHIPS WITH NATURE ARE GOOD FOR US

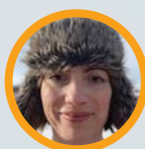
People who are connected to nature are happier, feel more alive and enjoy more positive moods. Beyond that, being connected to the natural world is also good for nature itself and the rest of society too, with nature connection typically associated with pro-environmental and pro-social behaviours.

## 5

### THERE'S A DIP IN NATURE CONNECTION DURING ADOLESCENCE

At a time when most young people would benefit hugely from having a connection to the natural world, we know from several research studies that this relationship suffers in the teenage years. This 'teenage dip' in nature connection occurs at around 13, with most not seeming to fully recover it until well into their 30s. By boosting young people's connection to nature earlier via nature-based learning and other approaches, we can help support their mental health and wellbeing while in turn helping to protect our planet.

For me, these five points (and many more besides) are reason enough for all of us in education to consider taking children outdoors, or bringing nature inside, and investing in nature-based learning. Greening our playgrounds and spending time in them can help democratise access to green spaces for our young people, and help them reap the benefits of spending time in nature and enjoying a better relationship with the natural world.



#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr Alexia Barrable is a qualified teacher with a PhD in psychology in education and is currently conducting research on the human-nature relationship; her new book, *Independent Thinking on Nature-Based Learning*, is available now (Crown House Publishing, £9.99)





# ROOM TO BREATHE

**Rebecca Leek** explores what schools can do to lend an outdoor dimension to students' learning via the facilities and spaces they have in place already

I should start with a disclaimer – I'm an outdoors person. If I don't spend at least some time outside on a daily basis, I start to feel very unhappy indeed.

A highlight for me last year was trekking the Cuillin Ridge, home to some of the most precarious Munros in Scotland. I go running outdoors, rain or shine, I live off-grid most of the time in a field on the Essex-Suffolk border and I know my pears from my permains.

However, I only really worked this out later in life. When I was at school, I was one of those academic types who could rattle off an essay with relative ease, understand the difference between a minor third and augmented second, and learn the principle parts of a Latin verb without getting my passive participles in a mess.

When asked about my career ambitions, GCSE options and A Level choices, there wasn't a whisper of the outdoors. It was going to be university – English, classics or history perhaps? Aside from PE lessons, the only time I can remember doing any outdoor learning in KS3 or 4 was the odd lunchtime before a GCSE exam, when

I'd ensconce myself under a tree to read over my revision notes. That and trips, which always seemed to involve a bit of walking.

been if I'd discovered long distance running (proper long distance running – not our painful annual cross country) earlier on.

**“There are many young people without access to gardens, whose parents don't take them on walks or visits to gardens and forests”**

## Bound by walls

Not that I have any cause to complain. The education system I was part of ostensibly suited me – a clutch of A grades, and I was on my way – but I do have some regrets. I now look at horticulture and botany courses with longing, and wonder at what may have

My secondary school experience was one very much bound by walls and ceilings. What if I'd spent more meaningful time outside, or had my eyes fully opened to outdoor industries such as estates management, outdoor pursuits, farming or marine work?

Primary schools are generally better at all this. The best Early Years theorists (Froebel, Montessori, Bruce) are all very clear that the outdoors and nature are essential ingredients in a child's

education, but why does this peter out as our children get older? Is it because children can sit at desks for longer periods of time?

One needn't look far to find research showing the benefits of being outside. The Mental Health Foundation reports that people with 'Good nature connectedness tend to be happier' (see [bit.ly/ts118-sp1](https://bit.ly/ts118-sp1)). During lockdown, many people found that being in the outdoors was essential for maintaining their equilibrium. People also reported developing new outdoor interests, such as gardening or cycling. Some even changed their careers entirely, realising that sitting in front of computer screens and long commutes simply weren't for them.

## A taste of the outdoors

As we continue to witness the steady destruction of biodiversity on our one and only planet, it's more essential than ever to ensure that the next generation are comfortable with, and connected to nature and the outdoors. Mud and rain might not be for everyone, but rather than ignore it completely in how you



deliver your curriculum and design your careers information, is it not time to give it more of a place?

There are many young people without access to gardens, whose parents don't take them on walks or visits to gardens and forests. Even if they're not necessarily all going to be 'outdoorsy' types, we at least owe those who *might* be a taste of the outdoors.

### 1. Get industrious

Consider the 'diet' presented as part of your careers offering. Are students made aware of the opportunities that outdoor industries provide? From the obvious (horticulture, construction) to the less obvious (dry stone wall maintenance, orchard-tree grafting), make sure people who actually work outdoors speak to your students. Is the outdoors represented in your work experience offering?

### 2. Appraise your grounds

What do your school grounds look like? Are they welcoming and inspiring? Some schools will be limited by their location, with very small footprints in built-up urban areas, but I'd wager that there's always a corner that can be improved with flowers, art, seating and other additions. You might not have much direct control

over the grounds in your school, but can you raise the matter with a senior leader or a governor? Any school amounts to the sum of its parts, and the levels of care a school takes over its outdoor spaces is important.

### 3. Review your subject curriculum

Primary schools are good at identifying opportunities for outdoor learning, even if it's just for a short project or discrete topic. The organisation Learning Through Landscapes is a good starting point for gaining insight into how primaries approach this – see [bit.ly/ts118-sp2](http://bit.ly/ts118-sp2) for some ideas. Could you work with your HoD in identifying modules that can be taken outside? This might provide the tiny taster someone needs to discover their affinity for spaces without walls and ceilings. Who knows – there may be an aspiring mountain guide in your midst...

### 4. Hold al fresco events

Every secondary school I know of organises open days of one sort or another. I once worked at a secondary that really went to town utilising its outdoor spaces, so that prospective families got a taste of what the school had to offer everywhere they went. This included musicians playing in a

courtyard, sculpture demonstrations, food technology displays (tasty treats under a gazebo) and live science experiments. If time constraints are such that you can't take lessons outside, then at the very least see how you fare with holding events outdoors. If nothing else, you'll be giving students plenty of insight into the project management side of things.

### 5. Take classes outside

If you're a form teacher, or have a pastoral role such as a head of year, what chances are there to take your group outside? Many schools schedule 'bonding' days into their first terms, so consider weaving outdoor experiences into these. You have a limited amount of time to get to know the many students in your care, but I've found that some of the best conversations I've had with students have been on long walks. Could you potentially organise an outdoor registration session once a fortnight?

### 6. Form an eco committee

Finally, what environmental work are you doing with your students, and what profile do these activities have throughout the school? Having managed school and trust budgets, I know how significant waste

management costs can be. If your school doesn't yet have an eco committee, form one and explore what they can do to help your school manage its waste – not just general litter, but also food waste, paper, recyclable plastics and defunct equipment. Composting should be the norm, and by engaging a student group in such projects, you'll be providing them with valuable experiences that can connect them closer to nature.

Returning to the aforementioned Mental Health Foundation report, connectedness to nature is linked to happiness. As the widely documented mental health crisis continues to impact upon the students in our schools, let's get them outside.

At worst, there's a good chance that doing so will create a lasting memory that they take with them from school. At best, you could open up a whole new world to them which leads to a career path that makes them truly happy and fulfilled.



#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Rebecca Leek has been a secondary and primary classroom teacher, head of department, SENCo and headteacher; she is currently the CEO of SEAMAT – a trust of three schools in South Essex

# Why it's good for young people to be scared

Schools obviously shouldn't put students in danger – but exposing them to the kinds of controlled risks encountered during outdoor adventure activities can do much to build their resilience, says **John Allan**

**I**t's widely accepted that young people experienced worse mental health outcomes, and experienced more acute feelings of loneliness, during the pandemic than adults. It's a view supported by findings from The Royal Society for Public Health and The Children's Society's 'Good Children Report 2022' (see [bit.ly/ts118-oe1](https://bit.ly/ts118-oe1)) – the latter of which revealed a deeply concerning continual decline in children's wellbeing.

The report highlights in particular how the pandemic prevented young people from physically interacting with friends at a crucial point in their psychosocial development, which in turn contributed to an existing downward trend in their levels of mental health.

## Beneficial outcomes

It's important to remember that even before the onset of COVID-19, growing numbers of youngsters were already showing high rates of emotional distress and fragility, which hindered their capacity for overcoming threats to their wellbeing.

This apparent lack of resilience – the learned capability to adapt to adversity – has coincided with steadily increasing pressures and expectations on young people, including exam

workloads, over-protective parenting, peer pressure and social deprivation. The pandemic may have been an unprecedented challenge of global proportions, but it served to reveal – and indeed, exacerbate – the limited resilience of young people to being able to adapt to change.

Public health institutions

They can give rise to many beneficial outcomes, a number of which appear to be retained over time, including increased independence, improved confidence, greater self-belief, the development of effective coping strategies, sociability, and improvements in both long-term memory and problem-solving, among

will invigorate our emotions, yet also encourage us to think more clearly; tasks which see us draw on our existing memories in order to create new ones, and which are open-ended, promote choice and offer personal support.

The post-pandemic return to school gave young people a safe place in which to mend, move and once again meet people – but there's arguably only so much re-conditioning that can be achieved in the context of the classroom where routines and consistency are rigorously applied. For a student in a slump, going through the same motions each day may even compound the problem.

Conversely, outdoor adventure learning can provide them with authentic, meaningful experiences in which they'll be challenged to build a repertoire of behaviours through facing their fears. These learned skill sets – which can variously include physical skills, health knowledge, the development of social support networks and wider attentional focus – can then be called upon when a future situation of uncertainty demands it. But, how is this adaptive capability built through outdoor adventure learning?

**Scaled risk-taking**  
Resilience is ultimately

**“Resilience is ultimately achieved by young people taking risks”**

have long pointed to the health and wellbeing benefits to be had by exposing young people to outdoor adventure. Even short periods of time spent in nature can significantly improve a young person's levels of mental health. Five minutes of exercise in an urban green space can be enough to boost their physical and mental wellbeing by fostering 'biophilia' – an individual's sense of innate connection to nature.

There continues to be a broad evidence base suggesting that outdoor adventure experiences in natural spaces can contribute significantly to young people's holistic development, with residential trips being a key tool for delivering such experiences.

others. These can all feed into and build an individual's reserves of resilience.

## 'Surviving' to 'thriving'

When we speak of 'resilient behaviour', we're referring to a spectrum that can range from 'surviving' to 'thriving'. For individuals with limited prior experiences to draw upon, the prospect of having to deal with an apparently dangerous or threatening situation will trigger a survival response that's likely to be accompanied by heightened emotions and difficulties in making decisions.

That said, similar reactions may also occur in the face of activities that fail to stimulate interest and restrict autonomy. The sweet spot entails activities that



significant risks in future.

The challenges in question will need to be invigorating, interesting and personally meaningful enough for individuals to overcome perceived threats to their wellbeing, without presenting seemingly insurmountable barriers to their achievement.

It's this careful scaling of intelligent risk-taking that facilitates young people being able to successfully deal with risk exposure, while also delivering meaningful learning. On the flipside, activities which serve to overprotect young people and restrict their exposure to risk-taking and engagement with the outdoors may wear away their resilience.

Critics of outdoor learning have argued that any positive outcomes arising from such experiences will be largely based upon untested assumptions that 'the outdoors works'. They will contest that exposure to outdoor activities doesn't build positive characteristics in young people through some automatic process, but rather serves up situations in which individuals will experience short-term novelty, or feel compelled to take part – with the result that any developmental outcomes won't readily transfer over to everyday settings.

### Adaptive quality

While it's true that outdoor adventure learning is certainly no magic bullet capable of 'fixing' young people, robust studies have shown that it can and does deliver meaningful educational outcomes when deployed in exciting, natural settings that build assorted

other strengths in young people.

This adaptive quality allows people used to learning in multi-sensory environments – where situations aren't uniform and predictable – to perform better across a range of physical and cognitive tasks, compared to those attending uni-sensory settings.

What's more, those outdoor residential programmes that report the most impactful and long-lasting benefits tend to be those that tailor their activities to meet the needs of different learners. For example, collaborations between outdoor adventure facilitators and secondary school teachers can give rise to the successful embedding of qualities associated with a school's ethos in a programme's design.

This approach has previously allowed children to plan some of their activities ahead of time; connect outdoor learning to curriculum subjects; become more familiar with

their school's expectations; undertake independent risk-taking; and review natural emerging experiences.

To consolidate their learning, children have been encouraged to move from describing outcomes and applying basic problem-solving to appraising and presenting an understanding of skills needed to achieve in school. Given the mental health problems of young people outlined at the outset, arguably, it has never been more important to facilitate opportunities for them to be immersed in outdoor adventure.

## FROM PASSIVE TO ACTIVE

Many children struggle when making the transition from primary to secondary school, or even to a new year group. Pupils who are able to participate in an outdoor residential programme as part of their induction have been shown in studies to have significantly improved preparedness for challenges presented by secondary school – so here's how to make the most of your transition trip:

### • INVOLVE TEACHERS AHEAD OF TIME

Work with your provider on the outcomes you need, and ensure they're introduced in the classroom ahead of the trip

### • GIVE PUPILS RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE TRIP

Plan how they can review their experiences or collect data during activities for a project back at school

### • SHOW PUPILS WHAT THEY'LL BE STUDYING

Think about how their 'new' studies of discrete subjects – English, maths or PE, for example – can be introduced through the residential experience

### • ENCOURAGE CO-OPERATION

Early on, get children working together in groups so they can build relationships and share experiences

achieved by young people taking risks. Without that element of risk being involved, resilience won't enter the picture. What outdoor adventure activities are great at is offering a blend of negative emotions – the sensation of feeling scared, or unstable in the moment – counterbalanced by positive emotions stemming from a sense of achievement or triumph. Both are essential underpinnings for the 'steeling effect' that ensures young people are better prepared to handle more



### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

John Allan is head of learning and impact at the outdoor activities provider, Kingswood, having been a lead academic and outdoor practitioner in sports pedagogy, psychology and adventure education for more than 25 years; for more information, visit [kingswood.co.uk](http://kingswood.co.uk)

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# 5 REASONS TO TRY... Conway Centres: Anglesey

Explore all that the great outdoors has to offer with an unforgettable residential trip to Conway Centres: Anglesey...



## 30 SECOND BRIEFING

Conway Centres' largest centre is ideal for making life-long memories. Whether it's Y7s attending a secondary transition course, or Y10s on a field studies trip of North Wales hotspots, Conway Centres: Anglesey has something for every secondary school – whatever your goals or focus.

### 1 ADVENTURE ISN'T FAR AWAY...

Situated in beautiful natural surroundings, Conway Centres: Anglesey is ideally placed for you and your students to explore all that the great outdoors has to offer. Whether you want students to discover the glacial valleys at Ogwen Valley, explore the Snowdonia mountains or visit the stunning Anglesey coastline, Conway Centres: Anglesey is close to many different and distinctive landscapes, making it perfect for fieldwork and various off-site activities.



### 2 IMMEDIATE ACCESS TO OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

Located adjacent to the Menai Strait, and set within 169 acres of National Trust parkland, Conway Centres: Anglesey is home to high adventure. From navigating the Menai Strait in a kayak, to developing mapwork skills with orienteering, to abseiling down a rockface – the activities and programmes at Conway Centres are designed to support your curriculum, build students' resilience and boost their confidence.

A winter or autumn residential might present more challenging weather, but what better way is there to encourage young people to learn and thrive in the natural environment? Young people always leave Conway Centres having learnt something new; by visiting in the autumn or winter months, you can set your goals early and watch as you fully reap the benefits over the rest of the academic year.

#### Contact:

01248 714 501  
conwaycentres@  
edsential.co.uk  
conwaycentres.co.uk



friendly and professional. Conway Centres only employ top tier, highly qualified and experienced staff who are industry leaders in outdoor education. From competing in sailing championships to ice climbing down frozen cliffs, the staff live and breathe adventure.

### 3 ENGAGING ACTIVITIES ALL YEAR ROUND

We'll let you in on a secret – at Conway Centres, autumn and winter is the best time of year! Conway Centres is open all year round for young people to enjoy life-changing experiences.

### 4 EXPERTS IN THE GREAT OUTDOORS

Each time schools visit, they're welcomed back by the same familiar faces. Schools say that the staff are a significant highlight of their stay, being supportive,

### 5 A WIDE RANGE OF FACILITIES

Conway Centres can also provide plenty of indoor classrooms and outdoor spaces that are well-suited to more theory-based, self-led sessions. Our experienced team of tutors can support you in specific learning areas, such as weather and climate impact, creative and performing arts, the natural environment and a wide variety of other course-specific modules.

## KEY POINTS

Whether it's accommodation for 250 children, or smaller private accommodation for a class of 30, Conway Centres: Anglesey has something for every school!

**PRICE FREEZE** – Schools that book a residential for any dates between January and March 2023 will get to take advantage of the same rate the following year.

Conway Centres: Anglesey is located near many different and distinctive landscapes, making it an unrivalled location for field work and off-site adventures.

Schools can book an unforgettable trip with no need for students' families to buy or renew passports – since adventure is never far away...



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- Ten courses available between January and May 2023
- Four modules for each course so you can show your commitment to PD and learn in greater depth
- Certificate upon completion of all four modules

Find out more and register your interest  
[rsc.li/sustained-pd](https://rsc.li/sustained-pd)



# teach SECONDARY AWARDS 2022

## AND THE WINNERS ARE...

It's time once again for us to reveal which education resources and services impressed our expert judges the most, as we unveil the winners of this year's Teach Secondary Awards...

### How it worked



We invited providers of education resources to enter one or more of their products and services for consideration by a team of expert judges overseeing a series of eight categories.

From the entries we received, Teach Company staff produced shortlists of submissions which were then passed to our judges for analysis. The judges were asked to observe the following criteria when deciding on their final verdicts:

- Does this resource meet a genuine need?

- What impact is it likely to have?
- How easy is the resource to implement and use?
- Can the resource be adapted for use in different settings?
- Does the resource represent good value for money?

Having assigned numerical scores to the shortlisted entries in their respective categories, the judges then confirmed for us their overall winner, along with two further entries they felt worthy of singling out for special recognition.

**T**eachers nowadays can call on all manner of tools, resources and services developed with the specific aim of capturing students' attention, improving their knowledge and building up their skills. However, the sheer volume of education resources out there makes it hard to sort through and find those that are best for you and your setting.

Enter the Teach Awards – our annual attempt to identify the best resources around, with help from a panel of expert judges well-

versed in what teachers will be looking for, and what a provider needs to do if they wish to see their offerings widely adopted.

With the judging now completed and the verdicts delivered, it just remains for us to unveil the winners – so here they all are. Some of the resource providers over the following pages will likely be familiar to you, others you'll perhaps be encountering for the first time. What unites them all is that they know how to effectively support the teaching and learning taking place in your classroom.

## MEET THE JUDGES



### APPS

**ADRIAN BRIGGS**

is a curriculum leader of computer science and lead teacher of virtual digital technology at Middleton Technology School



### ASSESSMENT

**MICHAEL CHILES**

is a lead practitioner of geography and principal examiner at King's Leadership Academy Warrington



### CPD

**NICOLA BROOKS**

is a professional development co-ordinator for Reach South Academy Trust and lead trainer for the Wiltshire Autism Education Trust Schools Programme



### CURRICULUM IMPACT

**JULIE KETTLEWELL**

is the assistant director of Huntington Research School, a teacher of psychology and an experienced sixth form pastoral leader



### HEALTH AND WELLBEING

**ANN MARIE CHRISTIAN**

is a safeguarding and child protection consultant, trainer and author, and has independently supported hundreds of organisations in strengthening their safeguarding agenda



### REMOTE LEARNING

**ADAM RICHES**

is a senior leader for teaching and learning



### FREE RESOURCE

**LIZZY WATSON**

is a lead practitioner for teaching and learning at Philip Morant School and College



### SEND

**JOHN GALLOWAY**

is a freelance writer, consultant and trainer specialising in the use of technology to improve educational opportunities for children and young people with SEND



# TELL THE STORIES THAT NEED TO BE HEARD

Book your school visit to Imperial War Museums now  
[iwm.org.uk/learning](http://iwm.org.uk/learning)





## WINNERS CPD

## WHAT WERE WE LOOKING FOR?

Training materials, software, books and other resources intended to enhance teachers' professional development

teach  
SECONDARY  
AWARDS 2022  
WINNER

DIGITAL CPD FOR TEACHERS

## LET'S TALK ABOUT EMPIRE AND CONFLICT

## LET'S TALK ABOUT EMPIRE AND CONFLICT: CPD FOR TEACHERS

Imperial War Museums

[bit.ly/ts118-TSA1](https://bit.ly/ts118-TSA1)

"This free, online resource centres around three webinars based on the themes of empire and conflict. It explores the barriers to teaching sensitive topics, whilst supporting teachers to include more diverse stories and experiences in their history teaching. Created with Imperial War Museum experts, teachers and equality advocates, these thought-provoking webinars are bound to stimulate discussion and shared reflection on practice." – **Nicola Brooks**

## SUSTAINED PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The Royal Society of Chemistry

[rsc.li/3gFSkUz](https://rsc.li/3gFSkUz)

"From the Royal Society of Chemistry comes an interactive programme of modules to support the teaching of chemical sciences. Informed by teacher voice, these fully-funded online modules are led by expert teachers. Participants also receive access to support hub pages and a private website area. With different options for KS4 and 5, along with different start times, this programme has the flexibility busy teachers need."

– **Nicola Brooks**



teach  
SECONDARY  
AWARDS 2022  
HIGHLY  
COMMENDED

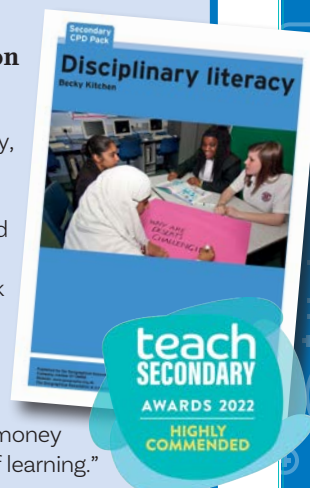
## SECONDARY CPD PACK: DISCIPLINARY LITERACY

The Geographical Association

[bit.ly/ts118-TSA2](https://bit.ly/ts118-TSA2)

"Designed to be used collaboratively, this pack on Disciplinary Literacy by the Geographical Association contains everything you would need to lead a CPD session within your own or a group of schools. The pack is highly flexible, with the ability to plan sessions of different lengths ranging from 15 minutes to half a day. The pack is downloadable and easy to access. It is good value for money and comes with a self-certificate of learning."

– **Nicola Brooks**



teach  
SECONDARY  
AWARDS 2022  
HIGHLY  
COMMENDED

## Category finalists

**SPEECH AND  
LANGUAGE SUPPORT  
FOR 11-16S**  
Elklan Training

**IMPACT BY NICK HART**  
Bloomsbury Publishing

**TEACHER TARGETED  
BULLYING**  
INEQE Safeguarding Group

**GOOD PRACTICE WHEN  
WORKING WITH YOUNG  
TRANS AND NON BINARY  
PEOPLE**  
Gendered Intelligence

**SHEFFIELD MANOR LODGE:  
HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT  
FOR AQA GCSE (9-1)  
HISTORY**  
Hodder Education

# Is the time you have for CPD in your geography department squeezed?

If you have 15 minutes, one hour or half a day the Geographical Association's secondary geography CPD packs could have the answer.

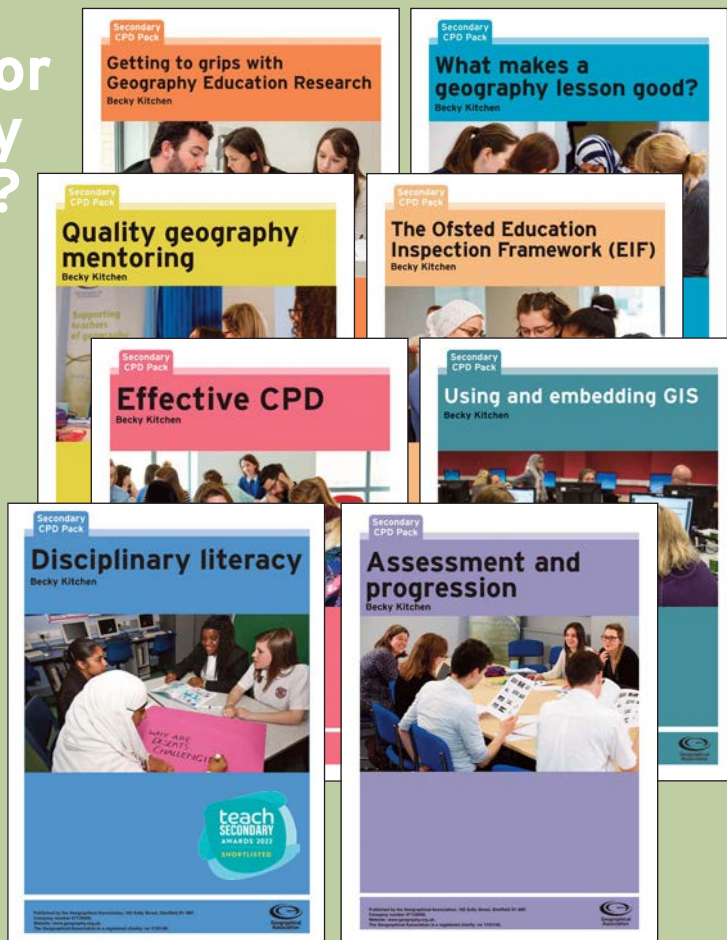
These flexible packs offer you all of the resources you need along with practical activities and guidance on a range of topics to help address your department's needs.

The packs are downloadable and include:

- an overview of the topic
- stimulus material – journal article, book chapter, etc.
- PowerPoint
- activity templates
- certificate.

Find out more at:

<https://www.geography.org.uk/cpd-packs>



**teach  
SECONDARY**  
AWARDS 2022  
HIGHLY  
COMMENDED

## Transform your music teaching

- ✓ Vibrant and authentic curriculum approach that engages students in whole class music making
- ✓ Interactive resources to support the development of musical knowledge and skills
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- ✓ Develop performance skills to promote achievement and attainment in music

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**TEACHSECONDARY**



[www.musicalfuturesonline.org](http://www.musicalfuturesonline.org)







WINNERS

# HYBRID LEARNING

## WHAT WERE WE LOOKING FOR?

Online platforms, software and similar resources aimed at helping schools to devise a robust and sustainable blended learning provision



**teach  
SECONDARY  
AWARDS 2022  
WINNER**

## CLASSROOM.CLOUD

NetSupport

**classroom.cloud**

"A perfectly intuitive interface that empowers teachers and learners to use technology for learning both in and out of the classroom. The platform is user-friendly, easy to navigate and designed with learning in mind. From the teacher's perspective, the controls are fluid and functional, while on the students' side, there is precision and clarity in how it's presented. The platform is additionally loaded with assessment tools, as well as effective security. Compatible with a number of big providers, including Microsoft and Google, and with notable evidence of impact, this choice is number one."

- Adam Riches

## CENTURY

**CENTURY Tech**

[bit.ly/ts118-TSA3](https://bit.ly/ts118-TSA3)

"With its stylish and sophisticated aesthetics, this platform appeals directly to students via an engaging set of features and some striking visuals. Clarity and consistency are apparent throughout the interface, which offers brilliant functionality for teachers, parents and students. The additional bespoke leadership tracking can also give a holistic overview of content completed, to help with maintaining a birds-eye-view tracking of progress."

- Adam Riches



**teach  
SECONDARY  
AWARDS 2022  
HIGHLY COMMENDED**

## RADIX TEACHERVIEW

**Radix**

**teacherview.live**

"This platform affords teachers the 'over the shoulder' teaching experience they will be used to in hybrid settings, while helping them stay in touch with their students, observe high levels of digital safety and provide the best possible learning experience. Stylistically appealing to older students, this platform would be a good fit for GCSE or A Level learners, making it ideally suited to remote revision and additional learning."

- Adam Riches



**teach  
SECONDARY  
AWARDS 2022  
HIGHLY COMMENDED**

## Category finalists

**NEO LMS  
FOR 11-16S  
CYPHER LEARNING**

**GOOD PRACTICE  
WHEN IACHIEVE  
iAchieve**

**HOLOCAUST  
LEARNING  
AT IWM  
Imperial War Museums**

Shine a light on  
the importance of

# BLACK BRITISH HISTORY

Collins

teach  
SECONDARY  
AWARDS 2022  
WINNER

## BLACK BRITISH HISTORY KS3

Teacher Resource Pack

Emily Folorunsho, Dr Simon Henderson and Teni Oladehin

Help all your KS3 students understand how the past informs the realities of modern Britain – including the successes and continued struggles that exist in race relations

- Fully editable, downloadable and photocopiable so you can teach flexibly and share across the department
- Teaching slides, student worksheets, lesson plans, a detailed narrative and audio and video resources bring history to life, from Black Romans to BlackLivesMatter
- Embed into an existing KS3 history scheme of work with the flexible structure and national curriculum links

TRY A SAMPLE  
WITH YOUR  
CLASS





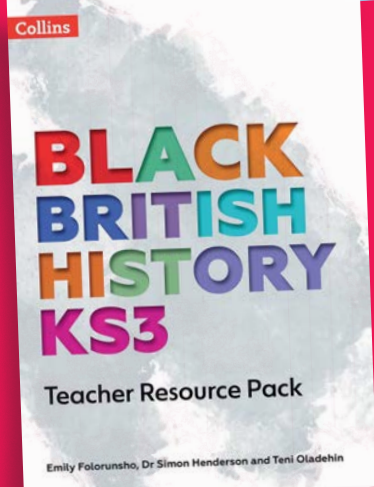


# WINNERS

## CURRICULUM IMPACT

### WHAT WERE WE LOOKING FOR?

Resources designed to support the ways in which a particular subject can be taught, or boost students' progress in that subject



### BLACK BRITISH HISTORY KS3 TEACHER RESOURCE PACK

Collins

[collins.co.uk/blackbritishhistory](https://collins.co.uk/blackbritishhistory)

"Recently, as educationalists, we have reflected on the importance of teaching young people about Black British history, but it can be difficult to know where to start with planning and implementation. These lessons are informative and affordable, and could also prove useful for personal development and as material for whole school assemblies." – **Julie Kettlewell**

**teach  
SECONDARY  
AWARDS 2022  
WINNER**

### LEVEL 1/LEVEL 2 CAMBRIDGE NATIONAL SUITE OF RESOURCES

Hodder Education

[hoddereducation.co.uk/cambridge-nationals-2022](https://hoddereducation.co.uk/cambridge-nationals-2022)

"These resources are incredibly comprehensive, and would be particularly useful for new teachers or when delivering a new subject, through the way in which they provide significant help with delivery. The extension tasks and the knowledge tests look particularly good, and the resources could be easily adapted for schools to use in the way that best suits their needs." – **Julie Kettlewell**



**teach  
SECONDARY  
AWARDS 2022  
HIGHLY  
COMMENDED**

### MUSICAL FUTURES ONLINE

Musical Futures

[musicalfuturesonline.org](https://musicalfuturesonline.org)

"These resources are great, and would be really useful for a range of students – both expert and novice musicians. They are easy to use, and teachers have the option to include elements in their lessons as they see fit. I particularly like the core values that they are shaped around, and how inclusive they are."

– **Julie Kettlewell**



**teach  
SECONDARY  
AWARDS 2022  
HIGHLY  
COMMENDED**

### Category finalists

**THE EXTRAORDINARY ELEMENTS POSTCARD SET**  
Bonnie Books UK

**PYTHON IN PIECES**  
2Simple

**TCBC ONLINE TOURS**  
TCBC School Tours

**SMART REVERSE**  
CraigDave Ltd

**LEARN WITH THE LORDS**  
UK Parliament



## WHAT WERE WE LOOKING FOR?

Print and electronic resources that are available to secondary schools entirely free of charge, other than for P&P (excluding time-limited offers)

### FLASHACADEMY

FlashAcademy  
[flashacademy.com](http://flashacademy.com)

"This is a brilliant platform for EAL assessment and learning. You can see the ease at which students would pick up new words and sounds. The 'gameplay' part of learning combined with the assessment tools make it a valuable school tool."

– Adrian Briggs

teach  
SECONDARY  
AWARDS 2022  
WINNER



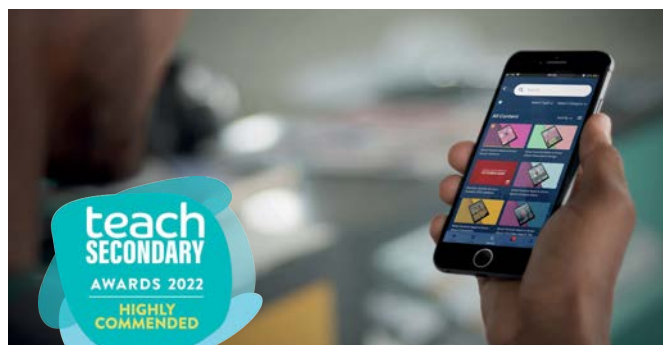
### SAFER SCHOOLS NI APP

INEQE Safeguarding Group  
[saferschoolsni.co.uk](http://saferschoolsni.co.uk)

"This is a very powerful app with lots of content available. The streamlined menu system allows you to navigate where you need to get to quickly and access the information you need. While on the site, I quickly learned new things myself and can see how this would easily help parents, students and teachers to stay safe."

– Adrian Briggs

teach  
SECONDARY  
AWARDS 2022  
HIGHLY COMMENDED



### NATIONAL ONLINE SAFETY APP

National Online Safety

[info.nationalonlinesafety.com/mobile-app](http://info.nationalonlinesafety.com/mobile-app)

"NOS has a vast array of online safety resources, courses and printable media, and crucially tailors its materials to teachers, students and parents. NOS stays on top of the latest viral trends, and seeks to regularly publish new guidance and suggestions."

– Adrian Briggs

### Category finalists

LESSONFLIX  
Lessonflix Ltd

[WWW.GCSEHISTORY.COM](http://WWW.GCSEHISTORY.COM)  
Clever Lili Ltd

THE NATIONAL  
COLLEGE APP  
The National College



## WHAT WERE WE LOOKING FOR?

Print and electronic resources available to secondary schools entirely free of charge, other than for P&P (excluding any time-limited offers)



## WINNERS FREE RESOURCE

### HOME AND TEACH LEARNING HUB

INEQE Safeguarding Group

[oursaferschools.co.uk/teachhub](https://oursaferschools.co.uk/teachhub)

[oursaferschools.co.uk/home-learning-hub](https://oursaferschools.co.uk/home-learning-hub)

"A comprehensive, up to date and informative pack of resources that tackles challenging and important areas that are both topic-specific and age-related. The resources support pupils, parents and staff in an engaging way, providing them with information and the confidence to discuss a range of important and relevant topics that affect us in the modern age."

– Lizzy Watson

teach  
SECONDARY  
AWARDS 2022  
WINNER



### 39 WAYS TO SAVE THE PLANET

The Royal Geographical Society

(with IBG)

[bit.ly/ts118-TSA4](https://bit.ly/ts118-TSA4)

"Quick and easy to navigate in a busy teaching schedule, this resource gathers together 39 interesting and cutting edge developments that aim to address issues relating to climate change and makes them

accessible to teachers and pupils alike. It can be used as a cross-curriculum resource to support geography, and STEM learning, and features a great use of different media to engage and enthuse pupils, and get them really thinking about the state of the planet." – Lizzy Watson



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### BBC SHAKESPEARE ARCHIVE RESOURCE

Educational Recording Agency

[era.org.uk/shakespeare-archive](https://era.org.uk/shakespeare-archive)

"This user-friendly entry point into the Bard's body of work lets users access a range of archived performances – not just of the plays themselves, but also adaptations of Shakespearean material and critical discussions, the latter of which allow pupils to improve their understanding of the plays and the quality of their analysis. It's certainly useful having such an extensive range of material spanning multiple year groups stored on one platform, both for accessing in class and for home learning purposes." – Lizzy Watson



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### Category finalists

ANYTIME, ANYWHERE  
ENGINEERS

NFU Education / Hi Impact Consultancy

WOMEN IN THE ARMY,  
FROM BRITISH ARMY  
SUPPORTING EDUCATION

British Army / EVERFI

EEDI  
Eedi

COLLINS SECONDARY  
WELLBEING PACK

Collins

WEATHER AND CLIMATE:  
A TEACHERS' GUIDE

Royal Meteorological Society

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### Your Hosts

**Jason Tait**

Director of Pastoral Care & DSL at a leading  
co-educational boarding school in the UK



**Helena Wykes-Dart**

Specialist Adolescent Social Worker  
& Director of the Adolescent  
Safeguarding Consultancy Ltd (ASC)





## WINNERS HEALTH AND WELLBEING

### WHAT WERE WE LOOKING FOR?

RSE teaching materials, safeguarding solutions, guidebooks and other resources that can supplement a school's provision of mental health and wellbeing support



Where are your  
safeguarding  
hotspots?

The Student  
Voice

### CONTEXTUAL SAFEGUARDING TOOL

The Student Voice

[demo.thestudentvoice.co.uk](https://demo.thestudentvoice.co.uk)

"This is a fantastic resource – child-friendly and simple to use. It covers in-school, surrounding areas and home, and is approved by Dr Carlene Firmin, who completed the research. It creates a proactive approach to reporting and understands the barriers children face in trusting the reporting system."

– Ann Marie Christian

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### STAFF WELLBEING AND SELF-CARE IN SCHOOLS

Teachhappy Ltd  
[bit.ly/ts118-TSA5](https://bit.ly/ts118-TSA5)

"These useful short videos educate teachers about their wellbeing provision and offer suggestions for meaningful reflection. They're suitable for all teachers who want to get the best out of children and maximise their learning. There are good, digestible takeaways and helpful resource pages at the end of each module."

– Ann Marie Christian

teach  
SECONDARY  
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COMMENDED

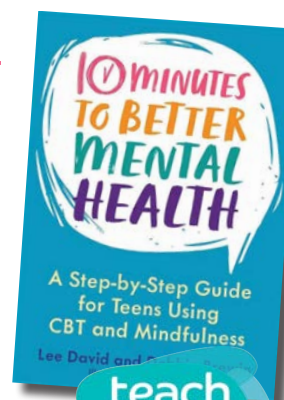


### 10 MINUTES TO BETTER MENTAL HEALTH

Jessica Kingsley Publishers  
[bit.ly/ts118-TSA6](https://bit.ly/ts118-TSA6)

"This child-friendly book has reflection pages and supports the mindsets of children. It includes basic, effective exercises that are simple to use, as well as good 'pause and think' pointers to get teenagers thinking. The language used explains things in a non-judgmental way, and there are resources at the back to support teachers in the form of websites, apps and video links."

– Ann Marie Christian



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COMMENDED

### Category finalists

JIGSAW PSHE  
Jigsaw PSHE

HEALTHY ONLINE  
RELATIONSHIPS  
INEQE

CERTIFIED SCHOOL  
PROGRAMME  
National Online Safety

CERTIFICATE IN THE ROLE  
OF THE SENIOR MENTAL  
HEALTH LEAD  
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# WINNERS ASSESSMENT

## WHAT WERE WE LOOKING FOR?

Resources and services aimed at helping teachers check students' understanding, improve feedback, track progress and drive school improvement



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## STAR ASSESSMENTS

Renaissance

[renlearn.co.uk/star-assessments](https://renlearn.co.uk/star-assessments)

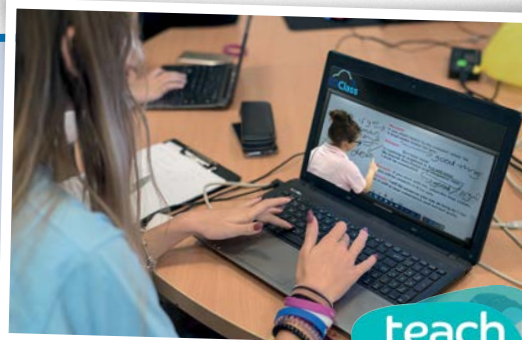
"Renaissance's Star Assessments are fabulous resources for schools, offering low-stakes testing in reading and maths. Research shows that low-stakes testing is an important component when implementing systems that allow teachers to assess pupils understanding, so that it can provide some degree of accuracy in relation to progress. What is particularly impressive is the scale of use, ranging from Y1 to Y13, alongside the Item Response Theory that works with pupils' performance over time. This means that teachers can see how their pupils are progressing, thus reducing the workload often associated with assessment practices in schools." – **Michael Chiles**

## SAM LEARNING

**SAM Learning**  
[samlearning.com](https://samlearning.com)

"SAM Learning is a dynamic resource that provides adaptive questions for students as they work through their KS3 and GCSE subjects. The AI function means that the platform works with each individual pupil, tailoring questions to their specific needs as they look to master their subjects." – **Michael Chiles**

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## EDCLASS

**EDClass Ltd**

[edclass.com/assessment](https://edclass.com/assessment)

"EDClass is an excellent resource to support pupil assessment, for the purposes of enhancing the provision given to schools at KS4-5. The built-in algorithm is a great feature that enables the system to be tailored to the needs of each individual pupil." – **Michael Chiles**

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## Category finalists

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SHAKESPEARE GCSE  
REVISION FOR MACBETH  
AND ROMEO AND JULIET**  
Oxford University Press

**EDUCAKE**  
Educake  
**DYNAMIC PROGRESS  
REPORTING**  
Axle Education



Special Needs Assessment Profile

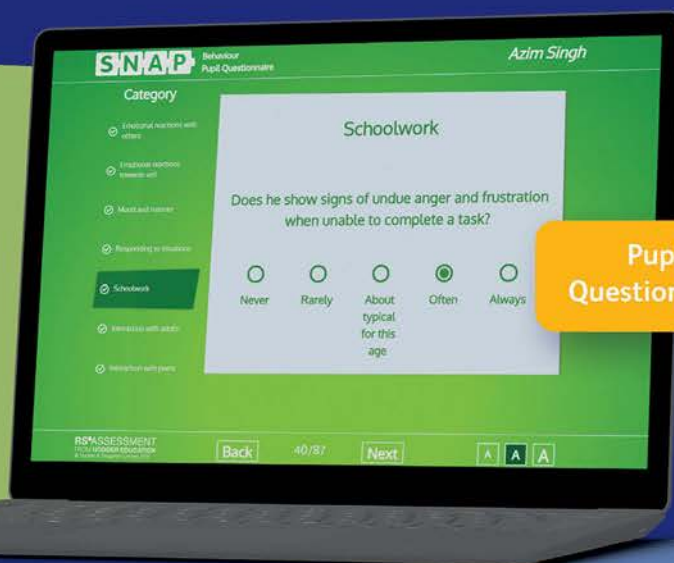
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- ✓ Track progress

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Core profile

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## PICTUREPATH

Picturepath

[mypicturepath.com/for-schools](http://mypicturepath.com/for-schools)

"Students with a range of SEND often need help with getting organized and following instructions. This easy to use app provides that, as well as offering reassurance to those in stressful situations by providing a path through them. As a digital tool, it is an age-appropriate update on visual timetables and social stories.

Using text, icons and images it structures activities to be shared with learners, home and staff."

– John Galloway

teach  
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## WHAT WERE WE LOOKING FOR?

Physical and electronic resources designed to support students with additional needs and make schools more inclusive

## GCSE MATHS FOR NEURODIVERGENT LEARNERS

Jessica Kingsley Publishers

[uk.jkp.com/products/gcse-maths-for-neurodivergent-learners](http://uk.jkp.com/products/gcse-maths-for-neurodivergent-learners)

"A very useful book that provides staff and students with a solid understanding of the challenges learners with a range of SEND face, and offers practical approaches to addressing these. It suggests ways of reframing perspectives to create a positive mindset, then gives multi-sensory ideas for teaching and learning. These are consistent in their use of tangible resources, and build gradually from introduction to understanding."

– John Galloway



teach  
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HIGHLY  
COMMENDED

## SNAP

RS Assessment from Hodder Education

[hoddereducation.co.uk/snap](http://hoddereducation.co.uk/snap)

"This continues to offer a robust, structured assessment toolkit that will be useful for anyone – particularly non-specialists – looking to better understand the learning difficulties of SEND students. The holistic nature of the questionnaires, backed up by more forensic diagnostic tests, will provide insights that can provide more accuracy in assessment and greater targeting in interventions. The latter is supported by a bank of suggested resources."

– John Galloway



teach  
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## Category finalists

RNIB BOOKSHARE  
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DYSLEXIA GOLD  
Dyslexia Gold

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SIGN LANGUAGE  
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Oxford University Press

OLLIE PREVENT,  
EMOTIONAL RESILIENCE  
AND OLLIE TEENS  
PROGRAMMES  
Ollie and his Super Powers

# The future STARTS HERE

If we want to give the next generation a reason to pursue STEM careers, we need to show them first-hand just how inspiring and rewarding they can be, says **Rebecca Wilkinson**

**R**ather than having them slog away with their noses in textbooks every lesson, we teachers of STEM subjects need to help our students see and recognise those tangible routes that will lead them from the classroom to an exciting career, or some other real-world application of knowledge

Done well, this can show them just how broad and varied the careers options in STEM fields really are, and in turn, how much power and influence they themselves can wield when it comes to their professional future.

## A voice in the discussion

I'm a physics teacher at The Polesworth School in Warwickshire, and recently supervised the participation of two of my students in the Tomorrow's Engineers Week Future Minds Broadcast ([teweek.org.uk](http://teweek.org.uk)). During the event, my students, along with many others across the country, heard from thought leaders in engineering, and were encouraged to discuss and present their own ideas for how new innovations could improve the world around us over the next decade.

After witnessing just how inspired and motivated my students became as a result of what they saw and experienced during the event, I was reminded of how crucial it is that young people continue to have

access to varied learning opportunities such as these.

By taking part in Tomorrow's Engineers Week, students are given the chance to add their own voices to vital discussions regarding new technological challenges, opportunities and outcomes. It will be shown to them how careers in STEM aren't just inspiring and important, but eminently accessible.

***"The new ideas I saw being proposed, discussed and sounded out by students left me feeling incredibly optimistic about the future"***

## Constant change

STEM fields tend to fast-paced and in a constant state of change – not unlike the numerous products of the engineering and technology industries that continue to shape our everyday lives in such profound ways.

It's important for both schools and parents that young people are given opportunities to think independently, and can draw a direct line between the notion of coming up with an idea in their head, and seeing that idea become a physical reality. But in order to do that, they need to first join in with conversations that can help explain to them the state of engineering as things currently stand.

By gaining direct access to leaders in STEM, teachers and students alike will be better placed to keep up to date with the constant evolutions in industry. It also helps us as teachers create inspiring content that draws on real-world settings and applications.

This is why interactive group learning events such as Future Minds work so well for STEM subjects. My

own ideas on how they thought engineering could help shape the world over the next 10 years. The ideas they came up with included the development of mechanical bees to increase pollination levels, and dedicating more resources to rewilding in order to increase biodiversity in a greater number of areas.

The students were also determined to bring about improvements in accessibility in sports for people with physical impairments, and argued for the advancement of prosthetic technology. What I took away from the event is that the younger generation clearly sees value in using STEM as part of wider efforts to help save the planet, and as a way of literally 'levelling the playing field' by creating more opportunities for people with differences.

As far as I was concerned, the plethora of new ideas I saw being proposed, discussed and sounded out by students left me feeling incredibly optimistic about the future – at both the students' prospects, and the kind of decision-making that may hopefully characterise the STEM industries in years to come.

## Conscientious engineers

As a teacher of STEM, there will be several objectives that you and your students will need to

students were able to hear directly from professionals working in sectors as diverse as environmental solutions, technology, entertainment and sport – employees at the very forefront of engineering innovations taking place in those industries right now.

The experience afforded them a uniquely exciting, dynamic glimpse of where STEM innovations may headed in the future, and at the kind of projects they could expect to be working on if they choose to follow a similar career path themselves.

## A force for good

During the event itself, the students were asked to discuss and present their





achieve. Getting them to pass their exams is the obvious one, but the teaching of STEM ought to go beyond that, to examine the real world applications of what they're learning about.

By encouraging our students to think creatively, critically

and question the norm, we'll be providing them with the tools they'll need to forge successful future careers. This, after all, is ultimately the catalyst that serves to advance innovation.

An engineer will look at the way things are and ask, "Could this be improved? Do we have to do it *this* way?" Many of the issues we face in our world today – even huge, epochal challenges such as climate change, inequality, and disease – can be alleviated, at least in part, by the work of conscientious engineers. If we fail to help our aspiring engineers realise their ambitions and talents, then the problems we face today will inexorably become the problems of the generation that comes after us, and those that succeed them.

Young people have a natural instinct for discovery and invention. As teachers, it should be our job to encourage and inspire our students, and to help them harness this natural creativity and curiosity. Not just in the service of passing exams, but also in terms of thinking outside of the box.

If we can allow our students to voice their own ideas, and contribute to conversations surrounding future innovation, we'll be doing our bit to raise future generations who'll go on to become creative and bold problem-solvers. Who knows – they may even end up finding partial solutions to some of the world's greatest problems.



#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Rebecca Wilkinson is lead practitioner and KS4 science coordinator at The Polesworth School in Warwickshire; The Tomorrow's Engineers Week Future Minds Broadcast and lesson plan is available now at [teweek.org.uk](http://teweek.org.uk)



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# FOCUS ON: SEND

This issue, we look at how students with SEND can gain experience of work while at school, the problems that can arise when self-regulation strategies cut across behaviour policies, and why selection based on ability remains a bigger issue than some would care to admit...

## What can education professionals do to better support the needs of students with SEND?

### THE AGENDA:

#### 70 WORK-READY

Luci Windle takes us through the innovative approach to providing careers education and work experience for SEND students practised at Abbey School, Rotherham

#### 73 PICKING AND CHOOSING

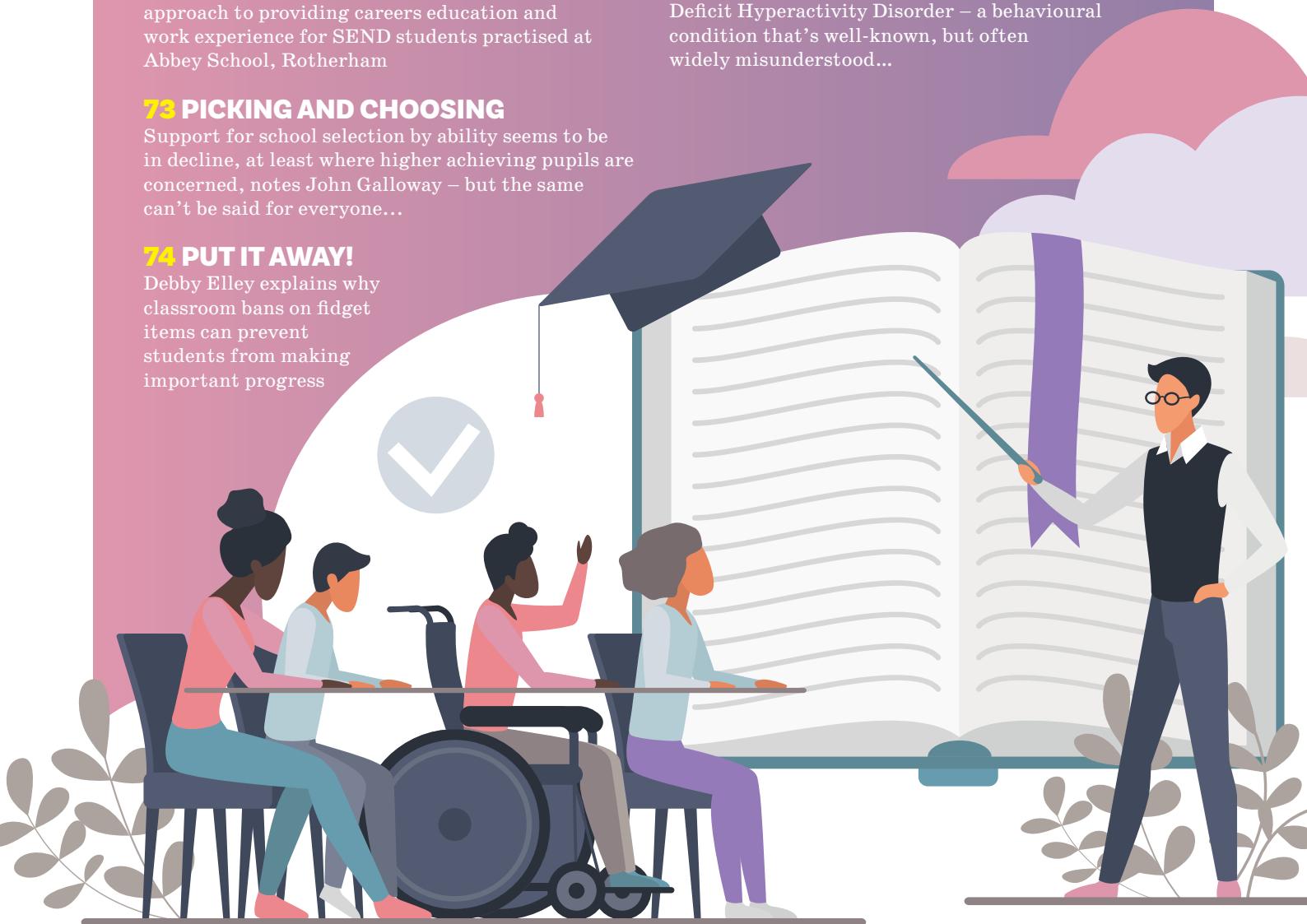
Support for school selection by ability seems to be in decline, at least where higher achieving pupils are concerned, notes John Galloway – but the same can't be said for everyone...

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Debby Elley explains why classroom bans on fidget items can prevent students from making important progress

#### 76 A TEACHER'S GUIDE TO ADHD

Diana Hudson presents a primer on Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder – a behavioural condition that's well-known, but often widely misunderstood...



# Welcome to the real world

Abbey School in Rotherham features a functioning street with a pet grooming room and its own branch of Asda, where students earn real credits...

**A**bbey School is part of Nexus Academy Trust, which is predominantly made up of special schools. We cover everything and anything to do with special needs – we have a hospital school, for example. We teach a wide range of children aged five to 19, from those with the most complex needs, right up to those that could potentially have made it in mainstream if the environment and curriculum had been right, so it's a real mix.

At the moment we have 211 children on roll across three sites, all with moderate learning difficulties – predominantly autism, but also children with social and emotional needs and PDA.

When I joined Abbey eight years ago, the school was in special measures and due for closure. When we achieved Outstanding three years ago, instead of feeling elation I remember feeling deflated. It sounds silly, but I was mindful of the fact that although we were giving children this wonderful educational experience, once they left us at age 19, the majority of them would end up sitting at home because there were no opportunities for employment.

Can you really be called Outstanding if your kids aren't going to do anything

after they've left you? It felt almost like offering children a trip to Disney World, then taking it away from them at the last minute.

## STEAM Street

The world outside of school is harsh – it's cruel. We're passionate about getting these kids into employment, and the way we've done that is not by putting young people into mainstream experiences, but by bringing the mainstream into our world.

We pondered for a long time about setting up a play centre – similar to the ones where Foundation Stage children can go and play as a hairdresser, or pretend to be a pilot. I thought that if we could mimic that in school we could better prepare children for adulthood and employment, so off we went. We decided that the school's specialist classrooms, which run right down the middle of the building, would all become related to employment.

STEAM Street, as we call it, features an actual road down the middle with lines on. It's got traffic lights (to teach road safety to our youngest children) and there's even traffic noise. We asked local companies to sponsor our specialist rooms, and a local restaurant agreed to sponsor our food technology room. The younger children would wear restaurant uniforms, and

the older children would have work experience. We've since started approaching larger businesses – our shop is sponsored by Asda, for example.

## Breaking down barriers

In their annual review, students think about what they ultimately want to become and we work back from there. Every young person in school has a job – whether it's sweeping the corridors, or being in charge of our school radio station. This breaks down barriers, especially for students whose parents have never worked. If that's your experience, why on Earth would you think it's great to have a job?

When the students are working in the shop, it feels like they're really working at Asda – they wear the uniform, and all the branding is there. They get paid in Abbey credits to spend at the shop, so there's a purpose to what they're doing.

We want our young people to become familiar with that sense of belonging within a particular company. A good example is one of our

autistic students with moderate learning difficulties. Our street corridor is sponsored by a local refuge company so he was, in theory, working in school for them. He'd clean all the rubbish out, sweep the floors and clean up any messes. When he was older, he went on a placement work experience with the





company, after which he actually gained full-time employment with them and is still working there now.

Another young man who had an internship with our IT team is now working for Amazon and drives a better car than I do! It's about talent spotting – what can this young person really offer? – and then exploring that within the safety and security provided by school.

### Purposeful education

On Friday afternoons we take part in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award. As part of this, we have a real pet grooming service and a horticulture service, both related to real

qualifications. Students have to apply for these jobs by going through an interview stage; they have to request time off; they get

bonus pay. There's also a finance team – students have bank accounts, and can apply for loans if they want to.

If you've got autism, find it hard to make sense of the world around you and haven't made it in a mainstream environment because there's too much to comprehend, then having the structure of knowing, 'On a Friday afternoon I go and earn money at my job', makes things much easier. They can translate their learning in school into an employment setting.

The kids here have a purpose for being educated; they know where they're going. When I asked my 16-year-old, who goes to an Outstanding secondary school and does really well, what they were going to do, they didn't have a clue.

That's the difference. All of our students know what they want to become, and they

know the stages to get there.

We're making a difference in kids' lives and boosting their self-esteem. When a young person who struggles with their speech and language hears themselves

real life in order to prepare young people right from the word go.

Our entire curriculum is geared towards explaining to students that they will have to get a job – they

**“The kids here have a purpose for being educated; they know where they're going”**

back on the radio, it motivates them to go to their speech therapy sessions, even if they don't like them, because they desperately want to have a job on our radio station. It's a behaviour incentive in lots of ways.

Also, just as in real life, if you don't rock up to school, you don't get paid. We try, wherever possible to mimic

don't have a choice about that. Benefits aren't an option for them. The only choice they have is what job they want to have. It's about pushing expectations.

It's great when shops and cinemas have things like quiet autism sessions, but that's not the real world, is it? Kids need to learn to be in the real world. Unless we really challenge young people to think about the future and about their careers, then as teachers, we're not really doing anything for them apart from temporarily occupying them.

Last year, 85% of our young people went into employment – either full-time employment or apprenticeships – with the rest going on to further education at college. If you look at the national statistics around young people with disabilities, about 6% of them end up in employment at the moment, so we must be doing something right.



#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Luci Windle (@luci\_windle) is executive headteacher at Abbey School, part of Nexus Academy Trust; for more information, follow @AbbeyLearning

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# Picking and choosing

Support for school selection by ability seems to be in decline, at least where higher achieving pupils are concerned, notes **John Galloway** – but the same can't be said for everyone...

**T**here are only around 170 grammar schools remaining in England, and despite various initiatives from the Conservative government, that number has remained fairly static. Even senior Tories, such as Michael Gove, have spoken out against opening more.

There seems to be a tacit acceptance that our system should be comprehensive, with schools providing for all learners regardless of background or ability – but is that always the case?

It's not just pupils who could be considered more able who have their ability and capacity to learn assessed before being a placed. The same can apply to learners with SEND, with those who are assessed for, and issued with, an education health and care plan (EHCP) liable to find themselves in similar situations.

## Economies of scale

Over the course of this process, parents have the right to have a school named in their EHCP as the place their child attends, giving them a statutory right to that place. However, there are caveats in the SEND Code of Practice of 2015 that can mitigate this if the school, "Would be unsuitable for the age, ability, aptitude or SEN of the child or young person; or the attendance of the child or young person there would be incompatible with the efficient education of others, or the efficient use of resources."

That seems fair enough. You would want a child to be educated in a place that can meet their needs, and in a way that won't stop others from learning. Readers will, however, appreciate that these are fairly imprecise descriptors, and potentially open to accusations of schools 'gaming' the system.

That said, they do point to some of the reasons as to why children and young people with more complex and challenging SEND are often brought together in specific provisions. Concentrating knowledge, skills and expertise, along with specialist spaces and equipment produces economies of scale and benefits whole school communities, rather than small cohorts in

mainstream classrooms.

Some may, for instance, require teaching staff possessing specialist skills and training, or who carry out regular medical interventions, such as tube feeding. It therefore makes sense to bring those with similar needs together – often in a special school, sometimes in a specialist provision attached to a mainstream school.

The issue, however, is that what's available, and the criteria necessary to attend such places, varies considerably across the country. That's part of the thinking behind the recent SEND Green Paper, which talks of creating national standards that include guidance on the, "Appropriate provision that should be made available for different types of need." It clarifies that this will, "Set out the full range of appropriate types of support and placements for meeting different needs," along with "the support that should be made ordinarily available in mainstream settings... whether their needs should be met in a specialist setting....[and] greater clarity in when a special school is appropriate."

## Direction of travel

The intention is therefore to clarify, perhaps stratify, which learning needs will be met in what way, but this will entail a considerable challenge. In part because of the variations in how SEND

provision is structured across localities, but more because of the variations in the abilities, aptitudes and learning needs of those with SEND. It's very difficult to be precise, and many individuals' abilities may change over time.

The general direction of travel has seen a shift away from grammar schools, towards an acceptance of comprehensive, inclusive education as being 'the norm'; where children and young people of all abilities and backgrounds learn alongside – and from – each other.

It would be a pity if the greater clarity sought in providing guidance on appropriate provision for those with SEND ended up inadvertently entrenching selection by ability in one area of the system, when it's becoming less attractive elsewhere. Currently, there's an expectation that a mainstream school will be the default placement for those with SEND. We need to guard against moving to a position where hard thresholds put this out of reach, and make aspirations for inclusion more challenging.



### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

John Galloway is a freelance writer, consultant and trainer specialising in educational technology and SEND



# Put it away

**Debby Elley** explains why classroom bans on fidget items can sometimes prevent students from making important progress

**Y**ou might be reading this article in the hope that it outlines some useful interventions you can use to help your students with SEND. There are times, however, when you can foster success simply by doing nothing.

Sounds like music to the ears, right? Nevertheless, there can be certain situations where students remain calm and focused due to the actions of teachers who simply know when to leave well alone.

## Mental overload

Take, for example, what we'll call here the 'habit' of fiddling and twiddling with things. It's a behaviour you may notice far more among autistic students, but please don't assume it means they're not properly listening to you. If anything, it's more likely to be the opposite. Rather than distracting them from the lesson, some students' fidget toys may in fact be the very coping mechanism that enables them to be attentive.

Autistic youngsters have highly reactive nervous systems. Their brains are constantly busy processing information that the rest of us can easily ignore as 'background data'. Trying to then attend to auditory information at the same time is no walk in the park if you have autism.

The mental overload caused by trying to focus on a lone voice in a busy classroom can overflow

into physical movement. How can you stay in your seat and continue to be polite whilst all this is happening to you? The answer is that you find something to fiddle with.

My autistic son Bobby, aged 18 and currently attending university, is now able to put into words the kind of insights he

lessons with heavy cognitive demands.

Robert Monk is an OT at the Seashell Trust – a school and college that supports students with profound and complex learning difficulties. He describes how, "Our team of sensory-integration trained OTs work with students to identify

how can you tell when someone is being genuinely inattentive, or merely fidgeting a little because it helps them to focus?

## Personal context

The key to answering that is to understand the personal context – and it's in these sorts of areas that Education, Health and Care Plans can often overlook crucial information. Getting it right depends on great SENCOs asking students and their families appropriate

**“Some students’ fidget toys may be the very coping mechanism that enables them to be attentive”**

couldn't express when he was in his early teens. "I've found that I can't keep still, and need something to fiddle with," he says. "My body is highly irritable sometimes, but having a fidget helps to calm me physically, so that I can focus mentally.

"Things like 'simple dimples' and fidget spinners can be really useful for work, because they can help you focus when you're thinking about something. It matters that your hands are latched onto something when your brain is busy processing. It gives you a sense of calmness. It means you don't have to rotate chairs or tap desks."

## Brain regulation

In specialist schools, where students can find focusing on tasks extremely difficult, occupational therapists will often timetable calming, physical activities ahead of

sensory strategies, which may include the use of fidget toys and/or twiddles. For some students, this tactile stimulation can help them concentrate and focus on a task."

It shouldn't come as a surprise that there will be students with similar sensory needs in mainstream settings. In mainstream schools, teenagers with sensory processing differences often end up having to find their own ways of regulating their busy brains, and a common one tends to be fidget toys.

Incidentally, this isn't limited to just students with autism. Sensory Processing Disorder is usually part of autism, but stands distinct from it, and will often present in other conditions too. So





questions to ensure that any important coping mechanisms are included in their support plans.

What do you find calming when there's a lot going on? What helps to focus you? Is there anything that's worked for you in the past? If these self-regulation tools aren't given attention, then things can, and often will go wrong.

"I get the impression that some teachers see it as more of a distraction," says Bobby. "I think it's because when fidget spinners were popular around 2017, everyone started jumping on the bandwagon. But whereas they may be a distraction for others, they really aren't for people with autism."

A parent who shared her experiences with me and co-author Gareth Morewood for our book *Championing Your Autistic Teen at Secondary School* told us that her son used to take Blu Tack with him to primary school. She recalled how his fidgeting was occasionally used as a punishment – 'You can't have your Blu Tack until you do this piece of work!' As she recalled, "All the 'punishment' did was make him cry, and the work never got done!"

As Gareth often likes to point out, we wouldn't remove wheelchairs or hearing aids from students, yet we'll often deny young people their own coping mechanisms through the unintended consequences of wider systems and policies.

I'm therefore hoping that as you read this article, you're starting to wonder

whether your school's policies support the use of self-regulation tools or encourage a blanket ban on them. If it's the latter, I'd venture that a rethink might be in order so that your setting can be inclusive, and adhere to that all-important need to make 'reasonable adjustments' for your SEND cohort.

Whilst fidget toys can help regulate busy brains, comfort items can be similarly important for reducing anxiety. In my last article for *Teach Secondary*, I wrote about how anxiety can quickly accumulate for people with autism, who will have difficulty in regulating their emotions when that happens. It's what I call 'the double whammy', and it can lead to very obvious signs of overload.

Comfort items can form part of a raft of strategies to mitigate this risk. A typical comfort item might be a favourite possession from home. Sometimes it can just be an image.

Bobby used to have a keyring with laminated photographs of his special interests that he could look at. The photographs would flood his brain with positive, soothing feelings, and drown out some of the 'noise' from his otherwise alien surroundings. Comfort items don't always need to be on show – sometimes just knowing they're available can make all the difference. Be led by the student.

What about the argument that allowing comfort items and fidget toys in class sets an unhelpful precedent? In my experience, concerns around whether peers will understand this 'special treatment' are generally raised by schools where leaders haven't recognised the need for peer training

to reinforce the policy exceptions that sometimes need to be made for students with SEND.

Difficulties will only arise when it hasn't been explained that fidget toys are as important to some students as wheelchairs might be to others – and that no one would dream of banning wheelchairs on the grounds that they provide certain students with an unfair 'advantage' compared to their peers.

### Collective solutions

If a fidget or comfort item is genuinely incompatible with the rest of the class being able to focus, enquire about what could be used as a less distracting alternative that performs the same job. The important thing is not to impose your own solution, but to work with families on finding one that suits all of you.

When considering all of this, I'd recommend you ponder one of my favourite quotes from the American poet, Robert Frost: 'Don't ever take a fence down until you know why it has been put up.'

When they feel secure, and in their own time, students will gradually reduce their reliance on fidget items. And if they don't – so what? Inclusion doesn't happen by making everyone else like us. It happens through accepting that some brains need different conditions in which to learn.



#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Debby Elley is the co-founder of AuKids magazine ([aukids.co.uk](http://aukids.co.uk)) and a parent to twin sons, both with autism; *Championing Your Autistic Teen at Secondary School*, by Debby Elley with Gareth D. Morewood, is available now (£14.99, Jessica Kingsley Publishers)

# A Teacher's Guide To ADHD

**Diana Hudson** presents a primer on Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder – a behavioural condition that's well-known, but often widely misunderstood...

**A**ttention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is a medical disorder involving brain chemistry. It affects the front part of the brain which controls our ability to think rationally, learn from experience and control impulsive behaviour. Children with ADHD have fewer chemical transmitters in this area than normal, resulting in spontaneity, risk-taking and lack of concentration.

ADHD affects around 2 to 5% of school-aged children and young people in the UK. The condition has no impact on a child's overall intelligence, but it can impair their progress unless carefully controlled.

Children with ADHD find studying and concentrating a real struggle. Many fall behind in class, and their initial enthusiasm and fervour can quickly turn to disillusionment, depression and a sense of failure. The earlier the condition is picked up and diagnosed, the sooner children can receive appropriate treatment and learn to control their symptoms – and thus begin to succeed and flourish.

ADHD cannot be 'cured', but it can respond to behavioural therapy, medicine and lifestyle changes.

## How can I spot a student with ADHD?

There are three behavioural indicators to look out for –

hyperactivity, impulsiveness and inattention, though some children will not exhibit all of them.

### HYPERACTIVITY (more common among boys)

- Fidgets and jiggles when sitting, appears restless and distracted
- Frequently leaves seat in class
- Tendency towards being silly and showing off
- Fondness for running or climbing at inappropriate times
- Excessive talking
- Chaotic manner; will often arrive late without correct equipment

### IMPULSIVENESS

- Shouts out in class
- Impatient
- Excitable
- Finds it difficult to wait their turn, will frequently interrupt
- Often agitated
- Reacts emotionally, rather than rationally
- Can become angry and aggressive, will frequently argue with peers
- Keen to take risks, likes excitement

### INATTENTION (more common among girls)

- Easily distracted, lacks focus
- May not listen properly

- Makes careless mistakes
- Poor short-term memory
- Experiences difficulty in following instructions
- Appears detached and/or absent-minded
- Will often lose things, arrive late, become lost or forget things
- Will avoid tasks requiring sustained mental effort

### NATURAL ADVANTAGES

*That said, children with ADHD possess some common attributes that may give them advantages in certain areas:*

- Heightened enthusiasm
- Capable of innovative and imaginative thinking
- High reserves of energy
- A different perspective that lends itself well to lateral thinking
- Charisma and a willingness to engage
- Confidence to take risks
- A readiness to volunteer
- A kind, friendly and outgoing demeanour
- A good rapport with younger children
- May rise to a challenge if given responsibility
- Ambitions to do well and make friends
- A keen sense of justice and fairness
- A passion and aptitude for a certain topic, sport or hobby – particularly physical and creative

pursuits such as acting, dance or sport

- A large number of successful public figures have been diagnosed with ADHD – many of them unusual thinkers who possess great drive and energy

## What can I do to help in class?

Children with ADHD can be both challenging and extremely rewarding to teach. You may find the following helpful when supporting a child with ADHD in class.

### CLARITY AND CLASSROOM RULES

Establish clear classroom rules, and remind the children of these periodically. Start every lesson the same way each time, as this gives security. Your demeanour should be positive, upbeat, firm but approachable. Try to develop a signal so the child can recognise if they are misbehaving, or a way for them to alert you if they are feeling particularly agitated or upset.

### SEATING FOR CHILDREN WITH ADHD

Sitting in traditional rows will work better than sitting around tables facing their peers. The child should be seated at the end of the row, away from windows, noisy pipes, doors, class pets and other distractions. Ensure that you have can maintain easy eye contact with them throughout the lesson.

**“Try to develop a signal so the child can recognise if they are misbehaving”**



**DISCIPLINE**

Put in place clear and fair rules on discipline, ensure that these are observed consistently and reward and reinforce good behaviour – incentive schemes can work well. Outline exactly what behaviour is unacceptable, and explain the consequences of misdemeanours; give clear warnings of any unacceptable behaviour.

**PUNISHMENTS**

These should be fair and feasible to carry out. If poor behaviour is repeated, act decisively and firmly, but do not shout or lose your temper. Don't take any outbursts personally.

**Classroom practice LESSONS**

Try to keep your lessons fast-paced and innovative, with frequent changes of activity. Employ a multisensory approach by using visual aids, film clips, audio and materials that the pupils can handle. Include practical exercises and creative activities, such as use of mini white boards and creation of posters. Allow children to role play, write poems or give ICT presentations.

**MOVEMENT**

If possible, try factoring in time for movement in the form of a practical exercise. You can also let children with ADHD to give out materials, collect books, open windows and perform other tasks. Provide them with opportunities to be helpful.

**COMPUTERS / DEVICES**

These tend to be popular among ADHD children, since they can be stimulating and fun while providing instant, non-judgemental feedback. Time on the computer can also be used as a reward.

**HOMEWORK**

Don't expect too much. Try to make it innovative and fun, and mark for content and effort rather than presentation.

**RESPONSIBILITY**

If possible, give children with ADHD a role in the class or school. Show that they're trusted, and that you have high expectations of them. Celebrate their successes where appropriate, and remember to report the good things they do, as well as any problems.

**YOUR ATTITUDE**

It's important to remain calm in your dealings with children with ADHD – be firm, but approachable. Remember to smile and show them that you care – it will make a huge difference.

**USEFUL RESOURCES****ADHD Foundation**

Provides many useful resources and support for educators  
[adhdfoundation.org.uk](http://adhdfoundation.org.uk)

**BDA Technologies Committee**

Provides numeracy software for dyslexic learners  
[bdatech.org/learning](http://bdatech.org/learning)

**Word Shark**

A games-based spelling and reading program that's well-suited to students with SEND  
[wordshark.co.uk](http://wordshark.co.uk)

**Listening Books**

A charity supplying downloads of audio books to individuals at all academic levels. Includes texts for both school and university-level studies  
[listening-books.org.uk](http://listening-books.org.uk)

**ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

Diana Hudson is the author of *Specific Learning Difficulties – What Teachers Need to Know* (Jessica Kingsley Publishers, £12.99)

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# “It’s important to foster a caring environment”

Ross Abbott highlights why it’s vital that schools do what they can to address the mental health needs of their staff and students over the coming months



## 30 SECOND BRIEFING

The pandemic is still impacting the wellbeing of staff and students, as cases of mental ill health continue to rise through the education sector. A caring culture, focussed on wellbeing, needs to be developed and maintained in order to support those who need it.

### Why is wellbeing important?

A recent mental health survey by Place2Be, taken by over 1,000 school staff, found that 60% had observed an increase in depression and suicidal thoughts among their students. They also noted an increase in student anxiety, however despite this this less than a quarter of staff said they were able to regularly access mental health support for young people. Around 90% of staff additionally highlighted that their own wellbeing, workload and capacity had been negatively affected, post-pandemic.

### What dangers can be found online, and what support is available?

Online life impacts our wellbeing now more than ever. A 2021 study by the clinical information resource Medscape found that adolescents who were bullied online were roughly 12 times more likely to have suicidal thoughts than peers who weren't.

We recently partnered with R;ppile (ripplesuicideprevention.com) – an organisation that delivers preventative measures when it comes to suicide. Their tech was designed in conjunction with mental health experts to interrupt online searches for content about self-harm/suicide, halt someone in a crisis and gently nudge them towards seeking help.



### Why is fostering a caring culture important?

It's important to foster a caring environment to support staff wellbeing. To achieve this, it's essential to model good mental health and wellbeing behaviour and practice.

We can help direct culture change that benefits staff and the wider school environment. that perfectly fits your needs.

### What support is available?

Our experts will analyse current culture, gather



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information and form a detailed approach to formulate a bespoke plan of implementation to direct the change of culture. Training is available to raise awareness. Our experts then help to set up an internal framework to maintain the new wellbeing culture.

### How should I look after my wellbeing this winter?

One thing that can often get overlooked is self-care! Try creating a self-care box, the contents of which might include a favourite book or film, and a notebook for jotting down thoughts and messages of encouragement. Other helpful habits include exercising – such as regular 20 to 30-minute walks to help regulate your mood – getting at least 6 to 8 hours of sleep at night while minimising screen time in bed, and using natural light to reduce your melatonin levels by getting outside during the day.

## What's the difference?

- + A bespoke wellbeing strategy designed by our team of experts
- + We possess extensive experience of directing, implementing and sustaining culture change within organisations
- + We can provide technology that directs individuals who are searching for harmful terms online towards seeking help

# Common knowledge

Is there a case to be made for single sex RSE classes – fewer distractions, a sense of being able to speak more freely – or are boys and girls better off learning together? **Rachael Baker** weighs up the options...

“**W**hat the HELL is that, Miss?” Torjion (Y8, never known for his diplomacy) has just clapped eyes on his first ever mooncup. I can see his point – they are somewhat odd-looking, especially when held open side down so that they resemble a little rubber elf hat...

Cue Tilda, who leaps in with “Nah, they’re good. Pop it up your vajayjay and it catches all the... you know.” I thank Tilda for her contribution, and gently remind her that we should be using correct terms wherever we can. Torjion’s face has meanwhile morphed from shock to bewilderment. “But it’s massive!”

“Not as big as a baby’s head!” chimes in Letitia. “And they do fold up,” I add, while nimbly demonstrating two different ways in which a menstrual cup can be folded to insert and, with help from a life-sized model borrowed from biology, showing how they cleverly pop open once inserted.

## Teaching by halves

I have a thick skin when it comes to RSE lessons. I’ve seen a lot of change over the many years I’ve been teaching the subject, but one development I’ll absolutely hang my hat on is the importance of mixed sex classes for RSE.

Far from being a horrorshow, the beautiful exchange highlighted above would only ever be possible in a mixed class. Without

mixed teaching, how else is a young man like Torjion ever going to learn about the lived experience of his female peers?

The question of whether to opt for mixed or single sex classes has always been something of a hot potato in the RSE world, but the evidence so far is clearly in favour of mixed. It ensures

rather than embedding negative stereotypes about menstruation being (unclean) and a firm warning to keep well away from boys, lest you get pregnant...

It doesn’t help, though, to only teach them half of it all. Boys and young men need to hear about sexuality from their female

inclusive of diversity in sexual orientation and gender identity.

Gone are the days of ‘all girls together’ and ‘boys will be boys’. Instead, let’s talk about how menstruation is something which affects most girls and women, and people with a uterus. Let’s talk about how most boys and men, and people with a penis will experience wet dreams and untimely erections. Let’s talk about the act of sex in terms of what consenting adults may choose to do with their bodies, rather than getting bogged down in those biology diagrams depicting ‘penis in vagina’ sex.

From our experiences of training educators and supporting schools at the Sex Education Forum, we hear that the reluctance some educators and parents have for supporting mixed RSE groups stems from concerns that teaching young people about sex is going to make them want to try it.

Actually, we know from many studies that this simply isn’t the case. Conversely, when people receive timely, evidence-based RSE, they’re actually less likely to experience first sex under the age of 16, and more likely to know how to keep themselves safe when they do.

## Tear down the stereotypes

One of the biggest issues facing our learners and schools today are the

**“Boys and young men need to hear about sexuality from their female counterparts, and vice versa. They all need to hear about it from each other”**

that learners hear the voices of their peers, and while it can be tricky at times – as with most things in the classroom – that’s often down to us more than them. Done well, it’s marvellous.

That said, I do understand the anxieties that surround mixed sex groupings for RSE, particularly in the context of puberty education. I get it. It harks back to those covert ‘big chats’ children have parents or older siblings, in which every detail and practical consideration of the puberty they’re about to embark on is unpacked and analysed.

Boys hearing the brass tacks about erections, wet dreams and noticing sexy ladies. Girls getting a practical guide to ‘sanitary products’ (or ‘menstrual products’, as they could be more positively referred to,

counterparts, and vice versa. They all need to hear about it from each other. Even if we taught the full RSE curriculum to single sex groups, they would still miss out on the brilliant process of hearing one another speak about their views, and the shape of the world in their eyes. Ultimately, they need to understand what sex and relationships mean to one another.

## Misplaced assumptions

It’s also impossible to be truly gender inclusive and trans inclusive in single-sex settings. A potential risk of single sex groups is that RSE is imagined heteronormatively, which can lead to assumptions that girls and boys will only ever be attracted to each other, while failing to be



horrifying findings of Ofsted's 2021 Review of sexual abuse in schools and colleges (see [bit.ly/ts118-se1](https://bit.ly/ts118-se1)), which found that over a third of female students at mixed-sex secondary schools have personally experienced some form of sexual harassment at school.

Sexual harassment, consent and the way we make others feel with our comments and behaviours needs to be openly tackled in schools. Rather than separating our learners, we need to bring them together. We need our learners to adopt a collaborative approach to tackling sexism, misogyny, homophobia, transphobia and biphobia, and create a generation of young people who are the change-makers. Let them tear down the stereotypes and raise their expectations for equality.

There is, of course, an authenticity that comes from learning about something practical from someone who has experienced it. But if we're getting hung up on whether we need to have experienced the thing itself before we can teach about it, that means we're not adequately distancing our teaching from our own personal lives. We're not there to provide personal recommendations or reflect on our personal experiences – we're there to facilitate our learners' explorations in the subject.

If we don't feel safe delivering content that doesn't personally affect us, then I suspect one of two things is at play. Either we need to bolster our subject knowledge, or we require a more robust Working Together agreement to ensure that both we and our learners feel safe. We need teachers to feel safe in delivering RSE, because young people tell us that they want to learn from us, from role models, and want

to be taught by men, as well as women.

### Additions and exceptions

There may be times when it feels right to deliver certain content in single sex groups. That might include an intervention for boys based around exploring issues of masculinity; a one-to-one session for someone who has experienced assault prior to a whole class lesson; an extra lunchtime session for girls to ask further questions about periods. In those instances we should make these models available to learners, but they should serve as an addition, and be the exception, rather than the rule.

Supporting teachers and learners to feel safe in RSE lessons is a frequent topic in the teacher training that Sex Education Forum offers. We give teachers the opportunity to consider their values around the subject, explore ways of approaching triggering topics and learn how to plan effective lessons.

My advice here would be to make your learning space safe. Take the time to build your group. Create a 'Working Together' agreement that sets out how you'll behave to one another, and how you can challenge views

respectfully. Use inclusive language and include all learners in the dialogue. Challenge gender stereotypes, and teach about consent.

These are the cornerstones of truly outstanding RSE, and are best delivered to mixed groups.



#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Rachael Baker is a senior RSE specialist at the Sex Education Forum, as well as a qualified teacher with extensive experience of teaching across various secondary, sixth form and special needs settings; for more information, visit [sexeducationforum.org.uk](https://sexeducationforum.org.uk) or follow @sex\_ed\_forum

# Let's Talk SCIENCE

From teacher-dominated talk to rapid-fire questioning, Paul Spenceley highlights the issues commonly encountered during class discussions in science lessons

**A**t its core, science as a subject is all about asking questions and looking for answers. So why is it that in the vast majority of the hundreds of science lessons I have observed, over many years in a wide range of different schools, the 'class discussion' part of the lesson has so often been, by some distance, the weakest part?

It never ceases to amaze me that so many teachers feel that all teachers can 'obviously' run discussions with groups of students, and similarly, how little focus this essential skill is given at a practical level with teacher training, in too many cases.

## It just 'happens'

Just one example of this from trainee teachers is when I have been shown lesson plans, sometimes running to several sides of A4 with almost every detail of the lesson meticulously planned – even subdivided at times into 'what the teacher will do' and 'what the students will do' sections – and more often than not, near the start, the end or both, in parts of the lesson plan there will be the word 'discussion' with an allotted time for it.

Sometimes, more information will be provided, such as, 'Discussion to check

understanding of the first learning objective.' No matter how these lesson plans are worded, the implication is the same; that the discussion will somehow just 'happen' with the teacher in control of it.

For teachers with more experience, lesson plans often contain less, not more, information on these mysterious 'discussions'. When queried about this, the inevitable response is almost always something vague, such as 'I will use a range of questions to find out what the students have actually learned.'

From my experience, discussions are usually by some way the weakest part of science lessons, but it is not just me saying this, because it turns out that there has been plenty of research carried out on oral work in schools. So, what do we know about classroom discussions?

## Teachers dominate

At one conference I attended, it was mentioned (citing Vivian Cook's 2000 book, *Second Language Learning and Language Teaching*) that teachers usually dominate 70-90% of lessons. But do science teachers really dominate science lessons and discussions to this degree?

Should you feel that this imbalance does not occur in science discussions in your school, then next time you

have an opportunity to observe a science lesson, use two stop clocks. Switch one on each time the teacher speaks to the class, and use the other each time students speak (officially, that is – not just chatter while 'working').

Whether you get those exact figures of 70-90% or not, one thing is



### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Paul Spenceley is a retired classroom science teacher, having previously worked for 35 years across both comprehensive and grammar schools, and is a regular visitor to schools and speaker at conferences across the country; this article is based on an edited extract from his book, *Successful Science Teaching* (John Catt, £15)



guaranteed – in far too many science lessons, the balance will be hugely in favour of the teacher speaking.

An interesting aside here is that whenever I have done this, even when presented with the evidence of the figures from the two stop clocks, most teachers have disputed the findings and insisted that there must have been a mistake. It seems that not only do science teachers like to dominate lessons, and discussions in particular, but that they do so often, without even being aware that they are!

### The silent many

Another fact I came across is that apparently 60% of secondary school students never have a conversation

with an adult on any one day at school (as observed in the 2006 book *Transforming Education for Every Child: A Practical Handbook* by John West-Burnham and Max Coates). Again, it is not the detail of this fact that concerns me, but the accuracy of the idea behind it with regards to science lessons.

Is it really true that more than half of the students say nothing to the teacher during a science lesson? Again, this can be fairly easily checked during a lesson observation. One way in which I've done this is to use a seating plan of the students, and simply put a tick by each name when a student makes an oral contribution to the lesson. One thing this will undoubtedly confirm is that all too frequently – especially in larger groups – well over half of the students will not contribute at all. The 'silent few' are, in fact, more often, the 'silent many'.

Another fact I picked up at some point and looked into is that apparently, the average length of response from a secondary school student to a question is five words. If so, this would clearly not be of much value in demonstrating their level of learning during a discussion. The shortness of students' responses can be checked quite easily by using a seating plan in combination with a simple three-tier measure (see panel).

### Wait times

My favourite fact about discussions is one that Dylan Wiliam introduced

## GET THEM TALKING

Below is a rough approximation of the type of responses students typically give:

- TIER 1** A short-answer response using a single word or phrase, or very short statement: 'Photosynthesis', 'Unbalanced forces' or 'They are all non-metals'.
- TIER 2** A longer sentence or possibly a short explanation: 'The arrows show the direction the energy flows in a food chain' or 'Alpha radiation is weakest, as paper stopped it.'
- TIER 3** Longer responses of more than one sentence, usually with more detailed reasoning or explanation: 'Herbivores have eyes at the sides of their heads. This gives them a wider field of vision, so they can see potential predators.'

Having tried the approach myself, in most cases answers tended to fall into tier 1, with a few in tier 2 and even fewer, often none, in tier 3. This highlights that too many responses in science discussions are far too short to give a really good indication to either the teacher, or the student, of actual learning.

me to in the early days of the King's College Assessment Project. Apparently, the average wait time between a teacher asking a question, and then adding to it with another follow-on statement or other form of 'encouragement' is... 0.9 seconds. That's right, folks – the average teacher waits for less than a second between finishing what they have asked their students and starting to talk again!

And yet, so many teachers wonder why so few students join in their 'discussions'! The next time I observed a colleague teaching, I sat with my stop clock and timed his 'wait times' between asking a question and starting to say something else to trigger a response. The colleague was an outstanding science teacher, yet even he had wait times that were often too short to time accurately and never ran to more than two seconds.

Science teachers, I have to say, are particularly

bad at this, too quickly adding additional information or clues to 'help' or 'steer' the answers. A teacher may ask students, 'Do you remember the chemical used to do photosynthesis?' but very quickly follow this with a clue, such as, 'It sounds like the chemical used in swimming pools.' This is often due to the fear that they will not be able to 'teach' all the knowledge they need to unless they move through the discussion quickly; again, the emphasis being on teaching, not learning.

I am sure there are many more key facts about classroom discussions that you could find with a bit of research, but these are the ones that I have taken on board over the years. They illustrate extremely well some of the big problems with 'discussions' in science. This is why using class discussions as a starter or plenary exercise is often less than successful as a method of measuring prior learning.

**"The average length of response from a secondary school student to a question is five words"**

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# MATHEMATICS IN SCHOOL

NOVEMBER 2021 - Vol. 50 - No. 5

**Celebrating 50 YEARS**

**The GOLDEN ANNIVERSARY Issue**

with Guest Editor **Rob Eastaway**

**Maths is everywhere**  
David Hunt

**Guest exam questions**  
Rob Eastaway

**Maths GCSE and me**  
What sixth formers think  
Nicole Gozens

**Maths across the professions**  
Andrew Jeffrey

**Where does the maths go?**  
Jude Mortimer

**Maths through a parental lens**  
Donald MacCormick

# Thinking AND doing

If the engagement levels of your maths lessons are lower than you'd like, technology-based practical work can do much to ignite pupils' imaginations, suggest **Keith Parramore** and **Joan Stephens**...

**B**ack in 1982, paragraph 243 of the Cockcroft Report

('Mathematics Counts' – see [bit.ly/ts118-maths1](http://bit.ly/ts118-maths1)) listed six elements for which opportunities should be found in the mathematics classroom. The third was 'appropriate practical work'.

This referred to the need for learners to develop from having to handle objects ('the concrete stage') to a stage at which objects could be replaced by pictures or diagrams ('iconic') before progressing to entirely abstract reasoning ('symbolic').

## Rite of passage

At present, the typical secondary classroom sees little in the way of practical maths. There are obvious organisational reasons for why this should be, but also often an unspoken assumption that 'practical stuff' ought to be left behind in primary school.

Yet we remember once observing a lesson in which top set Y8 pupils enjoyed cutting up cereal packets to measure their rectangular faces, before then computing their areas and thus the total areas of their packets. To our surprise, many pupils struggled with the same problem when it was posed in the form of an orthogonal projection with measurements given. Most pupils in the class were happy with manipulating abstract algebra, yet in this instance still needed recourse to concrete objects.

The rite of passage from 'concrete' through 'iconic' to 'symbolic' isn't a simple progression in which learners just move on from one stage to another. All of us can benefit from moving backwards and forwards between those stages, but teachers of mathematics often won't see any need to revert to the 'concrete' – and thus fail to notice that some of their pupils may benefit from doing so.

## "The benefits of practical work extend well beyond aiding cognitive development"

The logistical difficulties of organising practical work in secondary maths classrooms remain, but opportunities do exist. Such activities might include surveying certain areas of the school, such as the playing fields, or using card and scissor dissection of a circle to establish its area, as well as the usual trigonometry involved in finding the heights of buildings, trees, *et al.* We also shouldn't forget other obvious examples, such as using string to estimate the circumference of a circle, dice-throwing and pencil/ruler/compass constructions.

## Mathematical thinking

The benefits of practical work extend well beyond aiding cognitive development. It can motivate pupils, promote collaborative working, help develop manipulative skills and – since it involves the

application of mathematics – support the development of essential modelling skills. By its nature, practical work encourages discussion and a more precise use of language, which is crucially important to developing mathematical thinking.

Those of a practical bent often tend to be good at improvising. It's surprising, for instance, how useful it can be for a teacher to keep a knotted piece of string in

packages – for example, graph drawing packages, and the excellent interactive geometry packages available to support KS4 work on circle theorems.

## Access to information

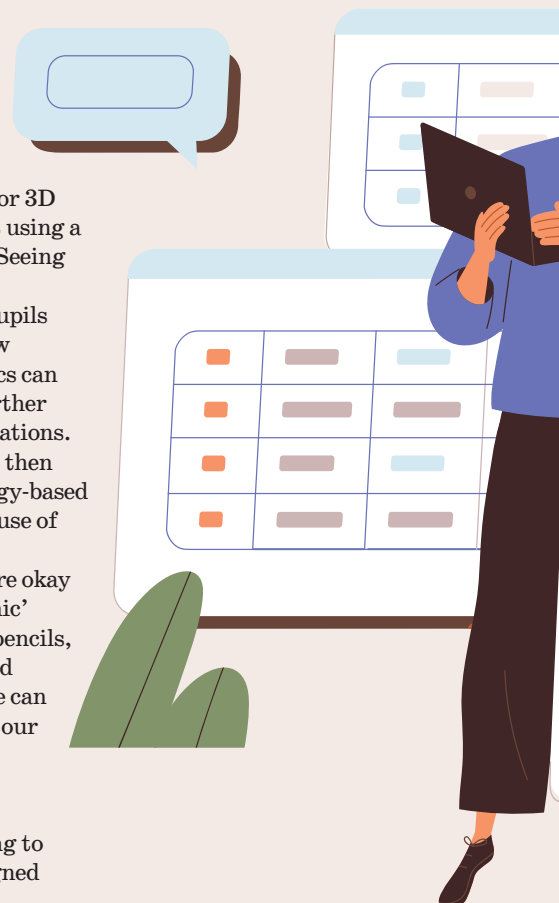
Among the aforementioned Cockcroft recommendations was the suggestion that every pupil should be able to access a calculator in mathematics lessons. Within a scant few years, that target had been met and surpassed to the extent that virtually every pupil had a calculator of their own.

Using a calculator is itself a practical skill, with

their pocket (though make sure it has at least 12 sections before using it to explain Pythagoras). Who could teach vectors, or 3D Pythagoras, without using a corner of the room? Seeing their teacher 'being practical' will help pupils better appreciate how practical mathematics can be, and hopefully further develop their imaginations.

Practical work can then morph into technology-based assignments via the use of geometric tools and packages. If pupils are okay with the idea of 'iconic' learning, why issue pencils, rulers, compasses and protractors, when we can emulate their use on our whiteboards?

Pupils working at 'even better if...' can meanwhile try getting to grips with well-designed





programmable calculators offering some students greater possibilities and flexibility. Indeed, around the turn of the millennium it seemed as if the technology category as a whole was taking us to a place of ever increasing personal computing power – yet instead, smartphones arrived and shifted us away from the prioritising of computing power, in favour of prioritising access to information instead.

That does, however, at least mean that in the present day, the easy availability of spreadsheet packages such as Excel allows most pupils to access and use technology in their study of mathematics. Some of the most obvious uses are to be found in the study of statistics, and the logging, managing and display of data that this demands.

The computing power of Excel can, however, be brought to bear on

probability as well, by having students use it to examine sample means. It takes only moments to enter 1,000 realisations of a uniformly distributed random variable into a spreadsheet column, and then copy these horizontally across 10 columns to produce 1,000 means of samples of size 10. From there, you can quickly generate a further 100 columns, giving 1,000 means of samples of size 100, and so forth.

A different assignment might call for the construction of a much more simple spreadsheet to compute a gradient and intercept of the line of best fit to just a few data points in the form  $(x_i, y_i)$ , and compare them to values computed by Excel. The line can be displayed on a graph of the points, with the option to change the points at will. This kind of construction is simple post-16 work, but can serve as a powerful introduction to probability modelling, while demonstrating the capabilities of spreadsheets.

It also shows how statistics can be computed for reasons other than merely summarising data.

### 'Wow' factor

Then there are applications within mathematics. It's very easy to use post-16 maths – the Taylor series, for example – as the basis for a very small spreadsheet that gives the sine of an inputted angle. Again, demonstrating this spreadsheet to KS4 pupils has a certain 'wow' factor, and will give them some insight into how their calculators do what they do.

Financial mathematics will often fail to inspire KS3/4 pupils, because the power of the relevant mathematics isn't available to them yet. But Excel gives us a means of enacting repetitions, enabling us to explore the effects of compounding.

For instance, we could take an interest rate of 100% per annum and apply it to £1 (cut us some slack here). After 1 year, the result is  $£(1+1)^1 = £2$ . Now compound it twice a year. After 1 year the result is  $£(1+\frac{1}{2})^2 = £2.25$ .

## WONDER IN ACTION

We once observed a Y10 physics lesson in a girls' school that involved pupils recording a measure of the classroom's background radiation, and then compiling an Excel column of readings from other substances.

The awe and wonder of dealing with radiation soon paled into insignificance once the pupils were shown how the value of the background radiation could be subtracted from every other reading by just one pull-down menu.

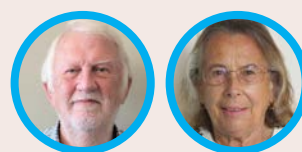
Now generalise, put it into Excel, and see the result of decreasing the compounding interval. What's interesting about it?

We'll finish here with one of our favourite practical exercises – using Excel to explore the harmonic series:

$$1 + \frac{1}{2} + \frac{1}{3} + \frac{1}{4}$$

It diverges, but very slowly indeed! By setting the Excel calculations to run on a loop using Visual Basic for Applications, one can compute huge upper limits to the time needed to sum this to a given small total.

Once again, the act of demonstration can be used to ignite imaginations. That's what we need to be doing when we teach mathematics – something that practical work and technology can very much help us with.



### ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Keith Parramore and Joan Stephens are a husband-and-wife team of mathematicians and visiting tutors to trainee teachers, both having previously taught mathematics in different school settings and held academic posts at the University of Brighton and University of Chichester respectively

Their book, *Lessons Learned from Maths Lessons*, is available now (John Catt Educational, £16)



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1

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Craig 'n' Dave is a comprehensive package of GCSE and A Level computer science resources designed to be delivered via a flipped-classroom learning model. The contents include schemes of learning, student workbooks, supporting videos, model answers, end-of-topic tests, programming activities and more besides, thus helping to reduce teachers' planning and preparation time.



The package's resources aim to facilitate self-starting lessons and get students engaging immediately. The included homework activities meanwhile encourage students to demonstrate independent learning, helping them to grow in confidence and take ownership of their unique learning journeys. To find out more, visit [craigndave.org](http://craigndave.org) or contact [admin@craigndave.co.uk](mailto:admin@craigndave.co.uk)

3

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Using this experience and feedback from hundreds of teachers, it has now developed a brand new suite of resources that will guide your learners through the redeveloped Level 1/Level 2 Cambridge Nationals courses and beyond. For more information, visit [hoddereducation.co.uk/cambridge-nationals-2022](http://hoddereducation.co.uk/cambridge-nationals-2022) or contact [cambridge.nationals@hoddereducation.co.uk](mailto:cambridge.nationals@hoddereducation.co.uk)



4

## On with the show

Disney's FROZEN – the musical that's sure to give you chills – is now playing at Theatre Royal Drury Lane. With incredible special effects, jaw-dropping scenery and an unforgettable score from Kristen Anderson-Lopez and Robert Lopez – writers of the international smash hit 'Let It Go' – FROZEN is an exhilarating experience that will stay with you long after the curtain falls.

Inspired by Hans Christian Andersen's *The Snow Queen*, *Frozen* draws inspiration from Nordic cultures and mythology. To enhance your visit to the show, there is a wealth of resources available, including free lesson plans and wellbeing resources for KS2 pupils. This heart-melting theatrical production is brought to spectacular life on stage by a multi-award-winning creative team led by Tony® and Olivier Award-winning director Michael Grandage, and featuring a book by Academy® and BAFTA Award winner, Jennifer Lee. For more information, visit [disneyonstage.co.uk](http://disneyonstage.co.uk)



5

## CPD time-saver

Is the time you have for CPD in your geography department being squeezed? If you have 15 minutes, one hour or half a day, the Geographical Association's secondary geography CPD packs could have the answer.

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Imperial War Museums' free digital (and Teach Secondary Award-winning) professional development resources explore a range of topics to support your teaching. As the global authority on conflict and its impact on people's lives, these resources are led by both IWM experts and teachers, and are designed to help support KS3/4 teaching across a range of subjects, from Empire and conflict to the Holocaust. The resources include practical guidance on approach, language, finding sources and how to manage difficult conversations in the classroom. For more details, and to sign up for IWM's teacher eNews, visit [iwm.org.uk/learning](http://iwm.org.uk/learning)



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Age appropriate, and compliant with government guidelines, teachers can simply click and go, streaming the programme directly from our website, while detailed lesson plans and teacher guidance notes and videos will help you tackle difficult topics with ease. The programme covers Y7 to Y11, and is available from our website for the bargain introductory price of £20 for one year's access spanning all year groups. Find out more at [respected.org.uk](http://respected.org.uk)



## Expert support

OCR is committed to supporting teachers throughout their journey alongside the redeveloped Cambridge Nationals. OCR's comprehensive support package includes free teaching resources, including candidate-style work examples, schemes of work and curriculum planners. These are then backed by support from an expert team of subject advisors, a wide range of professional development courses, online

internal assessment and on-demand training, access to past exam papers and mark scheme and more besides.

OCR wants to ensure teachers receive all the support and information they need, and will therefore be sending regular updates that contain administration guidance, important dates, new resources, details of professional development opportunities, Q&As and links to latest blogs. Those teaching a redeveloped Cambridge National are advised, if they haven't already done so, to notify OCR by completing a 'Teach with OCR' form, accessible via [bit.ly/ts118-ocr](http://bit.ly/ts118-ocr)



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# Once more with FEELING

**Helen Tierney** offers some advice for making sure your school's musical wellbeing strategies hit the right notes

**“O**ne good thing about music, when it hits you feel ok...”

Bob Marley's lyrics have never felt more relevant. Schools today face enormous demands for ever more student wellbeing support, and increasingly require strategies to help cope with mental health demands both across subjects and within specific departments.

As the same time, there's considerable evidence pointing to the power of music to heal, calm and unify. Music is a natural go-to in this area. It has the potential to yield great benefits for whole school communities, with the result that many music departments are now being asked to plan explicitly for both wellbeing and musical outcomes – but it's a complex task.

## Exponential rise

Bev Vincent knows this landscape well. Having previously worked as a head of performing arts at secondary, she now works as a communication and wellbeing practitioner, where her recent work has seen her liaise with eating disorder clinics and hospital schools, helping facilitate student reintegration back into school.

“The waiting list of young people in need of many types of support at present has risen exponentially,” she says. “If we had caught them earlier in mainstream settings it would have been much easier to keep them in their schools...”

Yet while she speaks positively of the intrinsic value that performing arts, and especially music, can have within this field, she also expresses some concerns regarding current practice. “Teachers need training to deal with the difficult emotions and anxieties that arise from wellbeing activities. The planning needs to be detailed, careful and long-term. This isn't just about box-ticking.”

So how can wellbeing strategies be made to work alongside school music life with integrity? Many secondary departments are facing a fall in GCSE and A Level music numbers and the loss of subject teaching time at KS3 and 4, while across the UK, music teachers are increasingly finding themselves running the show solo. COVID restrictions have also left a considerable long-term impact on the musical life of schools, with some departments still struggling to recover their extra-curricular provision.

## Hoping for magic

Professor Katrina McFerran of Melbourne University, and co-author of the *Handbook of Music, Adolescents and Wellbeing*, recognises the importance of identifying school-specific

needs, as well as the need to manage best solutions for issues such as staffing, skills and spaces. Having seen the complexity involved in deciding on what works best for schools and departments in Australia, her team came up with a matrix designed to help. As she notes herself, “You can't just add music and hope for magic.”

Meanwhile, the performing arts department at Finchley Catholic High School, under the leadership of Courtney

headteacher Niamh

Arnall hailed for its positivity, remarking how “Heart-warming it was to hear their amazing voices in harmony.”

Other strategies at FCHS included building improvisation into schemes of work to enable opportunities for self-expression. Wood used the concept of mood as a starting point in students' compositions, with positive results – especially among those for whom non-verbal communication was an easier first step for them to take.

## A musical safe space

Another response was to organise a ‘drop-in singing group’ for students that entailed no pressures to participate and no planned performances. Wood recalls how this sat very well alongside the school's established vocal groups and provided an important outlet for singers not drawn to the choir while still improving participants' confidence, and in some cases, enabling transitions from the informal group to others regularly rehearsing and even performing.

At a Cheshire comprehensive school where Fionnula McGranahan runs the music department, the priority use for its practice rooms is to provide a musical safe space for informal and social musical connectivity.

“We are lucky to have five practice rooms that we can open to students

**“Perhaps your flute peripatetic is a mindfulness guru on the quiet”**

Wood, came up with a musical response to the school's Y7 transition initiative – in the form of a project based around the novel *The Lion Above the Door*.

As Wood explains, “We collapsed the performing arts timetable for the first few weeks of term, so that students could learn as a whole Y7 group popular songs with themes relating to the strand. The songs would be a starting point for facilitating conversations within a safe weekly space, and a catalyst for exchanges of ideas between the students on topics such as bravery and friendship. This gave them opportunities to discuss fears and anxieties related to the song material, rather than risk exposing personal issues.”

The work culminated in a Y7 ‘welcome event’ performance, which FCHS







**“Many music departments are now being asked to plan explicitly for both wellbeing and musical outcomes”**

## FIND OUT MORE

Orchestras for All's website includes a page containing wellbeing advice for teachers and students, alongside a range of resources [orchestrasforall.org/wellbeing](https://orchestrasforall.org/wellbeing)

Making Music maintains a helpful evidence bank that collates the findings of recent music-related research and surveys [makingmusic.org.uk](https://makingmusic.org.uk)

The Ukelele Project is a successful national initiative the uses music to combat loneliness and promote individuals' wellbeing [ukuleleproject.co.uk/music-and-wellbeing](https://ukuleleproject.co.uk/music-and-wellbeing)

Lambeth Music Service has carried out a considerable amount of work in the area of music and wellbeing, making its website an informative read for teachers across the country [lambethmusic.co.uk/music-and-wellbeing](https://lambethmusic.co.uk/music-and-wellbeing)

at lunchtimes and after school,” says McGranahan. Above all, she recognises how this allows students to be freely creative, whether singly or with friends. Because let's be honest – which music teacher hasn't eavesdropped outside a practice room and marvelled at the teacher-less music-making?

McGranahan's yoga-influenced classroom warm-up activities, having initially been introduced to support vocal preparations, are now included in music-making lessons for their own sake, and have proved to be a staple of students' classroom experience: “I found that after the giddiness they settle into it, with most feeling a sense of calm before moving into the singing.”

LSAs at the school have also been invaluable in enhancing and refining the school's wellbeing practice. One of them, Maria McKernan, sees this at work daily, and can relate it to her own family experiences.

“My daughter had speech therapy, but it wasn't until after she took up the flute that we saw a significant improvement,” McKernan recalls. “Both of my children became less anxious when facing school exams and interviews, because of their history in performing and completing music exams.”

## Holistic and sustained

A similarly holistic and sustained approach is also at play within the work of the award-winning charity Orchestras for All. According to artistic director Emma Oliver-Trend, “The music is the wellbeing, and the wellbeing is the music in our work. Our programmes are one seamless set of activities.”

Oliver-Trend cites the charity's recent Rise and Shine sessions, where gentle physical movement encourages individuals to focus on breath and space for the day's music-making to come. OFA has also found success in blending yoga techniques and singing.

For the sole staff members running a music department, there's plenty of advice out there on how to blend music with wellbeing. In short, think creatively, plan in small steps and build a team of allies. Perhaps your flute peripatetic is a mindfulness guru on the quiet...?

Make musical wellbeing connections with other schools and local performing groups. Dig deep, and you'll soon find that opportunities arise to make that magic appear.

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Helen Tierney has run music departments in comprehensive schools for over 25 years, was an advanced skills teacher for secondary music in Barnet and now works freelance in music teaching, examining and dementia work; her book, *Music Cover Lessons*, is available now (Rhinegold Education, £39.99)

# Notes aren't knowledge

You're not an audiobook, and your students aren't there to copy down everything you say – but you wouldn't know it from the attitudes to notetaking seen in many secondary classrooms, observes **Matt MacGuire**

**D**uring my time as head of sixth form, I noticed a phenomenon. In subjects that were text heavy, where sources, novels or social theories needed to be studied in detail, some students would make copious and beautifully presented notes in every lesson.

Their folders became artefacts – precious receptacles of the knowledge doled out by their teachers in lessons. If a teacher tried to move on from a particular PowerPoint slide before these note-takers had copied down every last word, they'd panic, raise their hand and ask for another minute. Sometimes they would ask permission to take a photo of the slide so they could copy it down later.

I'd say that the most beautiful, well-organised and comprehensive folders I saw across sixth form subjects usually belonged to girls, though not always. These were hard-working and conscientious students – though not necessarily those who learnt the most in lessons.

## Holding pens

After much thought, I eventually came to the conclusion that these beautiful student folders were pretty much useless. Please – bear with me...

Ultimately, the proper receptacle for knowledge and skills is our students' long term memory. Folders full of notes are of no use in the exam hall, nor in the real-

world application of knowledge. At best, they're a place where students write down the things they want to store in long term memory. They're a kind of temporary holding pen, where students jot down salient information from the lesson in order to refer to it at a later date – typically in preparation for an assessment or examination.

And yet, this makes no sense. If the purpose of note-taking in lessons is to

## “Your job isn't to create human photocopiers”

create a revision resource for future use, why don't teachers obviate the need for note-taking altogether by providing centrally-produced revision notes? The cognitive load created when students are required to listen and take notes at the same time is suboptimal, and produces an unnecessary split in attention.

If you want students to really listen to you, don't task them with writing down every word you say, or the text displayed on your PowerPoint slides. You want them to feel they can give their full attention to listening and understanding. Your job isn't to create human photocopiers.

To reiterate the point, notes in folders are useless unless they translate into knowledge, because notes themselves aren't knowledge.

## Noting with purpose

On that basis, we could make the argument that students shouldn't take any notes in lessons at all, since doing so detracts from their ability to focus on explanations and new information. However, that argument isn't quite right either.

I believe that note-taking can play a role in memorisation (i.e. learning), but is of little to no use when it amounts to mindless, verbatim transcription. If we

students take notes in this way, their writing becomes an externalisation of their summative thinking, rather than a verbatim replication of the verbal input. They have cognitively manipulated the content before reproducing it in a more concise form.

This demonstrates thinking and at least a degree of understanding. Teachers can provide constraints that force students to aim for concision in their notes – allowing limited space for note-taking on each topic, or simply limiting the time provided for note-taking should suffice.

## Scaffolded thinking

Alternatively, teachers can prohibit note-taking during instruction, but allow students to try and write down what they remember after the explanation has finished. This forces students to think and try to recall what they have just heard, but resulting notes may not be accurate, and therefore not necessarily serve as a useful revision resource. Teachers will have to provide centrally produced and quality assured revision notes for that purpose themselves.

The point I'm ultimately making is that teachers should think very carefully before requiring students to take notes. They might record the information on paper, but the cost of doing so may be that they can't simultaneously record it in their memory.

Another way of scaffolding students' thinking during



note-taking is to use graphic organisers. The best I've personally seen is the Cornell notes method, which I shared with all of our sixth form students at the outset of their studies.

It's a method that provides students with a template which allows them to order their thoughts. A quick Google search will quickly provide you with plenty of free downloadable Cornell notes templates.

Like all graphic organisers, the power of the Cornell method lies in how it scaffolds the thinking process for students. First, students are allowed to make 'stream of consciousness' notes in a main note-taking column. They can record anything they feel is important but must still be selective, since there isn't the space or time for verbatim transcription.

Next, they add keywords,

subheadings or cues on a left hand column as they begin to summarise parts of the content. Finally, a separate summary section is used to draw out the most important pieces of information from the lesson. A good approach is to ask students to fill in this section after the lesson, possibly even the next day, to facilitate retrieval practice.

### Explicit connections

There are a range of free graphic organisers available online that can be well worth investigating and trying out

in lessons. They're easy to reproduce freehand, so you don't necessarily need to photocopy mountains of worksheets. Students could even create the diagrams themselves in their exercise books.

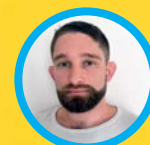
Graphic organisers help with note-taking, in that the way learners organise information on the page influences how they think about that information. A Venn diagram promotes comparative thinking. A mind map can help organise thoughts into hierarchal topics and

subtopics. A timeline promotes chronological thinking. Flowcharts are great for scaffolding thinking about processes, and can help make explicit the causal links between different stages in a complex process. In each case, the graphic

layout of students' notes make explicit connections: 'This information is the opposite of that information'; 'This process catalyses the next process'; 'This event happened chronologically earlier than this event'. All require thinking during the note-taking process, thanks to students needing to deploy their notes appropriately within the particular graphic organiser selected by the teacher.

Remember, notes aren't knowledge. Unstructured and mechanical copying down won't lead to learning, but by adding appropriate restraints, we can introduce desirable difficulty into the note-taking process itself. We can turn an otherwise mindless activity into an exercise in powerful thinking.

We can guide our students to summarise, compare, sequence or categorise. We can require them to retrieve information, instead of simply copying it down immediately. The golden rule is this – if they aren't thinking, they aren't learning.



#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Matt MacGuire (@MacGrammar) is an assistant headteacher; this article is based on a post originally published at his blog, Ten Rules for Teaching (tenrulesforteaching.com)

## FROM PASSIVE TO ACTIVE

If you want to turn your students' passive note-taking into a process of active thinking, try the following:

- Limit the space allowed for note-taking so students have to summarise
- Limit the time allowed for note-taking, to heighten urgency of concentration during the explanation
- Disallow note-taking during the explanation completely, but allow retrospective note-taking immediately after the explanation to promote recall practice

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## SMART QUIZ

Students often forget what they have learned over time. Smart Revise presents students with their own personalised, spaced, interleaved and diagnostic multiple-choice questions that encourage mastery of the core principles of business. Teachers can give students control, or opt to gradually increase the available content.

## SMART TERMS

These are more than simply electronic flashcards. In 'reflective mode', students RAG rate their understanding of subject key terminology. In 'interactive mode', students are challenged to write definitions. Both modes will present teachers with a rich set of analytic reports that are ideal for baseline assessments and topic reviews.

## SMART ADVANCE

Smart Revise features more than 450 original exam-style questions and 11 case studies (with command word help and guided marking for students) written by experienced teachers. These are accompanied by mark schemes carefully curated by a lead examiner, to ensure that students are encouraged to frame their answers correctly.

## SMART TASKS

Questions can be set using the categories of 'Quiz', 'Terms' and 'Advance', with teachers able to track completion and record outcomes while reviewing and analysing their students' performance. 'Quiz' uses algorithms to automatically select questions based on prior performance, while 'Tasks' allows teachers to set the same questions for all students.

# Can't read, WON'T READ?

If we want students to read of their own volition, we should respect their agency, understand their preferences and share our own enjoyment of reading, says **Hannah Grace**....

**T**he reading offer that students have in secondary school has become my passion. It's an area that's relatively under-researched, with conflicting evidence over what does and doesn't work at secondary level to keep students reading – but what we do know is that there tends to be a massive drop-off in terms of students' volitional reading when they transition over from primary school.

I currently work at a large secondary school in the West Midlands, where I'm the KS3 English lead. As well as having responsibility for the KS3 curriculum, part of my role involves managing and working with the librarian in our school library.

In recent years, I've also worked with Professor Theresa Cremin, co-director of the Open University's Literacy and Social Justice Centre, and her team on the activities they do around reading for pleasure. As part of that, I run a teacher reading group – part of a network of groups across the country that meet six times a year to examine the reading for pleasure pedagogy shared on the OU website, implementing that in classrooms and then reflecting on what does and doesn't seem to work.

## Social reading environments

Over the past several years I've done a lot of work around our school's reading

lessons – moving them away from being enforced periods of silence, to having them become social reading environments.

Giving children opportunities to read a wider range of literature is a huge part of what I now do in reading lessons. That can involve talking to the students about what they've been reading, as well as recommending books to them. One of the biggest changes for me, in terms of my approach to encouraging reading for pleasure, is that I simply read lots of children's literature now so that I can share recommendations – be it in a formal

don't have to read a novel during these periods. They can read graphic novels, magazines, books brought in from home, or even talk to each other about what they've been reading.

The foundation of my current practice is that 'reading lessons' don't necessarily have to involve 30 children sitting silently reading novels I've prescribed for them, or which they've had to choose from a list. It's an approach based far more around preserving their agency, which is tied into research that suggests this is how a long term love of reading can be fostered.

***“You can't just give kids books and expect them to be read unless you've shown that you're invested in the books yourself”***

classroom setting or through informal conversations I have with students in different parts of the school

We've always set aside a certain amount of lesson time for 'protected reading', but another major change I've made is that students

## Levels of risk

So far, there haven't been many objections in the sense that I'm doing is unacceptable. There have been many changes in





English teaching in recent years, not least in terms of our understanding of 'the canon', though that's a whole other conversation.

Admittedly, it's an approach that can be very difficult for staff unless they possess a working knowledge of contemporary children's literature – but I'd maintain that you can't just give kids books and expect them to be read unless you've shown that you're invested in the books yourself. There's a lot to be said for showing students that you've been reading those books, researching what's out, sourcing titles from a diverse range of authors and thinking seriously about the kind of books students might like to read.

It's a long term, highly personalised process, since what works for one group of students might not work for another. Some classes ultimately need more structure in their reading lessons – maybe reading a KS3-oriented picture book together under the visualiser and talking about it, which is something we do a lot of as a way of easing students into shared reading experiences. Conversely, voracious readers will already possess quite a lot of self-direction.

Yes, it's an approach that entails some level of 'risk'. With some

classes, the classroom environment might initially seem somewhat chaotic with lots of talking – which is why you have to establish with the class early on what your expectations are in order to make it work.

It's not simply a case of letting students run around the library and do whatever they want; you have to model the behaviour you want to see, and that process takes time. As secondary teachers, we can often worry about whether we're gathering enough evidence to tell if something is working – particularly in the context of reading. Reading for pleasure doesn't necessarily generate much empirical data in itself; it's more an aspect of engagement, and one that's difficult to track

via any means other than talking to the children.

### 'Big up your book'

When meeting with my groups at the start of the year, I'll share Quentin Blake's illustration of Daniel Pennac's 'Rights of the Reader'. It's beautiful illustration that I use to get students thinking and talking about our rights as readers, and as a reading class – how can we develop our own reading, while also being respectful of what our peers might want to be doing at the same time.

The lessons themselves then start with the modelling. To take a typical Y8 class, at the start I'll talk about what I've been reading recently, books that I've enjoyed, and sometimes books that I haven't. The authenticity is important – let them know that it's

okay to start reading a book at the weekend, not feel sure about it and switch to reading something else.

They'll then have a few minutes to talk to their partner about something they've read – an activity we sometimes call 'Big up your book' – so they can share what they've enjoyed. With some groups, this can be more scaffolded – 'Share three things with your partner that you enjoyed about the book,' for example, or having pairs read favourite passages together. If they're comfortable with doing so, they might then talk to the rest of the class about their book, which can generate positive conversations around what they'd like to read next.



**ABOUT THE AUTHOR**  
Hannah Grace (@MissGreads)  
is a KS3 English lead



## TRY IT YOURSELF

- If you can, make time for you and your staff to read children's books and discuss what you've been reading. Find out about the latest publications, identify popular authors and offer these as recommendations to your students.
- Get to know your students as readers. What are their experiences of reading? What are their likes and dislikes? Dig deeper into their preferences and try to discover their reading identities.
- Engage with the OU's Reading for Pleasure website ([ourfp.org](http://ourfp.org)), as my advice is essentially based on their structure of how to motivate young readers.
- Talk to your students about what they read at home. You'll probably find that they're reading a great deal, but perhaps not in ways they'd necessarily recognise.
- Also talk to them about the things you like, and what you do and don't like reading, as part of a sincere, authentic conversation.
- Keep books everywhere, make them visible and talk about them. If you can demonstrate an honest passion and energy for reading, your students will pick up it.
- Join a teacher reading group, particularly if you're a secondary teacher, as there's so much we can learn from what our primary colleagues do in this area.

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# LEARNING LAB

## IN THIS ISSUE

- + Discover the career opportunities offered by the NHS
- + Why classroom consistency is crucially important
- + The COVID Social Mobility & Opportunities study issues its initial findings
- + A short guide to classroom displays, and the point where decorations threaten to become distractions
- + The EHRC's new guidance on students who wear their hair in natural Afro styles
- + Barnardo's asks, where are our school Mental Health Support Teams?
- + LGfL launches new resource series to help education professionals tackle the spread of online extremism
- + Reframing behaviour in the classroom – part 3 of our explainer series on how to best deal with persistent behavioural headaches

## CONTRIBUTORS

### RICHARD JAMES

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NHS careers lead

### ROBIN LAUNDER

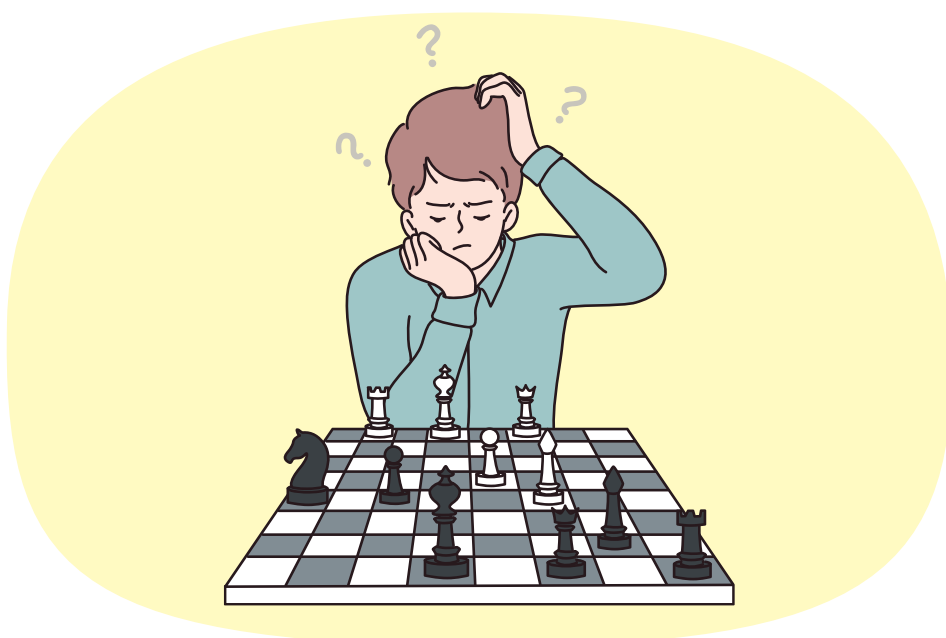
Behaviour management consultant and speaker

### ADAM RICHES

Senior leader for teaching and learning

### ZEPH BENNETT

PE teacher and school achievement leader



## Thinking about ...

## CHESS

**T**here will be children in your school whose lives could be transformed by chess in many ways, yet many people – including parents and teachers – have a rather negative opinion of chess as a game, and of those who play it (nerds, antisocial loners). That is, until they're encouraged by national and international chess organisations to perceive the game as something that's 'good for children' and 'makes kids smarter'. Let's look at how chess can be viewed by the public, and how accurate those impressions are...

**Chess is slow!** It may indeed not always be the quickest game, but there is the option of playing online 'bullet chess', where each player might take a minute or even less to play the complete game – potentially equating to one second or less per move. Really, you can play at whatever speed you choose.

**Chess is boring!** It's true that nothing appeals to everyone. Some people find football boring while others don't. The point about chess is that, unlike football and many other activities, it's knowledge-based – not just knowledge regarding the rules of the game, but information accumulated over the past

thousand years or more about the best way to play. You can enjoy watching a Premier League football match without being good at football, but you need to be a reasonably good player to appreciate chess games as a spectator.

**Chess is for young children!** Large-scale tournaments for pre-teens down to 5-year-olds are popular, though in my opinion, many promoters are well-intentioned but misguided. Due to the game's complexity and reliance on domain-specific knowledge, serious competitive chess is, in general, more suitable for children of secondary school age and adults.

### Chess isn't for girls!

Sadly, the vast majority of competitive players are male, with various reasons as to why. Modern chess clubs have their origins in the gentlemen's clubs of the late 18th century; the game later became popular in working men's clubs, so it's always been associated with male, rather than female spaces. The warlike nature of the game may be more attractive to boys than to girls, but my view is that there's no reason why girls can't play chess as well as boys. Schools can and should play a part in getting more girls involved in chess – perhaps by running separate competitions for girls, or by ensuring that chess teams are mixed.



### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Richard James has been teaching and organising chess for children since 1972, and has written extensively on chess history and trivia; this piece is based on an extract from his latest book, *Chess for Schools* (Crown House Publishing, £16.99)

## HELPING THE HEALTH OF THE NATION



The NHS is the largest employer in the UK, with 1.3 million staff in England alone. In fact, at least one student in every classroom will work for the NHS at some point in their life.

Over the last three years, our staff has led the fight against COVID-19; ordinary people, doing extraordinary things, but it's taken a toll, resulting in untold pressures on the NHS and its staff. Plans are in place to support the NHS workforce, patients and the public through these challenging times, but it's also important to not forget about the future – including making sure that we attract the next generation of staff.

Engaging young people in school is crucial to this. We need young people to be thinking about a future NHS career now, so that they can make the right choices as they go through their education journey.

People can often have misconceptions when it comes to NHS careers, such as needing to be a nurse or doctor, or needing to have attended university. Yet there are actually more than 350 careers in the NHS, spanning both clinical and non-clinical roles – estates, for example, or IT, or administrative services.

There are more routes into the NHS than ever before. Over 150 clinical and non-clinical apprenticeships are available at every level, ranging from production chef to doctor degree, so there's something to suit everyone. Most importantly, the NHS welcomes young people from a variety of diverse backgrounds and abilities. This not only creates opportunity, but also ensures we have a workforce that reflects and understands the

communities it serves.

'Step into the NHS' is a careers programme of teaching resources aimed at KS2 to KS4. The programme helps schools meet the Gatsby benchmarks through linking curriculum learning to careers, learning from careers and labour market information, and fostering encounters with employers and employees.

Our upcoming KS3 competition meanwhile tasks students with putting themselves in the position of an employer and creating a job advert that will appeal to their peers, with fantastic prizes to be won. Via free online videos, worksheets and quizzes, they can research the vital skills, experience and qualifications a job needs, while also widening their knowledge of the various different careers available in the NHS.

## DO THIS

### BE CONSISTENT

*EXERCISE BETTER CLASS CONTROL WITH THESE TIPS FROM ROBIN LAUNDER...*

Make sure that you're consistently the same person in each lesson, day in, day out. There should be no surprises, erratic behaviour or sudden character shifts – and needless to say, the person you need to be is decent, measured and boundaried.

Be the same person with all of your students. You have no favourites in your classroom, or if you prefer, *every student is your favourite*. Either way, all should feel equally valued.

The stuff that's happening in your life? Money worries, relationships, work issues – whatever it is, it shouldn't intrude in your classroom, influence your behaviour or unsettle your consistency. Whatever's outside the classroom must stay there.

By being consistent, your students will know where they are with you. They'll understand your expectations and be able to work towards them. They'll understand your boundaries and be able to keep within them.

But if you're inconsistent, none of that's possible. You'll become a barrier to the learning, end up losing your students' respect or worse – fill your students with anxiety as they try to double guess what you're going to do next.

**Robin Launder is a behaviour management consultant and speaker; find more tips in his weekly Better Behaviour online course – see [behaviourbuddy.co.uk](http://behaviourbuddy.co.uk) for details**

**ABI CHANGER IS AN NHS CAREERS LEAD; TO DOWNLOAD THE RESOURCES AND FIND OUT MORE ABOUT THE KS3 COMPETITION, VISIT [STEPINTOTHE NHS.NHS.UK](http://STEPINTOTHE NHS.NHS.UK)**



# 55%

of parents to school-age children report being concerned about how exam stress is affecting their child

Source: Parent voice research carried out by the campaigning organisation Parentkind



The COVID Social Mobility & Opportunities (COSMO) study – a joint project led by UCL and the Sutton Trust – has published its initial findings into how young people are progressing with their education following the disruptions of the pandemic.

The study is following a representative sample of over 13,000 young people across England who were in Year 11 in 2021.

Most of the cohort have just begun Year 13 and are due to take A Levels in summer 2023, with the rest variously undertaking other qualifications, or engaged in training and work.

80% of the study's participants believe their academic progress has suffered, while half say they are now less motivated to study and learn as a result of the pandemic. 37% of those attending state schools felt that they had fallen behind their classmates, compared to 15% of students attending independent schools.

In terms of catch-up learning, it appears that the most readily available option – additional online classes – was only offered to half of the participants, and taken up by less than a third. When asked if they had been able to catch up with learning lost during the pandemic,

46% of students attending comprehensive schools stated that they hadn't; the same sentiment was expressed by a significantly 27% of those attending independent schools.



## YOUR GUIDE TO ...

### DISPLAYS

In 2014, Anna Fisher of Carnegie Mellon University's department of psychology found that children were less likely to stay focused in highly decorated classrooms, and that students who were taught in such environments received lower test scores than those taught in comparatively sparse spaces.

Displays need to be useful. They need to help the learning of pupils – but how?

The first thing to have focal points. This doesn't simply mean plastering your walls with random words, hanging objects from the ceiling and making the room resemble a maze of paper. Make your room a 360° experience, but group resources together – key terms in one place, writing frames in another and exemplars in another.

Keep the extraneous load low by guiding students around the displays. Make them resources that you point to in the course of your teaching and keep referring to them, as this makes them memorable. Use your room to guide your kids through their exams by putting up key words/vocabulary, phrases, concepts, graphs, pictures or models of

great work with annotations.

Don't restrict your displays to static resources though, as it's a waste. Take down terms and resources and use the resulting gaps to put up recall exercises. Build in low stakes testing around your displays and replicate them (if possible), so that students can use them at home. Little tricks like this are a great way of building engagement with resources that take you time to make.

Displays that model work – a paragraph structure, for example – can save reams of time and frustration. Just imagine not having to repeat concepts that have been covered (sometimes many, many times) before!

You can also reduce your workload when you're in the classroom by having a point you can reference. This is especially helpful with key terms and phrasing – 'How do I say...' – which can be remedied with a point in the right direction. What more, you need only do this a couple of times before the resource has paid for itself (so to speak) and the student's study habits start to improve as a result.



ADAM RICHES IS A SENIOR LEADER FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING;  
FOLLOW HIM AT @TEACHMRRICHES

# 52%

of teachers are worried that staff resignations throughout the 22/23 academic year will impact upon pupils' learning

Source: Online survey conducted by Renaissance among UK primary/secondary school senior leaders and subject heads across the UK and Ireland

## Need to know

The Equality and Human Rights Commission issued new guidance last month, stating that children and adolescents shouldn't be prevented from wearing their hair in natural Afro styles while at school. As a result, any uniform policies that explicitly ban certain hairstyles, without any allowances for exceptions on racial grounds, are set to become unlawful.

This hairstyles in question include natural Afro hairstyles, braids, cornrows, plaits and head coverings, among others.

The EHRC's guidance was accompanied by the publication of resources aimed at helping education authorities, academy trust boards and school leaders ensure that any hair or hairstyle policies they implement won't be unlawfully discriminatory.

The resources include guidance on stopping hair discrimination with practical examples based on real-life incidents; a decision-making tool to help school leaders to draft and review any existing policies; and an animated video aimed at raising awareness of indirect race discrimination in schools and what should be done to prevent it.

Further information and details of how to download the resources can be found at [bit.ly/ts118-LL1](http://bit.ly/ts118-LL1)



## RESEARCH SPOTLIGHT

### MENTAL HEALTH PROVISION IN SCHOOLS

**New data from children's charity Barnardo's has revealed the impact that poor mental health is having on academic performance of secondary school children, as it calls on the government to accelerate the rollout of Mental Health Support Teams in schools.**

A YouGov poll commissioned by the charity of parents with school-age children experiencing mental health difficulties found that three fifths of said children were struggling to perform well in the classroom. 61% of this group said that poor mental health had contributed towards them feeling low self-esteem, while over half said that they were finding it hard to focus or concentrate on learning.

Barnardo's is currently calling on the government to speed up the rollout of Mental Health Support Teams (MHSTs) in schools across England, and has launched an online petition that calls for this provision to be put in place at every school and college in the country.

A recent analysis of government figures by the charity found that 6.5 million children likely won't have access to an MHST by 2023 under current plans, despite growing concerns around the mental health of school-age children. NHS data further shows that approximately one in six children in England have a probable mental health disorder.

According Polly Atkins, Children's Services Manager for Barnardo's, "The pandemic's lockdowns and home-schooling provided children with the opportunity to avoid the classroom and any negative feelings which they may

have had towards that setting, such as anxiety. But our children need the opportunity to develop skills to help them handle this range of emotions, rather than hide away from them and in-school support plays a vital role."

Barnardo's itself offers a range of health and wellbeing tools aimed at teachers and students. The charity's Education Community produces various free resources on topics that include loss, coping with change and self-care, alongside examples of best practice, shared learning and information on how to get support from a Barnardo's service. This can also help teachers spot any causes for concern amongst students, as a complement to existing safeguarding training.

"Teachers know their kids, so are in a good position to notice any changes in their behaviour," Atkins adds. "However, we also know that teachers are already time poor. That's why government-funded specialist MHSTs and designated senior mental health lead are so vital for ensuring that children's wellbeing is protected, and that they can thrive at school."

"We truly believe there is a real need for more mental health provision in schools. We hope the government will act quickly to roll out MHSTs in England, so that every child can access the support they need to focus on their studies and work towards a positive future."

**Readers can find out more and get involved with the Barnardo's Education Community by visiting [educators-barnardos.org.uk](http://educators-barnardos.org.uk)**





On the radar

## Act Early Stories

The charity LGfL has launched Act Early Stories – a pack of free educational activities and accompanying lessons intended for use by schools and youth centres to raise awareness of extremism, spark discussion and promote critical thinking among young people.

Created by LGfL's safeguarding team, the resources serve to complement Counter Terrorism Policing's ACTEarly Campaign, which was formed in response to record numbers of young people appearing in CTP casework – thus indicating a

need for teachers, parents, friends and family to do more to protect the young people in their care from extremism.

According to the latest set of Prevent statistics, dated 2020 to 2021, some 25% of referrals were for children under the age of 15 (out of 4,915 referrals in total).

The Act Early Stories resource aims to provide schools with a means of exploring extreme right-wing narratives and religious extremism. The contents include a series of explanatory videos, ready-to-use session slides and guidance notes for encouraging productive

discussions around issues such as peer pressure, grooming and exploitation.

The resource is designed to be used by experienced practitioners, as well as those lacking extensive knowledge of the issues in questions.

According to Mubina Asaria of LGfL's DigiSafe Team, "We all have a role in safeguarding young people from online harm. These resources can help build resilience to extremist narratives by tackling these issues head-on."

Find out more at [actearlystories.lgfl.net](https://actearlystories.lgfl.net)

## TRENDING

Our pick of the recent resources and launches teachers might find useful...

### THE GREAT OUTDOORS

New from the Field Studies Council is a Digital Hub aimed supporting secondary teaching staff and students in subjects with a fieldwork component. The service includes student resources for fieldwork topics required by 14-18 geography and 16-18 biology courses, as well as worksheets, story maps and CPD materials.

[field-studies-council.org/digital-hub](https://field-studies-council.org/digital-hub)

### LISTEN IN

The Social Mobility Commission has launched a new podcast series titled 'Social Mobility Talks'. Episode 1 sees host, SMC chair and Michaela Free School headteacher Katharine Birbalsingh discuss the role that parents and families can play in social mobility with the UK's first professor of social mobility, Lee Elliot Major of Exeter University.

Available via YouTube, Spotify and Apple Podcasts

## TEACHER WALKTHROUGH

### REFRAMING BEHAVIOUR IN THE CLASSROOM

PART 3 OF AN ILLUSTRATED EXPLAINER, BASED ON A TWITTER THREAD FROM @IANWHITE21, ON HOW WE CAN APPROACH PERENNIAL BEHAVIOUR ISSUES USING A MORE MEASURED RESPONSE

1



#### ROUTINES

A common problem is allowing expectations to drift over time. Individual students are allowed to shout out, routines become sloppy, relationships remain underdeveloped. One way to arrest this is to narrate things consistently: 'Remember, we always <insert expectation>'

2



#### SQUAMISHNESS

Some teachers are nervous of giving sanctions and being strict, because they think it's dehumanising and cruel. My experience suggests the opposite – the sanctions you put in place communicate that you care and have high expectations.

3



#### VOICE

Students giving inaudible answers damages pace, but also causes behaviour problems as students get frustrated. Explicitly teach students how to project their answers – 'Class voice please, David – go!'

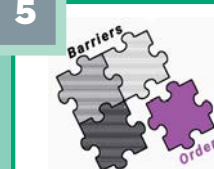
4



#### LOW ENERGY

It's different for every teacher, but behaviour management can be massively improved by showing passion for the subject material. Locate the most charismatic, authentic version of yourself and be that teacher.

5



#### EXCUSES

We've heard them all – I'm late because the last period overran, or because it's windy today – but steer clear of all this. Behaviour management is a puzzle to be solved. Students deserve ordered lessons, not for us to give up on them because it's 'windy'.

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

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## SAFEGUARDING

## Mentor

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- Trainees gain access to a personalised learning platform

## REVIEW BY JOHN DABELL



All staff need to possess up-to-date safeguarding and child protection training, so that they can capably discharge their responsibilities within a modern school setting. But for this, they require high quality, accredited CPD training and specialist support services from those in the know.

The Safeguarding Company would be my first port of call, since they offer a comprehensive training programme delivered by staff who possess a deep knowledge of essential safeguarding processes and strategies.

Their aptly named Mentor service provides schools with exactly what they need to manage the wide spectrum of challenges teachers can face in the course of their duties – including digesting the voluminous quantity of statutory guidance and legislation out there, and translating it into usable resources and handy summaries.

Mentor provides schools with an impressive suite of training courses designed to enable all staff to confidently carry out their roles while effectively safeguarding the children and young people in their care. They offer a choice between self-paced, on-demand learning delivered online, or interactive online tutor-led sessions that run throughout the year.

The courses themselves come in different forms to suit the various needs of teachers, and any support or volunteer staff working regularly with children. As such, the individual training can be introductory, general or specialist in nature, though there

are also offerings designed with whole staff training in mind, including refresher courses that cover the 4 'R's of 'Recognise', 'Respond', 'Report' and 'Record'. Beyond that, there are further courses geared towards yet more specific needs, be it those of DSLs, governors or even staff at international schools.

For those seeking an all-inclusive safeguarding training solution, The Safeguarding Company's Mentor Pro option includes access to its full range of on-demand, CPD-accredited courses and specialist safeguarding resources, as well as a useful download library that includes INSET packs, policy templates and guides for handling child abuse disclosures. If, on the other other hand, you're looking for something more specialised, bespoke training and services can be arranged via the Mentor Plus package.

Common to all Mentor options are online community rooms and calendars that can be used to share best practice, obtain support and gather resources, as well as access to a host of materials that include case studies, presentations, guidance documents, glossaries and explanatory booklets.

Safeguarding is a complex and demanding area, in which schools need all the help they can get. With its high quality training and impressive array of resources, The Safeguarding Company's Mentor service can provide such help in spades – thus ensuring that school staff can develop and retain the vital skills and knowledge they'll need to keep children safe at all times.

teach  
SECONDARY

## VERDICT

- ✓ Offers a depth and breadth of training that's second to none
- ✓ Provides staff with informed, practical knowledge and the skills they'll need to ably safeguard students
- ✓ Helps ensure compliance with the latest statutory guidance
- ✓ All course content is supported by a host of high quality resources
- ✓ Can optionally support the delivery of whole-school safeguarding training

## UPGRADE IF...

You're looking to change the behaviours, attitudes and skills within your school in a way that creates a better safeguarding culture, or are wanting to equip safeguarding leads with the confidence to oversee consistently high safeguarding standards.

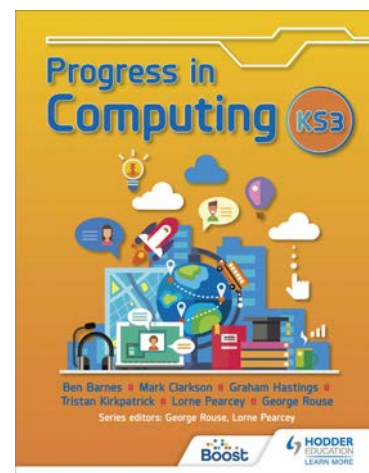
For more details and to obtain a quote, contact 0330 6600 757 or visit [thesafeguardingcompany.com/mentor](https://thesafeguardingcompany.com/mentor)





# 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](https://hoddereducation.co.uk)



#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

John Lawson is a former secondary teacher, now serving as a foundation governor and running a tutoring service, and author of the book *The Successful (Less Stressful) Student* (Outskirts Press, £11.95); for more information, visit [prep4successnow.wordpress.com](http://prep4successnow.wordpress.com) or follow @johninpompano



#### THE LAST WORD

# Defending the indefensible



So, you want to be a humanities teacher? Well, first you've got to be able to interpret fractions and percentages as operators, notes an increasingly exasperated John Lawson...

One of my close friends, Eve, gained a first in philosophy, a distinguished Masters in English literature and a doctorate in theology. She has raised three remarkably independent daughters, and held down a full-time managerial position at a City law firm for 12 years while she studied.

Yet while she enjoys the job and its generous benefits, education is her true passion. Eve is an engaging and impressive communicator, and would have become a certified teacher were it not for one irrelevant gap in her otherwise impressive CV – *she needs a grade C/4 GCSE in mathematics to commence a secondary PGCE*.

Why? Eve left school at 15, later blossoming as a mature student, with the result that a maths qualification was never something she'd required or needed. Indeed, I myself excelled in my undergraduate logic class without studying maths.

This 'illogical' GCSE requirement maligns the work of humanities scholars who dexterously manipulate and evaluate the complex empirical and theoretical data generated by their disciplines. Many teachers successfully utilise intuition, logic, and imagination without the conscious application of maths. Yet the DfE insists that for now, Eve is unfit to teach English in state secondary schools – unless she acquires a 'C/4' in mathematics, whereupon she will be officially hailed as the excellent candidate she already is. Sorry, but it simply doesn't add up.

### Bureaucratic myopia

Many among today's online voices are actively seeking to expose this lazy and prejudicial DfE ruling that hones in on people's supposed 'deficiencies' rather than celebrating their unique skills and talents.

Are we effectively barring the 35% of teens who fail to achieve a grade 4 in maths from teaching? Virtually all forms of prejudice reduce individuals to a small part of who they are. Instead of viewing the whole person, critics fixate on a perceived flaw. In this case, Eve may be brilliant, but *tut tut*, she hasn't passed maths.

My own research has led to me identifying seven pillars of effective teachers – knowledge, passion, clarity, love, labour, creativity, and SOH. Mathematical mastery isn't one of them.

As a primary school governor, I've supported drives for higher standards across the board in English, maths, and science. I'm not entirely opposed to setting rigorous standards for secondary PGCE students, but in this case, I do take issue with the bureaucratic myopia, superficiality and intransigence of the move – not the immense value of mathematics as a subject. It seems odd that we regularly take on new staff with dyslexia across the teaching profession, while continuing to discriminate against those who aren't consummate mathematicians.

### 'Might is right'

Mathematical (in)ability doesn't determine one's ability to teach the arts and humanities. There are many 'inspirational teachers' currently in post who couldn't pass a GCSE maths exam if they took one tomorrow. Should we fire them?

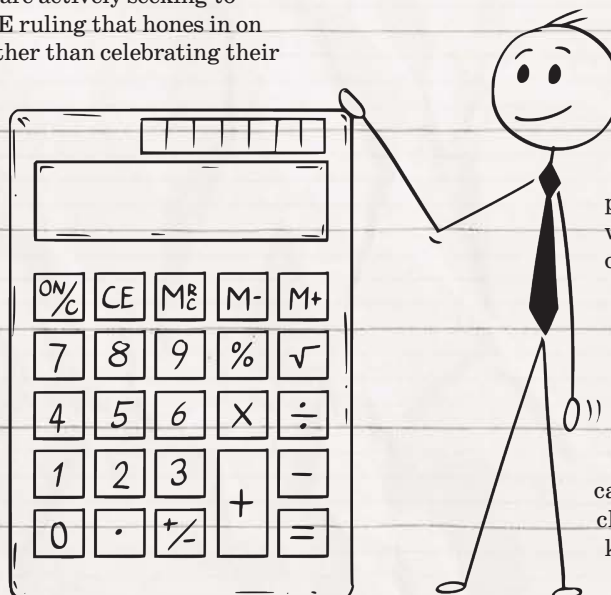
It's an absurd and superficial rule that could conceivably have prevented Jesus Christ himself from teaching RE and Shakespeare from teaching a lesson on *Macbeth*. I've written to the DfE repeatedly about it, and had eight different officers feed me the templated party line: "GCSE maths is a statutory requirement for initial teacher training courses... [It] also ensures that candidates have a minimum standard of educational attainment."

This 'circular' auto-response doesn't actually address the question – it merely dissolves it. It seems that the DfE would rather project a 'might is right' approach than reconfigure its entry requirements in a way that could significantly increase our talent pool.

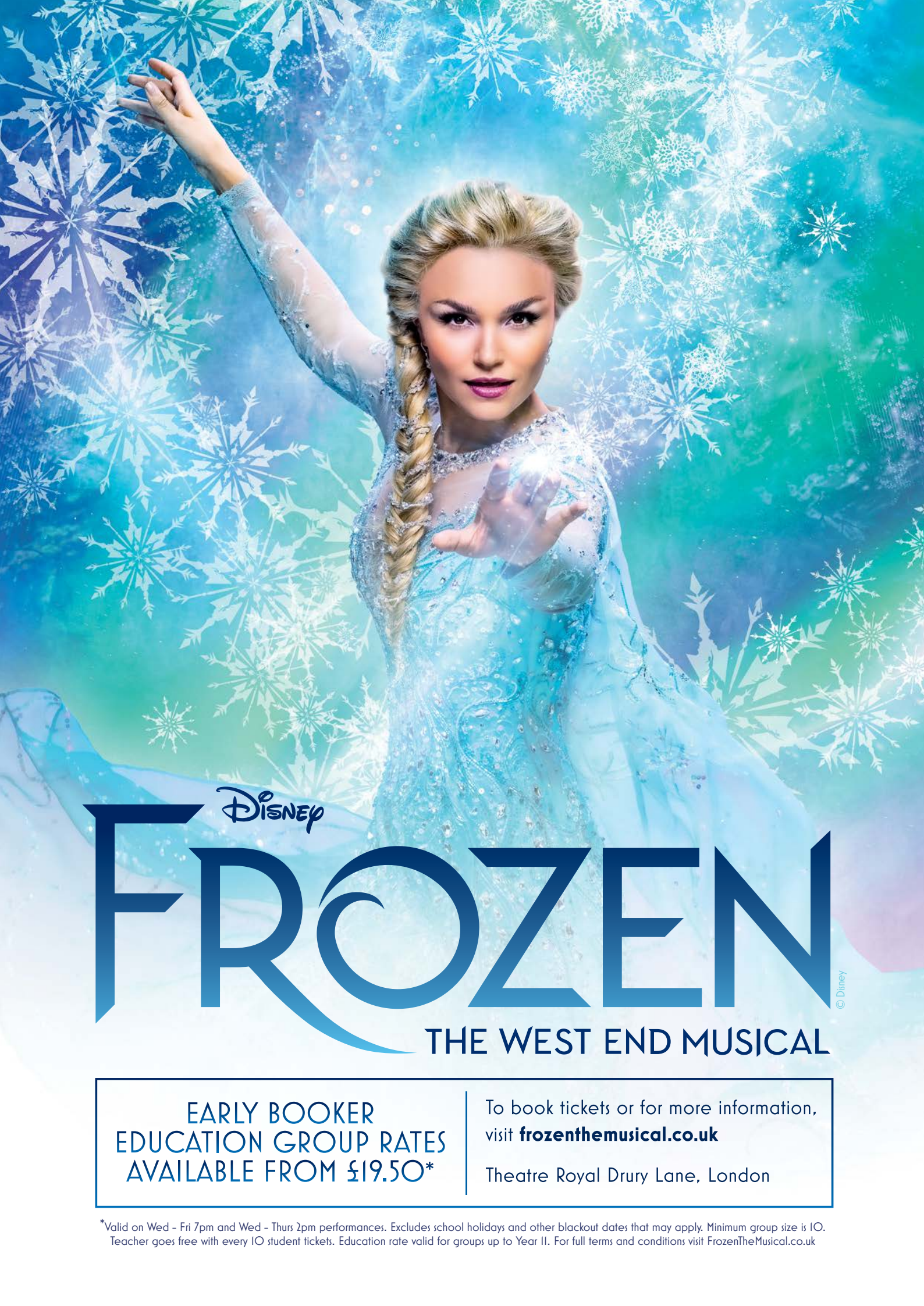
So long as our egos are kept in check, one can never lose an argument. If anyone demolishes you in a debate, politely thank them and simply steal any ideas they present that you happen to agree with. So here's one I stole earlier, courtesy of Plato:

*"The highest form of knowledge is empathy, for it requires us to suspend our egos and live in another's world."*

It's time for us to stop defending the indefensible and instead welcome any and all candidates with immense character, strong subject knowledge, acute thinking skills, and empathetic mindsets into our diverse schools.







Disney

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