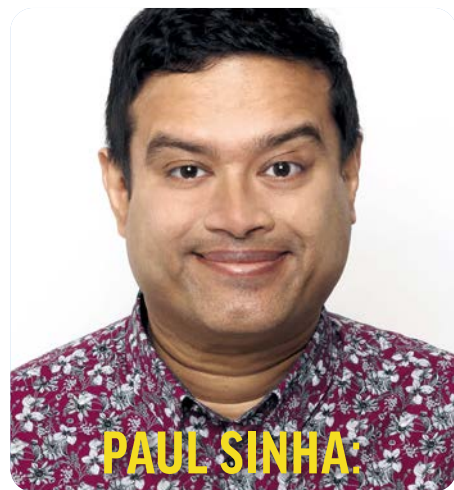


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INTERVIEW



PAUL SINHA:

*"I was destined to
show off knowledge"*

EDUCATE EVERYONE

Can families afford
your curriculum?

BEHAVIOUR

ROBIN LAUNDER

*"You should be
nice – but also
be in charge"*

**SHOULD
BREAK
TIMES BE
LONGER?**

Seat at the table

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9

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expeditions

Managing
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FROM THE EDITOR

“Welcome...”



Everyone’s familiar with how it takes a long time for the full impact of education reforms to be revealed. Yet in an odd way, the inverse can be true as well – the full repercussions of society-wide shocks and transformational changes can often present themselves in schools first, before filtering out everywhere else.

That seems to be the case at least with the ongoing issue of student, and by extension staff absences in schools, owing to latest developments in the COVID-19 pandemic. There’s an uneasy ‘canary in the coal mine’ sense to what’s currently happening – inside the school gates, students from thousands of households mix in close proximity before calling in sick en masse, while in the streets, homes and workplaces outside, the masks have largely been shed and the social distancing now perfunctory at best.

Schools arguably performed a similar bellwether function years before the pandemic, however, as the full effects of the post-2010 age of austerity began to bite. Schools were among the earliest to witness first-hand the impact that closing those SureStart centres and reducing the funding for councils was going to have. And now? As CAMHS backlogs mount up and families increasingly turn to schools for help with providing even life’s most rudimentary basics – like meals for children – schools have to be alert to the needs of their most disadvantaged students like never before, as Rachel Macfarlane observes on page 38.

Being a teacher in the modern age continues to be a far from easy task, but I hope a couple of pieces this issue serve as welcome reminders of just how special – in a good way – the job can be. On page 35, Ryan Wilson ruminates on how it feels to be recognised by pupils and former pupils outside school, and the embarrassment, or indeed pride, that can often accompany such encounters.

On page 42, meanwhile, Gary Toward and Chris Henley set out a plan for becoming what surely all educators aspire to be – ‘that’ teacher who your students will remember fondly long into the future. The job might be tough right now, indeed far tougher than it ought to be, but it’s still about as noble a calling as there can be.

Enjoy the issue,

Callum Fauser
callum.fauser@theteachco.com

On board this issue:



Robin Launder is a teacher trainer, specialising in behaviour management



Hannah Day is a head of visual arts, media and film



Barry Mansfield is director of Halcyon London International School



Rachel Macfarlane is a former headteacher



Ian Mitchell is a teacher of English and psychology



Julia Knight is principal at EtonHouse International School Bahrain

KEEP IN TOUCH!

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

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‘That’ teacher

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The pandemic has caused many schools to reassess their priorities and practices, but thus far few seem to have implemented one change that could do students considerable good – extending the length of break times

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Group editor: Joe Carter

Editor: Callum Fauser,
callum.fauser@theteachco.com, 01206 505115

Head of commercial solutions:
Richard Stebbing

Advertising manager: Ria Bentham,
ria.bentham@theteachco.com, 01206 505240

Deputy advertising manager: Ashley Lower,
ashley.lower@theteachco.com, 01206 505926

Art editor: Richard Allen

Designers: Ben Kemp, Kevin Dennis

Photography: CLIQQ Photography
cliqq.co.uk

Accounts: 01206 505995

Design & reprographics: Ace Pre-Press
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aceville@dictmedia.co.uk, 0800 904 7000

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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...

SQUID GAME

Hang on, isn't pretty much every teacher with a Netflix account and passing familiarity with the cultural zeitgeist already au fait with the streaming TV show du jour – a Korean-made dystopia where debtors are forced to participate in playground games with fatal consequences for the losers? Well, yes – but so are many of your students. And therein lies the issue.

For reasons that still perplex your correspondent, the show's numerous shootings, multiple stabbings, scenes of organ removal and one particularly gory moment involving a hand and an industrial mangle only warrant a 15 certificate, theoretically giving your Y10s and Y11s licence to binge on its violent critique of capitalism to their hearts' content.

Unfortunately, however, the siren song of FOMO has ensured that KS3 cohorts up and down the land are up on it too, prompting some schools to request that parents more closely monitor what their kids are watching. A noble aim, but one we can't help but suspect is depressingly futile – not least until the next must-see murderfest comes slithering down the intertubes and onto students' mobile devices...



DON'T SAY

"Who's up for a bit of red light, green light at break?"

DO SAY

"If you watch it with the dubbing on, you deserve a worse fate than the characters"



BEAT THE BUDGET



What are we talking about?

Every Mind Matters by Better Health

What's the targeted age range?

KS2 to KS4

What's on offer?

PowerPoint presentations, print-out activities and

supporting films to help students explore 16 topic areas relating to mental

- Easy and ready-to-use
- Wellbeing bullet journals
- Engaging videos
- Links to RSHE curriculum

Better Health every mind matters



health, including self-care, physical/mental wellbeing, social media, sleep and bullying

How might teachers use the resource?

To teach lessons with links to RSE and PSHE, or as part of a whole school wellbeing and mental health programme

Where are they available?
bit.ly/ts108-emm

DON'T QUOTE ME...

"You know, Ofsted, frankly, it's a reign of terror"

Dame Alison Peacock, chief executive of The Chartered College of Teaching

Think of a number...

£13.5bn

Funding required to enable a full recovery within the education sector following the COVID-19 pandemic

Source: Education Policy Institute

97.7%

Proportion of parents who believe cooking should be included on their school's curriculum

Source: Survey of approximately 140,000 parents by ParentPay and LACA

£10,000

The increase in energy costs faced by the average secondary school due to rises in wholesale gas prices

Source: The Labour Party

ONE FOR THE WALL

"I have learned you are never too small to make a difference"

Greta Thunberg



Picking up the pieces

A briefing report produced by the UCL Institute of Education has revealed the extent to which families living in areas of high deprivation have become increasingly reliant on schools for essential support.

According to interviews conducted with 50 parents and staff at seven schools across England, schools have been called upon to assist families with children in need of food and clothing, households with limited digital connectivity and individual pupils who have variously experienced mental health difficulties and been exposed to domestic violence.

According to the one of report's co-authors, Professor Alice Bradbury, "Our research shows that the lack of services that support children, particularly Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) and emergency housing for domestic violence cases, puts schools in the position of first responder, coping with families facing complex challenges.

"Schools are picking up the pieces from a welfare and social services system that no longer provides a real safety net for families."

Schools included within the study identified food insecurity as their main priority, and endeavoured to ensure that all of their pupils received at least one meal a day, in some instances distributing food to families' homes.

The authors conclude by calling for a greater focus among policymakers on building system resilience in the longer term, and changes to the current settlement offer for schools to address the issues raised.

▼ **SAVE THE DATE** ▼

KEYNOTES AND CORRESPONDENCE

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



THE HEADLINE:

Education secretary addresses NAHT Conference

WHO? Nadhim Zahawi, Secretary of State for Education

WHERE? County Hall, London

WHEN? 9th October 2021

I will listen to you and work with you to make sure we do right by children and learners. And I will also be honest with you.

This will not always be an easy journey for us, I know that leadership can be a lonely place at times. There will have been sleepless nights, worrying about the children in your schools... I know all about sleepless nights, having just worked as Vaccines Minister. It is a different set of challenges that I am focused on now, though.

We must end illiteracy and innumeracy and make sure that no child leaves primary school unable to read or without a grasp of mathematics, and then we'll continue a relentless focus on literacy and numeracy throughout secondary school.

We'll also be making sure our excellent teachers get the recognition they deserve. The Prime Minister announced in his [Conservative Party] Conference address that those who are in the early years of their careers will be eligible for salary boosts of up to £3,000 tax-free to teach maths, physics, chemistry and computing.

But perhaps one of the most crucial commitments, certainly as far as I'm concerned, is that we do far more for vulnerable children and make sure they have the support they need to succeed. For me, this is about children with SEND, or those who are looked after, getting as many opportunities as their peers. It is about acknowledging that we must close the disadvantage gap and do the best by every single child by focusing on the outcomes for every single child.



THE HEADLINE:

Chancellor delivers Autumn Budget and Spending Review 2021

WHO? Rishi Sunak, Chancellor of the Exchequer

WHERE? House of Commons

WHEN? 27th October 2021

Today's Spending Review ... delivers our commitment to schools, with an extra £4.7bn by 2024-25. Which combined with the ambitious plans we announced at Spending Review 2019 will restore per pupil funding to 2010 levels in real terms – equivalent to a cash increase for every pupil of more than £1,500.

And for children with special educational needs and disabilities, we are more than tripling the amount we invest to create 30,000 new school places. And we know that the pandemic caused significant disruption to children's learning. We've already announced £3.1bn to help education recovery.

Today, as promised by the Prime Minister and Education Secretary, we will go further – with just under £2bn of new funding to help schools and colleges. Bringing this Government's total support for education recovery to almost £5bn.

16 NOVEMBER Bringing the past to life | 10 DECEMBER Save the Children Christmas Jumper Day 2021 | 19-21 JANUARY 2022 Bett 2022

16 NOVEMBER

Bringing the past to life:
Using archives to enrich teaching
Online
bit.ly/bth-archives

Hosted by Behind the Headlines, this free, half-day CPD session will focus on the use of archive material in education. Archiving specialists from the likes of The Guardian Foundation, Marks & Spencer and publisher DC Thomson will discuss their education programmes, and a teacher panel will share their experience of archive initiatives across a range of settings.

10 DECEMBER

Save the Children Christmas Jumper Day 2021
National
savethechildren.org.uk/christmas-jumper-day

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

19-21 JANUARY 2022

Bett 2022
ExCeL London
bettshow.com

The education networking, professional development and product showcase extravaganza is set to reopen its doors once again next January, with this year's overarching theme being 'create the future.' As seasoned Bett visitors will know, expect myriad CPD talks, informative drop-in sessions, attention-grabbing edtech demos and much, much more.

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Get Into Film



THE PERKS OF BEING A WALLFLOWER
(2012, 12, 105 MINS)

CURRICULUM LINKS:

Literacy, psychology

Set in the early 1990s, the film follows teen outsider Charlie as he attempts to survive his first year of high school. Initially, he's a shy 'wallflower' watching everything from the sidelines, until free-spirited senior Sam and her stepbrother Patrick take him under their wing.

Soon Charlie's having fun, partying hard and falling in love, while in the classroom, his favourite teacher feeds his dreams of becoming a writer. But beneath Charlie's new confidence is a persistent sadness that begins to resurface when his older friends start preparing to leave for college...

Discussion questions:

- In what ways do Charlie's new friendship group help and support him?
- How many different ways is writing used as a motif throughout the story?
- What do you think the film is trying to say about the difficult topics and issues it broaches?
- How does Charlie change throughout the film? Can you think of any examples which showcase his progress in social situations?

Head to Into Film's new streaming platform for schools, Into Film+ to stream the film.

download a film guide, access teacher notes on these discussion questions and more besides – see intofilm.org/films



Retweets

Who's been saying what on Twitter this month?

Andrew Morrish @AndrewDMorrish

A re-aligned objective during the pandemic to maintain standards is far more relevant and realistic than raising standards. Ofsted need to learn about the strategies schools have used to achieve this against insurmountable odds.

Teacher's Manual @UnofficialOA

I once taught yr 10s the wrong lesson. After 30 mins of blank faces and no prior knowledge, I finally caught on. So like any honest teacher, I got them to glue the pages together so there would be no evidence of it in a book scrutiny.

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

TEACHER TALES

True stories from the education chalkface

Suits you, sir

It was the last day of teaching practice, and our final year trainee was doing the rounds of colleagues, thanking them for his time with us. I was in the pool area, teaching a group of Y8s how to dive, when the doors opened and our trainee entered, smartly dressed in a suit and carrying a briefcase. He proceeded to wait by the door, obviously not wishing to interrupt the lesson.

Without warning, he then suddenly bellowed in a loud, authoritative voice, "That's not the way to do it!" – and fully clothed, still clutching his briefcase, dived into the pool. This was met with absolute silence and gasps from the assembled class, swiftly followed by a huge cheer of approval.

I must admit to having had huge admiration for this uniquely confident way of bidding us farewell, from a man clearly keen on immersing himself in his career...

Tied up

Late one evening, I heard a colleague busily laminating documents in the nearby resources area. As the minutes went by, his voice seemed to become more laboured until it was reduced to a rather alarming gurgle.

It transpired that he required a pair of scissors and my assistance to help cut him free from the bulky laminating machine, which had swallowed his tie and was close to strangling him...

Just not cricket

We were once surprised upon reading a student's GCSE PE coursework outlining the skills required for cricket. Having copied a fellow student's work on football skills and simply substituted all mentions of 'football' with 'cricket', he asserted that "One of the key skills in cricket is heading the ball..."

Find more true tales and amusing anecdotes at schoolhumour.co.uk

A FEW MINUTES OF DESIGN

#18 INGENUITY PITCH

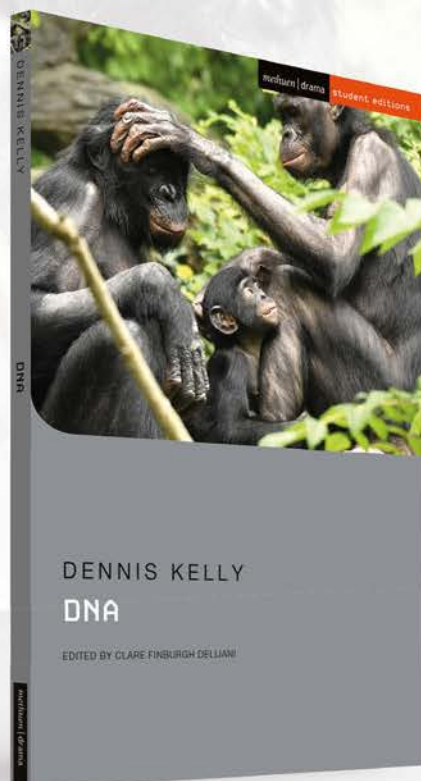
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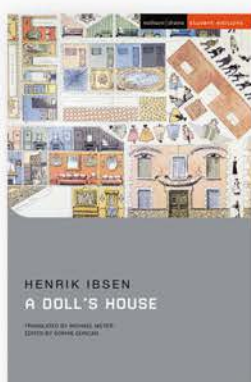
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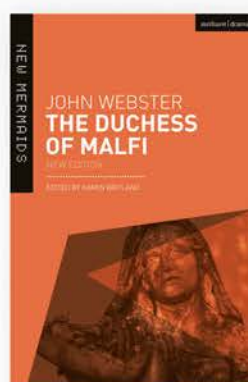
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The Vocab Clinic

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

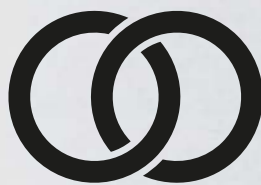


TRY THIS TODAY: 'THESAURUS SPRINTS'

Pupils routinely use tools like dictionaries and thesauruses to extend their vocabulary in the classroom. The problem? They often use them badly – particularly the thesaurus.

Pupils need these tools modelling and scaffolded for them, and with them.

One engaging approach is undertaking 'Thesaurus sprints'. If, for example, you're revising narrative writing in English, or drafting an essay in religious education, you can get pupils to identify a small number of words to revise. Once they have selected four or five words, the pupils then rapidly select potential synonyms in a 'sprint', before comparing and justifying their choices.



Cracking the academic code

Some academic writing can feel both familiar and sophisticated because we routinely use 'collocations' - pairings of familiar words that strike an academic tone.

When you hear the word 'capitalism' used in history, geography or politics, for example, it will often instantly call to mind phrases like 'global capitalism', 'industrial capitalism' or 'the capitalist system'. They're familiar terms, but pupils often won't know the words well, or understand what the full phrases mean. Making collocations explicit when we're writing in school will ensure pupils can crack the academic code when they speak and write.

DO THEY KNOW?

A portmanteau is a word formed by taking two known words and making a new one – e.g. 'doomscrolling'

ONE FOR: FOOD / NUTRITION STUDENTS

COAGULATION

Derives from: The Latin word 'cogere', meaning 'curdle' or 'collect'

Means: The changing of proteins from a liquid to a thickened mass

Related terms: Congelation, gelling, concentration, agglomeration, curdle, congeal

Note: Coagulation is routinely used in biology to represent the clotting of blood



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

INTERCEPTION

In geography

Describes precipitation that doesn't reach the soil, but is 'intercepted' by leaves, plants, etc.

In physical education

A move in sport when an opposition team member intercepts the ball



One word at a time

Every pupil and teacher wants a 'companion' of some sort – but what do we know about that word and its history? The etymological roots of the word offer a classic example of how you can strategically break down words and glean knowledge in the process.

First, the prefix 'com-' means 'with' or 'together'. 'Pan' represents bread, while 'ion' means 'process'. Build the word back up, and it describes *the caring process of sharing and breaking bread with a friend or loved one*. Naturally, we want pupils to work diligently with their companions as they attack the roots of words for their meanings...



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

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[MATHS PROBLEM]

MULTIPLYING MAKES THINGS BIGGER

In everyday life, 'multiplying' usually means 'getting bigger', but in mathematics that isn't necessarily the case.

In this lesson, students examine different sizes of multipliers to see when multiplication or division results in a bigger or a smaller answer.

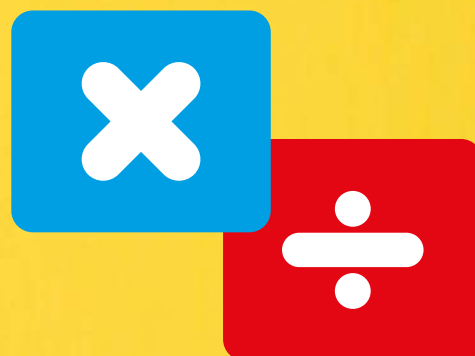
THE DIFFICULTY

This task is intended to bring to the surface possible confusion over multiplication:

*Aka multiplied 8 by a certain number. He got an answer that was **smaller than 8**. He thinks he must have made a mistake. What do you think?*

Students may agree that Aka must have made a mistake (e.g., he pressed 'divide' on the calculator instead of 'multiply'). Other students may realise that multiplication by a number that is **less**

than 1 will give an answer that is smaller than 8. They might think of specific examples, such as $\frac{1}{2}$ or 0 or -10.



THE SOLUTION

By thinking at the same time about multiplication and division, and multipliers that are greater than 1 and less than 1, students can develop a powerful sense of the expected size of answers to calculations.

*Ajunni **divided** 8 by a certain number. She got an answer that was **larger than 8**. She thinks she must have made a mistake. What do you think?*

This may be a bit trickier for students to sort out. They may think, for example, that $8 \div \frac{1}{2} = 4$, rather than the correct answer of 16. However, if they record their calculations

systematically, they may realise their error:

$$8 \times 2 = 16 \quad \text{so} \quad 16 \div 2 = 8 \quad \text{and} \quad 16 \div 8 = 2$$

$$16 \times \frac{1}{2} = 8 \quad \text{so} \quad 8 \div 16 = \frac{1}{2} \quad \text{and} \quad 8 \div \frac{1}{2} = 16$$

Patterns like this can be powerful for convincing students things like the fact that $8 \div \frac{1}{2} = 16$, rather than 4. Everyone should agree with the blue statements. The red statements then follow by continuing the pattern. (Checking on a calculator may also reassure the very sceptical!)

Students could generate more examples and summarise their observations as:

$8 \times$ number greater than 1 = number **greater than 8**
 $8 \times$ number less than 1 = number **less than 8**

$8 \div$ number greater than 1 = number **less than 8**
 $8 \div$ number less than 1 = number **greater than 8**

The symmetry of these statements makes the pattern easy to recall, and, of course, the same thing will work not just for 8 but for any other positive number.

Students may benefit from lots of practice of this. For example, they could be asked to stand up if the answer is more than 15 and stay seated if the answer is less than 15. Then, you call out a series of calculations, like $15 \div 3.7$ and 15×0.8 , and the students need to quickly respond by standing up or staying seated. They don't need to try to calculate the exact answer – only to say if it must be greater than or less than 15.

Checking for understanding

These final questions should give an indication of students' understanding of these ideas:

Choose the missing number that makes these calculations correct:

1. $15 \div \square = 125$ A. 120 B. 12 C. 1.2 D. 0.12

2. $15 \times \square = 1.8$ A. 120 B. 12 C. 1.2 D. 0.12

D is the correct response in both cases.



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

You have to laugh...

Ian Mitchell considers the importance of humour in making teachers' days more bearable, while also helping them perform better than they otherwise might...

According to recent research by Teacher Tapp, teachers who go for drinks with their colleagues are more likely to work at outstanding schools (see bit.ly/ts108-tp1). Meanwhile, 51% of teachers claim they have a best friend at work, and 80% confirm that they can 'have a laugh' with colleagues.

The indications are that a little warmth goes a long way in terms of improving staff morale. School leaders are by no means oblivious to the importance of staff morale – indeed, some will even use it as a selling point to attract new applicants. Naturally, it's desirable to have a workforce with plenty of confidence and optimism, but it doesn't follow that this can be controlled from the top down.

When it comes to cultivating an atmosphere conducive to good staff morale, I believe that there's a paradox at play in that staff morale is achieved by not striving for it.

Organic friendships, relaxed humour and a few visits to the pub are most likely to happen when the opportunities needed to enable them actually exist – usually because the school ethos provides a little breathing space.

Furthermore, a school's atmosphere cannot only be formal; there has to be a time and a place for both work and play. Some of the finest – not to say most amusing – memories from

my time in teaching came from arbitrary situations when something fun or entertaining just happened to happen. I'm therefore grateful to Teacher Tapp for not just highlighting the value of staff morale, but for also giving me the opportunity to recall some priceless humorous moments.

For instance, I was once in a staffroom meeting, many years ago, when a middle aged, female colleague made an announcement. She was appealing for help in finding who she strongly suspected were the students at the school who had defaced her car. After finishing work the

night before, she had found it in the staff car park sprayed with abusive graffiti, including the word 'slut'.

As she spoke, describing the misogynistic language, this room full of teachers fell silent in sympathy. She then added, *"...And I just looked at it, and thought to myself, well – chance would be a fine thing...!"* At which point, the entire room fell about laughing.

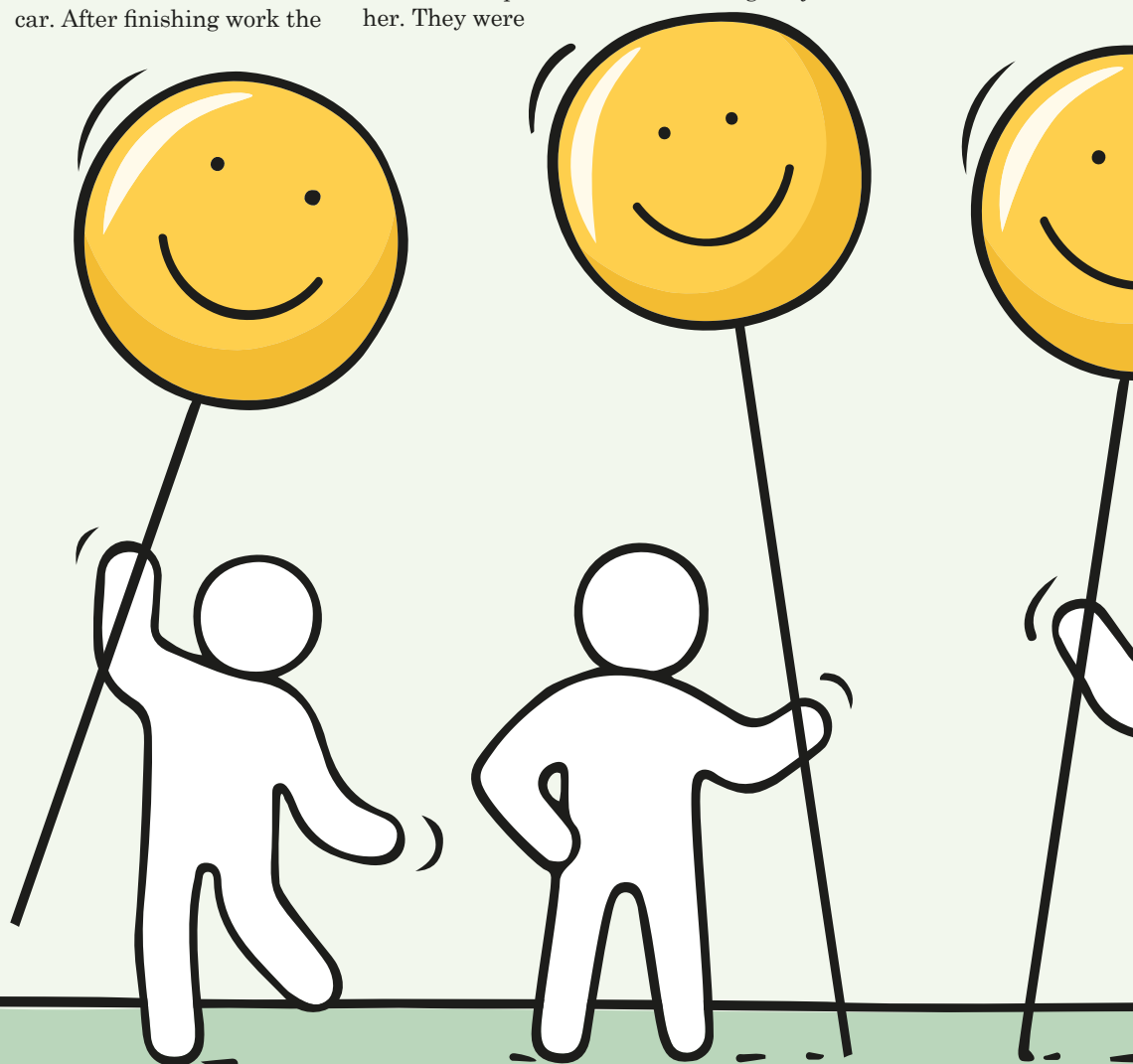
What I always admired about this teacher's attitude was her steadfast determination to not be fazed by the behaviour of idiots. It was the vandals that had the problem – not her. They were

not going to ruin her day. Moreover, it was an example of how humour can be most valuable when it occurs arbitrarily.

Value in humour

On another occasion at the same school, we held a meeting to discuss the imminent arrival of Ofsted. The teacher in charge of PSHE explained that, owing to Ofsted's visit, the Y9 sex education programme would be delivered later in the year. "Does that mean we're now putting off sex for Ofsted?" quipped a voice.

I also remember how the deputy head would always diligently make notes on the



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staffroom whiteboard at each meeting, and kept her board pen stuck to a piece of Blue Tac on the wall with a note beside it, saying, 'Don't even think about it!' (This was back when board pens in schools were as precious as gold dust.) If that school had a strength, it was realising the value of exercising a sense of humour.

Going further back, I remember an occasion during my first post when the headteacher was about to deliver his talk to new parents at that year's annual information evening. Just as he began to speak, a dozen or so

watches seemed to beep in unison as the teacher sweepstake to guess the length of his speech duly commenced. He knew all about it, of course, but understood that such japes did him little harm, while providing his staff with a little entertainment.

A precious quality

What those anecdotes all have in common is that they occurred unexpectedly. In teaching, humour is a necessity. Its precious quality makes it impervious to manipulation or management. It's unique to each individual teacher, and shouldn't

be encouraged, nor discouraged by anyone else.

With teachers now returned to school sites after 18 months of partial closures, the need to maintain staff morale remains even more vital than ever. Last summer saw teachers assume the role of unpaid examiners, assessing their students for summative grades. At the same time, staff turnover continues to be high – most likely the result of heightened bureaucracy and long hours.

In such a climate, it's imperative that teachers know not to take themselves or their roles too seriously. Just because a job matters, that doesn't mean that it can't be the subject of jollity. Teachers need to feel comfortable enough to sometimes laugh at their place of work – especially in response to

those parts of the job that would otherwise drive everybody mad, such as assessment, staff meetings, parental complaints and INSET days.

Secure beliefs

I imagine some senior leaders might well be wondering what those schools highlighted the Teacher Tapp research have done to so successfully foster a culture where staff feel like meeting each other for drinks. My best guess is *nothing*.

School leaders have to recognise that some aspects of the workplace are simply beyond their, or anyone else's control. Trying to enforce an *esprit de corps* will invariably have the effect of merely stifling people's sense of security and balance. Humour and fun require a little room to move. There's no need to try to make them happen; remember that less is more.

A school that's secure in its values and beliefs will generally be the kind of school that can boast of having the best staff morale. They are places of work that are comfortable enough in their own skin to not to care too much about what goes on in between lessons and those various other daily routines. In my experience, teachers respond no better to having their social lives managed than captive pandas. But it takes a prudent leader to realise that.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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



5 REASONS TO COMMIT TO... Embedding Formative Assessment

Find out how formative assessment can help your students learn and achieve more with the aid of this well-resourced and supported CPD programme



30 SECOND BRIEFING

Embedding Formative Assessment is a professional development programme aimed at improving pupil outcomes by embedding formative assessment strategies. Schools receive resource packs to help run monthly workshops known as 'Teacher Learning Communities', while teachers conduct structured peer feedback.

1 EVIDENCE-BASED

Despite formative assessment being among the most cost-effective ways to improve student learning, it has yet to be embedded in most schools. Our solution to this is the Embedding Formative Assessment (EFA) programme – a research-informed, two-year professional development programme for schools and colleges. Participants will receive all the materials needed to run Teacher Learning Community workshops, which focus on the five strategies of formative assessment. These conclude with teachers choosing which areas they wish to work on to further develop their formative assessment practice, with support from their TLC colleagues via peer feedback.

2 PROVEN RESULTS

The programme was developed by SSAT and leading international experts Professor Dylan Wiliam and Siobhan Leahy, drawing on over 15 years of accumulated research. More than 1,700 schools have engaged with the pack since it was first published, spanning UK primaries and secondaries, along with many other schools internationally. Students in EFA schools have completed the equivalent of two



months' additional progress in their Attainment 8 GCSE scores, with the progress made by children in the lowest third for prior attainment greater than that made by children in the highest third. Teachers have submitted positive feedback regarding the Teacher Learning Communities, stating that they have improved their practice by facilitating valuable dialogue and encouraging experimentation with formative assessment strategies.

Contact:

020 7802 2300
adviseme@ssatuk.co.uk
ssatuk.co.uk/teach

3 SUPPORT

EFA mentors will work closely with school leaders and staff at critical moments of EFA implementation. To ensure success, our mentors agree in advance a number of face-to-face and virtual consultations designed to maintain momentum when embedding formative assessment in a school, thus ensuring the necessary professional development mechanisms are present and impactful.

4 LASTING CHANGE

EFA is a programme that provides teachers with the choice, flexibility and support to become even better by changing their everyday classroom habits. EFA has clearly defined outcomes that benefit both students and teachers alike. Short term gains can be evidenced in students taking increased responsibility for their learning, while longer term impacts have included increased levels of progress across all subjects, equating to a 25% increase in learning (Dylan Wiliam 2018).

5 A CULTURAL CHANGE.

Teachers value having time to reflect, discuss and share their practice and expertise, in order to further their professional development. When asked to identify their greatest success, most participating schools highlighted positive changes in their culture for both students and teachers alike.

KEY POINTS

Improve teaching and learning across your school by empowering teachers to trial and refine formative assessment strategies

Enable learners to take responsibility for their own learning through peer and self-review techniques

Support your teachers in taking ownership over their learning by providing professional development and leadership opportunities

Build a stronger sense of community in schools through teachers and learners collaborating with each other on common goals

With Gavin Williamson having exited stage left, what kind of Education Secretary will his successor Nadhim Zahawi be – and how much will it matter?

Melissa Benn



What makes for a good Secretary of State for Education? And how much influence does any Minister, good or bad, really have on the day-to-day lives of our schools and colleges?

The first question has hovered in the air these past couple of years following Gavin Williamson's appointment to the post, and become more pertinent now in light of his recent sacking. Since replaced by Nadhim Zahawi, Williamson was frequently described in some quarters as 'The worst education secretary ever'.

Of course, the public judgement on any Minister depends on a whole range of factors, from political beliefs to more general considerations and perceptions of competence – but the influence a particular Minister wields also depends on what powers he or she possess.

Towards the centre

For those in charge of education during the early 20th century, the job was a more hands-off affair compared to today. As the educational journalist Peter Wilby recently observed, "It was a position mainly for has-beens, never-weres and political climbers who couldn't wait to move on to something else."

Ministers' powers back then were far more constrained. Even after the landmark 1944 Education Act, the day-to-day running of schools was still largely the responsibility of local councils, with education unions consulted by governments far more than they are now.

Ironically, just as the political rhetoric around education has shifted towards calling for greater school autonomy, political *control* has become ever more centralised, with the result that Education Ministers have become correspondingly more powerful.

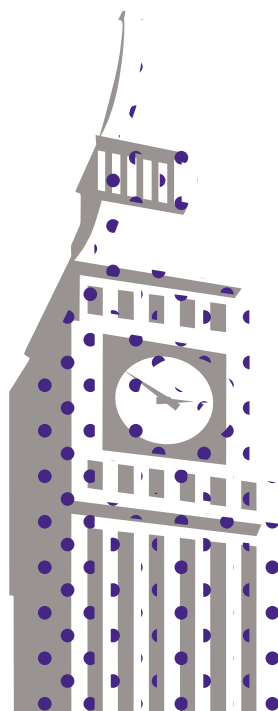
It's possible that without COVID, Gavin Williamson might have coasted through his time in office, doing relatively little

harm. Instead, the hapless Williamson oversaw the 2020 exams debacle and presided over what many have judged to be a chaotic, over-controlling and non-consensual approach to the pandemic.

This combination of a national crisis and a weak Education Secretary has had a huge impact on a generation of teachers, heads, and above all, students. Yet strong Education Secretaries can sometimes inflict just as much damage as poorly performing ones...

crosshead

Yes, we had to get to Michael Gove eventually. He oversaw arguably the biggest change in education since the 1944 Act. In those four years, he drove forward academisation, rewrote both the primary and secondary curriculums and expanded the role of formal exams in assessment.



He also famously demonstrated a deliberately combative and openly contemptuous attitude to most of the profession and the trade unions, which ultimately led to his sacking by his then-friend and ally David Cameron.

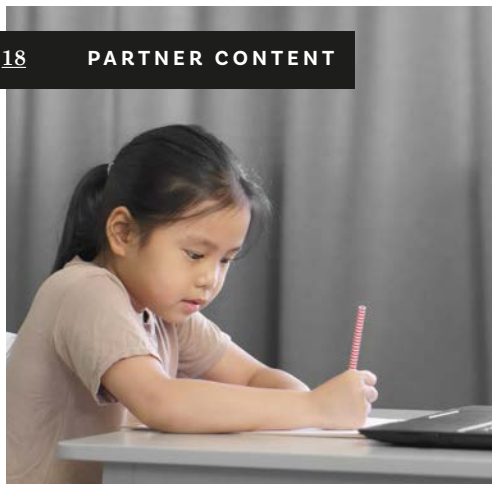
So what kind of Secretary of State will Nadhim Zahawi turn out to be? The biggest item in his in-tray is the pandemic recovery, and he will surely have battles with the Treasury over that task.

As for his broader stance on the direction of education, the early signs are somewhat contradictory. His appointment of Mark Lehair – an outspoken free schools advocate and educational small 'c' conservative – as a policy advisor doesn't suggest much deviation from the key tenets of the Tory approach over the past 10 years, namely marketisation, competition, tough discipline and a fact-heavy school experience.

But the replacement of Nick Gibb, Gove's loyal lieutenant and hitherto longest serving Minister of State, with Robin Walker signals some possible new thinking around the balance between the vocational and academic strands of the secondary phase.

Zahawi is also a good friend of Robert Halfon, the outspoken Chair of the Education Select Committee, who has spearheaded a campaign to reform GCSEs and offer more effective vocational education. Zahawi has additionally talked about the need to create a system that endures over the long term, suggesting a Minister in search of a lasting legacy.

The fact remains, however, that his policy wishlist will be subject to the government's overarching priorities and Boris Johnson's short-term electoral imperatives. Frankly, neither of those offer much cause for optimism, nor much comfort to the country's already battered school and college estate...



ASK THE EXPERT

“Technology can present distractions”

Lenovo's Coby Gurr explains how LanSchool can empower teachers when it comes to digital learning

1 What differences have you observed with schools' use of technology pre-and post-pandemic?

One obvious change is the widespread adoption of 1:1 devices. Many schools previously had 1:1 for certain grade levels, but the pandemic forced them to figure out how to get devices into more students' hands, which often required them to be resourceful. Lenovo is working with schools to help where we can. We're currently running an 'Equity Program', whereby every Lenovo device purchase results in a small donation towards helping underprivileged children gain better access to technology.

One interesting outcome of distance learning is that teachers and students have become much more comfortable and skilled with using technology. Another is the growth of more innovative lesson planning. Those speak to the fact that technology will remain a staple in the classroom going forward, and that people are generally more accepting of that now.

2 Where do you see LanSchool fitting into this new edtech landscape?

Introducing new technology into classrooms can present distractions and various other challenges for teachers. It can be hard for teachers to know exactly what students are working on, especially with remote learning. LanSchool gives teachers more oversight of this, so they can guide students' digital learning both in class and when they're at home. Teachers can glimpse what students are seeing on their screens and message any who seem to be losing focus, and there are some built-in safety features for limiting the websites students can visit.

3 How easy is LanSchool to roll out?

There are two versions of LanSchool. LanSchool Classic is a self-hosted software



EXPERT PROFILE

NAME:
Coby Gurr

JOB TITLE:
General Manager,
Lenovo Software

AREA OF EXPERTISE:
How edtech innovation
can improve learning
outcomes

**BEST PART
OF MY JOB:**
“Creating digital
solutions for schools
that have a direct
impact on the lives
of teachers and
students.”

application schools can use on campus, while LanSchool Air is a cloud-based version that works both on campus and at home. 'Classic' has to be installed and hosted locally on school devices, but the process is straightforward and it's very easy to manage once installed. It also includes enterprise-level data collection, allowing IT teams to see how the software is being used and spot where teachers might need help. LanSchool Air can be implemented remotely by simply sending links to teachers and students and is fully maintained by LanSchool, so there's no IT infrastructure needed on the school's part before they can start using it. Our software integrates well with Google Classroom, Clever and Azure AD, making classroom rostering extremely easy, and it even supports the importing of CSV data.

4 LanSchool is partly designed to reduce teachers' workload –can you tell us more?

LanSchool allows teachers to see when students are off-task or performing tasks incorrectly. Teachers can discreetly reach out and correct students before they require additional supervision, and also save time when guiding students by pushing content to all devices or blanking screens as needed.

ASK ME ABOUT

CONNECTIVITY – and how LanSchool's classroom management software is an effective complement to digital learning in connected and virtual classrooms

SECURITY – in relation to us partnering with online safety specialists to provide LanSchool's safety features, making it easy for schools to adopt a multi-pronged approach to their digital security

CONVENIENCE – and how LanSchool includes support for the single sign-on integrations used by Google Classroom and Azure Active Directory

lanschool.com/gb

With COVID having left a profound impact on the mental health of adolescents across the country, schools can help by rethinking their priorities when it comes to the structure of the school day...

Julia Knight



For many of us, the pandemic has encouraged a re-evaluation of what's really important in our lives – whether it's a promise to spend more time with our loved ones, a reduction in working hours or an effort to deepen our meaningful connections with others.

Schools were quick to adapt to new COVID-related laws and mandates concerning social distancing, vaccinations and everything else – but how ready are we for the consequences that lie in wait for us later down the line?

Social aspects

The combination of social distancing and school closures caused many young people to experience increased anxiety and mental health challenges. Is there anything schools can do to help address these?

I'd offer one simple suggestion – to lengthen and improve the quality of break times. An aspect of education that's been completely overlooked in recent months is the school day and how it's organised; by increasing the opportunities students have for play and socialising, we may be able to improve their academic performance.

Since the mid-1990s, schools across the world have consistently reduced the length of their break times in order to accommodate more learning. Giving students more time in the classroom may well have led some students to achieve more in examinations, but also miss out on key social aspects of their education.

Everyone working in schools will know how there are certain areas of life that can't

be formally taught in a classroom setting. These include social skills, of the sort that are important to forming friendships and managing conflict, as well as the leadership and team building skills that often develop naturally in the course of play activities organised and led by students themselves.

The power of play

And yet reductions in school breaks have seen primary schoolchildren lose an average of 45 minutes of playtime per week. The drop is even larger at secondary, amounting to 65 minutes per week – despite researchers at UCL's Institute of Education finding that the benefits of play at break time can be overwhelmingly positive.

A separate study carried out at Princeton University and subsequently published in the *Journal of Neuroscience* further found that increasing students' levels of exercise served to boost calmness and reduce anxiety, resulting in improvements to students' levels of mental health. If learners' anxiety can be reduced, it can have a profound, school-wide impact.

Many UK schools already have excellent playground areas, parts of which could be turned into interesting spaces with the help of volunteers or your PTA. These spaces might offer opportunities for physical exercise – grassy areas for ball games, outdoor equipment that will challenge children's natural curiosity – but also spaces for quiet reflection. The latter can play a vital role in helping children to unwind after lessons.

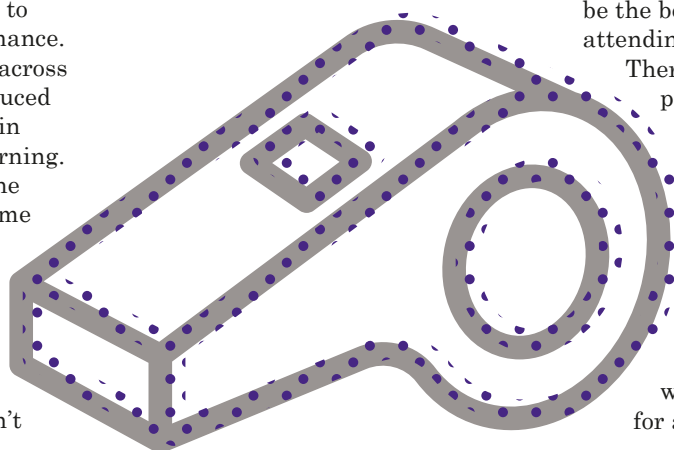
Better outcomes

Longer break times will enable schools to provide their students with lengthier periods of exercise and time away from studying, so that they can better enjoy their time at school as a whole. When we look back on our own school days, what do we remember the most? I'm pretty sure the answer won't include additional maths lessons, but rather those pleasant Tuesdays spent playing with friends.

UK independent schools currently set aside an average of around 20% of the school day to break times, compared with an average of 16% in the state sector. This is significant, given what are widely considered to be the better outcomes for students attending independent schools.

There are other factors at play here, of course – but this is one that shouldn't be dismissed.

Schools that offer longer break times will actively improve the wellbeing of the children in their care, and stand a better chance of successfully balancing their social and emotional wellbeing with the need for academic rigour.



Julia Knight has been an international teacher since 2012, and is currently principal at EtonHouse International School Bahrain; follow her at @KnightWilliams

3 things we've learnt about...

TEACHERS' CAPACITY FOR COMMUNICATION

We find out whether the loosening of pandemic restrictions has affected teachers' readiness to meet with and message their colleagues and parents

1 Teachers spend lots of time dealing with emails

Teachers spend most of their working days teaching and managing classes, but will also assume break duties, lunch duties and fill any remaining time with PPA.

Simultaneously, a stack of emails awaiting their attention will be quietly building up in their inboxes...

Recent survey data reveals that the typical classroom teacher receives around 18 emails per day and sends eight in return. On average, teachers state that it takes two minutes to read each email and a further two minutes to reply – that's nearly an hour per day reading and responding to emails. Secondary headteachers describe receiving just under 50 emails daily and sending 30 – that's almost three hours out of their day. Some schools limit their out-of-hours email activity, but only 15% of teachers confirm that this the case where they work.

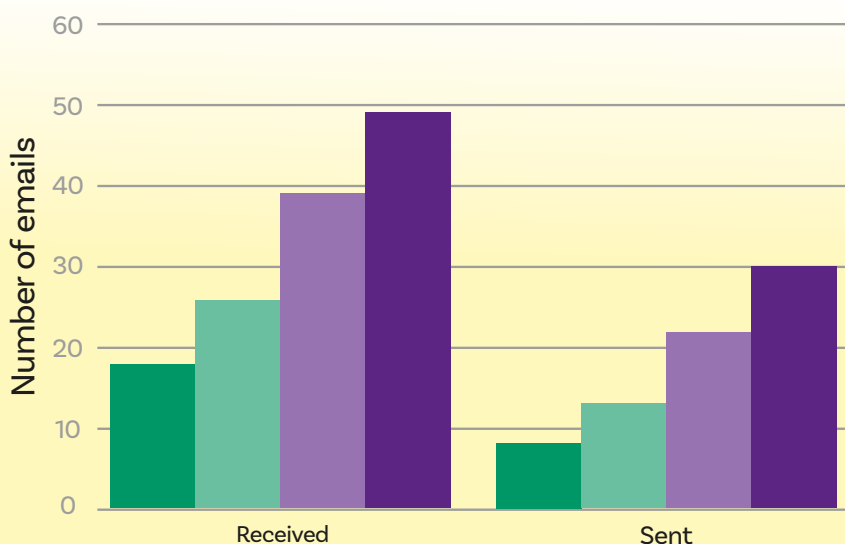
2 The nature of parental engagement is changing

One positive change brought about by the pandemic has been the adoption of virtual parents' evenings. These have proven popular, with only 30% of secondary teachers expressing a wish to fully return to face-to-face events. Consequently, 60% of secondary schools intend to hold this term's parents' evenings online, but not all schools are following. 40% of schools in the highest quartile for free school meals have said they'll be reverting back to face-to-face evenings, compared with just 9% of the most affluent schools. More broadly, 50% of teachers say that the pandemic has changed the way in which they communicate with parents. Two thirds of secondary schools now use automatic contact systems to coordinate their parental communications – double the number compared to when we last asked a similar question back in 2018.

3 It's not all work and no play

The past 18 months obviously haven't allowed much time for teachers to unwind and socialise with each other in person. Over the last few months, however, teachers appear to have been socialising almost as often as they were before the pandemic. At the end of September 2019, 39% of teachers said they had socialised with colleagues at least once within the last academic year. This year, the proportion isn't that much lower at 34%. It'll come as little surprise that it's younger teachers who tend to be the social butterflies. Only 6% of teachers in their 20s say they wouldn't socialise with colleagues, compared to 19% of teachers aged 40 and up. Londoners seem to be the most keen, with 50% of teachers there having socialised since the start of the academic year – 10 percentage points higher than any other English region.

EMAILS SENT AND RECEIVED PER DAY



Classroom teacher
Middle leader
SLT (excluding head)
Headteacher

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.

WHAT I LEARNT AT SCHOOL

The comedian, broadcaster and formidable quizzer reflects on his formative years attending one of the country's oldest public schools

I went to Dulwich College Preparatory School in South London – a real academic powerhouse in terms of prep school education. From there, I went on to Dulwich College at the age of 13 – a very well known school, famous for its rugby and indeed its acting alumni, including Rupert Penry-Jones and Chiwetel Ejiofor in recent years.

Because I won a half-fee scholarship, I was put in a so-called 'intellectual hot-housing class', where we did our O Levels in two years instead of three, and took them at the end of the fourth year before then being promoted to lower sixth. It meant we never had a fifth year, which looking back, wasn't particularly helpful in that we lost a year of emotional maturity. I certainly don't feel I've had any life advantages from being academically accelerated in that way at secondary school.

People always think of public schools as being posh, but you never quite appreciate just how much posher prep school is until you're in it. I certainly sounded a lot more posh when I was 12 than I do now, thanks to developing a distinctive prep school accent that I've managed to lose over the decades since.



At the beginning I didn't quite fit in. I was around 13 when I first started hearing jokes and talk about women and sex that I felt I couldn't join in with because I was gay. I wasn't 'one of the lads', but because I was quite funny and witty, I wasn't generally considered to be 'one of the nerds' either. Those were the very formative years when I changed from being an extremely shy teenager into quite a confident one.

Growing up gay in the 80s was complicated. I didn't know anyone else in school who was gay, and whether it was something that was just going to disappear one day. I'd have liked to tell myself back then not to panic, and that your adult years are going to clarify everything...

I really enjoyed languages, going on to do French and German at A Level, and I always found maths ridiculously easy. The one thing at school that would always earn someone credibility over anything else was being good at sport, but Dulwich College was actually quite enlightened in another way, in that staff would find the things you were good at and encourage them.

There was one particular teacher, Andy Archibald, who was my house master when I was 13 and a bit of a celebrity, because he'd won an Olympic gold medal in 1976 in the modern pentathlon. I remember him asking us all what we liked, and then doing these mental calculations to work

out how we might take those interests further. When I told him I really liked general knowledge, he became visibly excited – "You'll be good in the house general knowledge competition!"

That's the thing, isn't it? You've got to make everyone feel that they're doing something that's valued. School shouldn't be a solitary journey – you ought to feel like you're part of a team.

I represented the school in competitive chess, general knowledge and mathematics, and when you got good results they'd be announced in assembly and applauded. I'm pleased to say that other students respected me because of that – 'Oh, you're the chess guy.' And we were good – in my last year at school, we placed among the last 16 in the country. The assembly applause after that was one of my proudest moments.

Looking back at my school years now, my feeling is that everything was sped up a bit too much. Important life decisions were being made by individuals who were quite young and immature, which wasn't helped in my case by being from a family of medics. So I went to medical school, but it was just the wrong career choice for me. Of all the things I was good at, science really wasn't one of them.

I think I was destined to try and make people laugh, and to show off knowledge. The chess is now gone, but I'm still interested – watching *The Queen's Gambit* last year reminded me a lot of those junior chess tours I did as a kid...

Paul Sinha began his career as a trained medical doctor before becoming a successful stand-up comedian and broadcaster, appearing regularly on Radio 4 and becoming one of the 'Chasers' in the popular ITV quiz show *The Chase*; for more information, visit paulsinha.com or follow @paulsinha

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THE TS GUIDE TO... BEHAVIOUR

It's a perennial challenge that teachers grapple with throughout their career – how do we get students to behave? This issue, we explore the art of keeping your learning environment free from strife...

IN THIS SECTION

26 10 BEHAVIOUR ESSENTIALS

Whether it's consistent application of rules or following through on assurances made to students, there are some behaviour management strategies all teachers should follow, suggests Robyn Launder

28 A QUESTION OF RESTRAINT

Paul Dix highlights the complex issues surrounding considerations of when staff should restrain pupils and when they should hold back

30 JUST LIKE YOU

No protective barriers, equal treatment – Susan Ross looks at how schools can support students with a visible difference



IN FIGURES:

WHAT SUPPORT DO TEACHERS AND SCHOOL LEADERS FEEL WOULD BE MOST HELPFUL TO SUPPORT POST-COVID BEHAVIOUR ISSUES?

19%

Hiring extra support staff, such as school counsellors, to provide one-to-one support and mentoring

14%

Changes to the curriculum, including greater flexibility, exam reforms and less focus on attainment

14%

Easier access to external agencies by addressing ongoing issues, such as the time taken for referrals

Source: DfE COVID-19 School Snapshot Survey October 2021

3 TEACHWIRE ARTICLES FROM THE ARCHIVES

10 THINGS NQTs SHOULD REMEMBER ABOUT BEHAVIOUR

Taking control of your classroom should be a priority for NQTs says Emma Kell – but thinking you've got it nailed will always be a recipe for disaster...

bit.ly/108special1

IT'S LESS WHAT YOU SAY AND MORE HOW YOU SAY IT

Effective behaviour management is anchored less by what you say to students, and more by the meanings produced by your mode of speaking, writes Peter Nelmes

bit.ly/108special2

HOW PARENT-TEACHER ENGAGEMENT CAN HELP 'PROBLEM CHILDREN' THRIVE

"You may find him hard work, but with support, empathy and guidance he can thrive" – Elena Holmes pens a letter to her adopted son's new class teacher...

bit.ly/108special3

10 BEHAVIOUR ESSENTIALS

From consistent applications of rules, to following through on the assurances made to students, here's **Robyn Launder's** list of the behaviour tips every teacher should know...

Students want you to be in charge. They might not always act like they do, but they do. They want you to be in charge because they want to be in a classroom where they feel safe and contained, free from both the distraction of misbehaviour and the pressure to misbehave.

Now, being in charge doesn't mean being terrifying, shouty or stern – approaches as counterproductive as they are unethical – but you do have to demonstrate your dominance. You can do this through the way you hold yourself, what you say and how you say it. You can also do it by observing the following 10 pointers...

1 Use a seating plan

Sit girls next to boys. If you're a single sex school, sit according to the register. If you know the students, factor in any relationships that may cause behavioural issues. At the beginning of every new half-term, display your seating plan so that students can take their seats without any fuss.

Make sure you stick to your seating plan throughout the year. If you have to change it, only do so in order to serve teaching and learning needs. Don't change it because of friendship requests, because a student's nice or as a bargaining chip for good behaviour. Once the

students know you won't change it, they'll stop asking.

2 Embed rules

Classroom rules are like the foundations of a house. Without them, student behaviour can quickly sink to rock bottom. – so here are mine:

1. We are silent when the teacher is talking
2. We follow instructions right away
3. We let others get on with their work
4. We respect each other

The first three rules are specific, and that's their strength. The last rule is more general – and that's its strength. Rule 4 catches any behaviour that falls through the first three. You can also use Rule 4 proactively by noticing behaviours that demonstrate respect, such as turn-taking, being supportive and handing out resources helpfully.

3 Establish routines

It could be the way students enter your classroom, or how they move from one activity to the next. Or the method by which they submit their homework, have their planners checked, stand in line, get your attention, contribute to a group, exit the classroom – if it's a repeated behaviour, it needs to be turned into a

routine. And you do that by teaching it. Here's how:

- a) Detail the routine's sequential steps
- b) Model the routine if necessary
- c) Check for understanding
- d) Get the students to practice the routine
- e) Give the students feedback
- f) Get the students to practice again, this time incorporating your feedback
- g) Stop when you reach perfection (or as close as you can get to that ideal)

you have to explain the task verbally, then your instructions aren't clear enough. Given the importance of spaced retrieval, it makes sense for the task to be a review of previous learning, whether it be from last lesson, last week, last month, two months ago or even longer. The only materials students need should be a pen and something to write on.

End the 'Do Now!' with a rapid review of the answers. Don't drag this bit out – prepared model

“Behaviour always improves when it's being observed”

The next time the routine happens for real, remind the students of these sequential steps. This will proactively set the students up for success, while also reducing the scope for wiggle room.

4 Do Now!

A 'Do Now!' is a 3- to 5-minute, in-silence writing routine that students complete at the start of each lesson. It's not a starter activity, but rather an activity intended to settle the students, set the tone of the lesson and reinforce your high academic and behaviour expectations.

Display your 'Do Now!' activities clearly on the whiteboard with easy to understand instructions. If

answers on the whiteboard will the quickest way of achieving this. Once done, crisply move on to the next part of the lesson.

5 Say 'thank you', but not 'please'

Both are equally polite, but where 'please' has a begging quality, 'thank you' has the inbuilt expectation that what you want to happen is going to happen. After all, why else would you be thanking the students?

6 Scan

There are two parts to this tip. First, you need to give your full attention to what's going on in your classroom. That means no sneaky texts, no emailing, no tidying of cupboards or shelves and no prolonged turning of your back to the students. Instead, actively scan the students.

Second, you need to be *seen* scanning, so make your scanning obvious. Behaviour always improves when it's being observed.

7 Nip it in the bud

The best time to deal with misbehaviour is as soon as possible. If you wait, the misbehaviour will only get worse

and subsequently require a stronger intervention. It's better by far to nip any misbehaviour in the bud.

8 Stick to Your Word

The old adage holds true – actions really do speak louder than words. It's also true that if you always

do what you say you're going to do, then your words will be as 'loud' (i.e. convincing) as your actions, so stick to your word.

If you tell the class that you're going to return their homework on Tuesday, return it on Tuesday. If you tell a student that you're going to phone his mum to let her know how hard he's working, make the call. If you tell another student that you'll help her with her project at break, be there waiting.

The same goes for sanctions. If the sanction is stipulated in your school behaviour policy or in your classroom contract, or you've said it's going to happen, then make it happen. When what you do is the same as what you say, what you say will carry the weight of what you do. So stick to your word.

9 Avoid the 'SBT'

When challenging a student's misbehaviour, it's not

uncommon to receive a bit of eye rolling, huffing and puffing and a snarky comment or two – or maybe even a very naughty word. Be careful! This response is an SBT – a Secondary Behaviour Trap. Its job is to allow the student to save face among their peers, but it's also a trap, because if you let them, such behaviours can wind you up and cause situations to quickly spiral out of control.

Instead, stay calm, stay in control and stay focused on the initial misbehaviour. Definitely follow up on any secondary behaviours – but not in the heat of the moment.

10 Be nice

You must be in charge. If you're not, then you can't have a functioning classroom. At the same time, however, being in charge alone isn't enough. You also have to be a nice person.

So be warm, respectful and kind. Take an interest in your students as individuals with lives outside of the classroom. Be proportionate with consequences and make sure you start every day with a clean slate. Smiling helps too, as does a little fun and laughter (though never at the expense of a student).

One last thing: you have to be consistently nice, and consistently in charge.

Because it's the consistent combination of the two that will get students to buy in to your behavioural expectations.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Robin Launder delivers behaviour management CPD across the UK and runs a five-week Better Behaviour online course; for more details and to enrol, see behaviourbuddy.co.uk

A question of RESTRAINT

Paul Dix highlights the complex issues surrounding considerations of when staff should restrain pupils and when they should hold back

Restraint is one of the most risky interventions any adult will make – risky in terms of physical safety and also in terms of your career. Decisions made in an instant can play out in lengthy disciplinary investigations and even in court. We can learn a great deal about proportionality from the decisions made around restraint.

Let's start with the extreme end of the scale. If someone is attacking you with a knife, it might be proportionate to defend yourself with a rolling pin. However, if it was a child with a knife made from chocolate, then a rolling pin would be a drastic overreaction.

Stopping a child from running into a busy road by holding their shoulders might be proportionate, but shaking them by the shoulders because they haven't done their homework is less proportionate reaction and more assault.

Volatile environments

Restraint can result in serious complications if pupils are bent over, held face down or sat on. It can quickly become life or death. Just try doing up your shoelaces and holding a conversation to experience the feeling of a constricted airway. Now add in the chaos of a crisis situation and being forced to hold that position for five minutes.

Following the tragic deaths in youth custody of Gareth Myatt and Adam

Rickwood, I worked on the Restraint Accreditation Board to look at the use of restraint and pain compliance techniques on young people in custody. Drafted in for my understanding of behaviour rather than restraint, I learned a great deal about the bravery of prison officers, the unique culture of prisons and the difficulty of keeping both inmates and officers safe in an often volatile environment. It is really, really hard.

Three words that must be acted upon during a restraint are *'I can't breathe'*. Whatever your training, when you hear those words – whatever the context – you must release your hold and ensure that everyone else does too. The death of George Floyd is yet another example of how rotten cultures erode training or best practice. *'You are talking so you must be breathing'* is a haunting falsehood that is repeated too often.

Restraint and additional needs

No teacher puts their hands on a child because they want to. Restraint is never a punishment, surely – and yet recent revelations from special schools and other settings regarding restraint and seclusion show us that complacency is a dangerous mindset.

Restraint is a huge issue in special education settings where children may have serious health issues. Not only is there a greater risk of restraint or seclusion being subtle or hidden, but also

more scope for abuse – locking the wheels of a chair, leaving a door handle out of reach, facing a child against the wall, positioning a table so the child's arms are trapped beneath it, and plain old locking children in a room half the size of a prison cell.

Alongside the restraint that goes undiscovered, there are also the endless stories of children being restrained for five hours at a time in a children's home. The stories keep coming, despite legislation, training and political campaigns. Even, and at times especially, in settings where the power is most unbalanced, the greatest abuses go unreported or unnoticed.

According to a 2019 report produced by the Challenging Behaviour Foundation and Positive and Active Behaviour Support Scotland, 'Reducing Restrictive Intervention of Children and Young People' (see bit.ly/ts108-r2), significant numbers of pupils within both mainstream and special school settings were at risk of restraint and seclusion. Some 88% of 204 surveyed respondents said that their disabled child had experienced physical restraint, with 35% reporting it happening regularly.

Real nuance

Restraint is about safeguarding and needs to be placed firmly within that culture and context. You should only ever put your hands on a child to keep them safe. Restraint does not sit within behaviour

practice. It is not at the end of the punishment road, or the next step in a disciplinary policy.

Of course, judgements made in the blink of an eye can have long-term consequences, but doing nothing may not be an option. However, proportionality is again relevant. Restraint causes genuine internal conflict. I love the idea that no teacher would ever have to restrain a child again, but neither will I stand by and watch a child getting beaten up, or a teacher being attacked for a principle. I have been on the inside of too many of these horrible moments to make grand pronouncements about restraint.

There is real nuance here, and real complications, because intervening too late can result in escalation. I was once in a school where staff were trying to talk down a student in the middle of a violent incident, but they were still talking when they needed to act. The student ended up barricaded in a store cupboard, trashing every resource they could get their hands on with the police on their way.

Intervening too quickly can also have its difficulties. You might appear to be overzealous, too fast to put your hands on a student or too rash. You are between a rocky rock and a very hard place.

Three holds

All the evidence around the impact of physical restraint training shows that the

holds you have learned, if not used regularly, are all but forgotten within three months and would be dangerous if applied incorrectly.

Of course, that is not a great message to give to those buying in training – it makes refresher courses an expensive business. The converse is not great either. The worry is that newly trained colleagues go out and find any excuse to ‘practise’ on unsuspecting children: *‘Mr Harris, Mr Harris, I only asked for a pen – those leg straps are proper overkill...’* Incidents of restraint often increase in the week after a training course.

‘Three simple holds’ gives those who volunteer to deal with restraint incidents the best chance of staying safe. In a special school setting it might be that everyone needs to be trained in physical holds, while in a mainstream school it is more sensible to have a small group trained to a high standard rather than everyone trained a bit.

Some courses teach more than 30 different holds. By the end of the training I have forgotten most of them, and by the following morning I am probably unsafe. Keeping it simple might mean not using hold number 23 for situation number 6, but you were never going to remember that anyway. Three holds executed consistently and safely are all that is needed. It means that training has

the best chance of being implemented accurately.

Of course, the problem with even just three holds is that they rely on physical strength and ability. This is not something that any company selling training will want to admit readily, but it is the inconvenient truth – regardless of the veracity of the techniques.

You might be trained to the highest restraint ninja master level, but if you are five foot two and 10 stone in weight, and the 15-year-old you are trying to restrain is six foot two and 17 stone, it isn’t going to fly. The reality of working in settings

where young people are severely traumatised and/or living a deeply violent existence is that when the fighting starts, being fit, strong and built like a small truck can really help.

It is no coincidence that in nearly every school for excluded children there are some physically dominant adults. Experience also helps, but keeping everyone safe often means doing everything you can to bring the violence to an abrupt halt.

‘Rarely restrain’

A focus on reducing restraint is a healthy course for any setting. ‘Rarely restrain’ is surely a more reasonable objective in

the most fractious settings than restraint elimination – unless someone can explain how releasing your hold on a furious six foot 15-year-old who is about to rip another student apart is the right choice to make. There are victims, and without adults keeping them safe they are not safe.

However, the data is often skewed. One or two children in crisis can cause a spike in restraint that doesn’t represent normal practice. The data that is perhaps more concerning is a regular and normalised high number of restraints that pass through a governors’ meeting without a raised eyebrow because they are always ‘around that number’.



“No teacher puts their hands on a child because they want to”



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Paul Dix is a teacher, leader and teacher trainer specialising in difficult behaviour

The article is an edited extract from his book *After The Adults Change – Achievable behaviour nirvana* (Independent Thinking Press, £16.99); for more information visit whentheadultschange.com or follow @pauldixtweets

Just like you

Equal treatment, no protective barriers, someone to turn to – these are some of the ways in which schools can support students with a visible difference, says **Susan Ross**

With many students now regularly using video calls to attend school remotely, it's natural for teachers to want their cameras on at home while they're in lessons – after all, they need to see the kids they're teaching in order to gauge how they're doing. Yet it does mean that a child with a visible difference may well be constantly looking at themselves throughout and internally criticising their own appearance.

Combine that with the ability for individuals to post anonymous comments regarding others' appearance via social media, and it's easy to see how personal appearance can be a source of huge issues for young people, which they then bring with them into school.

There's a feeling among many young people that how they look is more important than other aspects of their personality; that a favourable appearance will do more to help them get to know people and form friendships than their abilities and what they're like as a person.

That said, it's also to be entirely expected that an individual's outward appearance will inform the initial judgements others make about them. That's what human beings do – we're hardwired to be sensitive to how different people look. When a person looks noticeably different, the individual doing the looking can initially be taken aback, or even feel uneasy at their appearance.

However, we're not cavemen. As adults, most of us have will have moved far beyond such unthinking reactions, but the same doesn't always apply to students. They're likely to feel that natural, hardwired reaction much more strongly, but it's how you manage this response and overcome those behaviours that's important.

Protective fields

Teachers should also try to be aware of their own unconscious

biases when around people with a visible difference. Students with a visible difference shouldn't be afforded a level of interaction that's any better or worse than their peers; it's important to not ignore them, but nor should you overly support them.

Going deliberately easy on them compared to their classmates will do the child no good whatsoever in terms of their attainment and interactions with others. If anything, it will

likely lead to ostracism and bullying if it's felt among the rest of the class that a child is receiving some form of special treatment.

There are, however, ways of supporting students with a visible difference without setting them apart. With Y7s, it can be useful to talk with staff at the child's previous school to see what worked there. On top of all the usual transition concerns, they may be wary of engaging with many new people who won't know



“It’s to be expected that an individual’s outward appearance will inform the initial judgements others make about them”

BRONWEN'S STORY

I was born with a bilateral cleft lip and palate. My face didn't fuse together properly in the womb, leaving me with gaps in my lip, gums and palate. I was also born with a condition called amniotic band syndrome, which is why the digits and toes on my left hand and right foot are slightly shorter and misshaped.

At school I mainly noticed stares at first. I'd try smiling at people, to let them know that I was just like them. It got harder when people started making comments. I soon found it hard to walk the corridors, because I'd be constantly worrying about who was going to shout something next about the way my nose looked. Most of the comments came from older students I wasn't in classes with, usually Y10s and Y11, and mainly from boys.

I always knew I could speak to someone at school, but it was difficult because I didn't feel they were aware of what it's actually like to have a visible difference. Speaking to someone who had that awareness and a deeper understanding of it would have made me feel a lot more comfortable and less alone.

I feel that lack of awareness was also partly responsible for the bullying. If there could have been a bit more awareness throughout the school, maybe from assemblies or lessons, that might have reduced the bullying and made people a bit more accepting of the idea that it's okay to look different.

The main thing I like to tell others in a similar situation is that they're not alone. I had quite low confidence for a while due to the bullying, when I realised there were others out there just like me, I suddenly felt more confident. Sharing my story felt like a huge weight being lifted off my shoulders, so now I try to help people realise that they're not the only ones going through what they're experiencing.

them, but be curious about them – and therefore liable to stare.

If students in the class have questions about a classmate's visible difference, it's often best to answer them honestly, if possible, provide reassurance that the classmate isn't in pain where applicable, and then move the conversation on. Restricting the asking of any questions, or shutting down discussions with a simple 'Don't stare' can be very isolating for individuals with a visible difference. The effect can be that everyone steps back from them, out of caution at not wanting to say or do the wrong thing. Raising a protective field around the child will only make it harder for them to establish friendships.

Needless to say, you should talk to the child themselves, and find out if there's anything specific they'd like the school to do for them. It may be that they want no forms of special treatment, or for their visible difference to be discussed in class without them being present. Conversely, they may want to talk about it in front of the class themselves. There's single effective approach; it really depends on what works for each individual. That said, I would recommend giving children with a visible difference somewhere they can go, and someone they can talk to if they're feeling uncomfortable or worried.

Any instances of bullying need to be addressed immediately. As one of the

A WORLD OF DIFFERENCE

Changing Faces has recently launched a free package of resources to support teaching around visible difference under the banner 'A World of Difference'. Aimed at KS2/3, the materials include a teacher guide, lesson visuals and activities and prompts for a themed assembly covering what visible differences are, how these relate to media representations and the impact of stereotypes.

These are accompanied by a series of videos aimed teachers, showing young people with a visible difference discussing their experiences of attending school and the challenges they've had to manage.

The resources can be downloaded from bit.ly/ts108-visdif1



parents we support once observed, 'Banter is bullying'.

Assert your expectations that no one in school should say or do anything that's negative or hostile towards anyone else, but don't cite a student's visible difference the underlying reason for this, since doing so can be very destructive and further exacerbate the difficulties a students may already be having.



Susan Ross is head of education and learning at Changing Faces; for more information, visit changingfaces.org.uk or follow @FaceEquality

How schools are closing the Word Gap

The new Oxford Language Report provides primary and secondary school case studies that share a variety of different impactful approaches to improving vocabulary teaching and learning.

Read all of the research and findings at:
oxford.ly/wordgap



The Inside Story

LIONEL BOLTON

oxford.ly/wordgap

How extensive is the Word Gap issue and what impact is it having among secondary students? Oxford University Press has been finding out...



Lionel Bolton is the Head of Secondary English, Languages and Humanities at Oxford University Press

[MEET THE TEAM]

Helen Prince, author of *Get it Right: Boost Your Vocabulary*, advisor and CEO of Chatterstars



Andrea Quincey, Director of Primary Literacy at Oxford University Press

OUP's first Oxford Language Report, 'Why closing the Word Gap matters,' was published in 2018. Drawing on a nationwide survey of primary and secondary school teachers, it revealed that over 43% of children in Y7 were perceived to have a 'Word Gap' – vocabulary below age-related expectations – and that the situation was getting worse. Significantly, having a Word Gap was found to impact upon not just students' academic success, but also their self esteem, behaviour and life chances.

Those findings were echoed in a follow-up report we produced in October 2020, called 'Bridging the Word Gap at Transition', which went on to highlight the impact Word Gap was having on primary to secondary transitions. One reason cited as causing challenges for both students and teachers was the increased vocabulary children are now exposed to when arriving at secondary school. This is largely academic vocabulary, which over 60% of our survey respondents saw their Year 7s struggling with.

We will soon be releasing a third Word Gap report which compiles experiences of, and strategies pursued by, schools that are successfully starting to identify and address their pupils' vocabulary development. It brings

together nine case studies – five from primary schools and four from secondary schools – which educators will hopefully find helpful for their context. The report sets out the schools' reasons for wanting to take action, explores how action plans were implemented and reviews the impact these had, not only on raised standards, but also on areas such as parental engagement and wellbeing. Teachers also talk about their planned next steps.

One of the things that strikes me about the material within the report is the degree of commonality. The featured schools are located across the country and operate in different contexts, yet some of the issues and actions seem quite similar. For instance, there's the schools' explicit focus on teaching Tier 2 and Tier 3 vocabulary, their increased emphasis on talk and reading, and above all, whole school adoptions (with CPD) of the strategies they opted for.

Significantly, all the schools report a range of positive outcomes from the actions they've taken. When the report is published, I believe that teachers and senior leaders will find the approaches practical and helpful when considering Word Gap issues in their settings.

Whilst the Word Gap continues to be a significant issue, made worse by the pandemic, the actions schools are taking are having a positive effect academically, as well as on confidence and wellbeing.

CONTACT:

To find out more about OUP's Word Gap research, visit oxford.ly/wordgap

Our Journey

2018

'The Oxford Language Report: Why Closing the Word Gap Matters' is published, exploring the impact of a Word Gap on young people and beyond

2019

Subject-specific and whole-school Word Gap packs are released, followed by a KS2/3 transition pack

2020

A follow-up report, 'Bridging the Word Gap at Transition', looks secondary school transitions and the impact of COVID-related school closures

2021

The 'How Schools are Closing the Word Gap' (just published) contains primary and secondary vocabulary improvement case studies

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CLASSROOM VOICES

“Who knew she existed outside the school premises?”

Ryan Wilson reflects on the pleasures (and occasional awkwardness) that come from being recognised by current and past students outside of school...

It must have been 1991 when I spotted Mrs Evans in Belfast Airport. I'd have been eight, and heading off for a week in Majorca with my family. Truth be told, 30 years later I couldn't tell you anything about the food, the beaches or where we stayed – but I remember well the thrill of realising my Y4 teacher was queuing up for the same flight as us.

It was unmistakably her, but she didn't look the same. In place of her usual flowing dresses were shorts and a t-shirt. She was clutching the hand of a man I'd never seen before. Her posture, the way she was talking – everything was familiar, and yet different. Who knew she existed outside the school premises? I felt like I'd peeked behind the curtain...

‘SIRRRR!!!!’

Having now spent many years as a teacher myself, I can speculate as to how Mrs Evans might have felt that day.

Did her heart sink as she laid eyes on me at the start of a much-needed holiday, the sole purpose of which was to expunge all thoughts of me and my classmates? Was she silently willing the universe to ensure we weren't staying at the same hotel? If so, I wouldn't blame her.

Having said that, bumping into pupils – and former pupils – out of school is simply part and parcel of being a teacher. I've never experienced any particularly negative interactions from it myself. Yes, I've sometimes had ‘SIRRRR!!!!’ roared at me at an ungodly volume from the other side of

a road when out with friends, much to their amusement. Yes, I've received a bit of giggling and pointing when travelling on trains, but I've overwhelmingly found that any chats have been cordial.

When meeting former pupils, it's been a joy to hear what they've been up to. I'm often left shaking my head at how the passage of time and the shedding of puberty-induced hormones can mellow and mature even the most wayward of students.

CHILDHOOD REGRESSION

That doesn't mean such meetings always happen under ideal circumstances, of course. I've definitely become self-conscious of what's in my trolley at supermarkets, and guiltily scrambled to cover potentially embarrassing items with bags of salad on occasion. Pub trips have come to premature conclusions when groups of sixth formers have appeared. A former colleague used to recall the time she was accosted by a pupil and their mother in a cinema foyer and interrogated about a forthcoming

piece of coursework. Another still cringes as she remembers the unfortunate occasion when a pupil who had recently finished school was assisting with her smear test.

You never know when a train conductor, flight attendant or police officer will break into a smile and ask ‘Do you remember me?’ Assuming you've bought a train ticket, aren't being rowdy on a flight and aren't about to be arrested, it's almost always good to see them.

If you're lucky, and have a better memory than me, then a distinct mannerism, facial feature or tone of voice may well trigger something deep in your brain that allows the man or woman in front of you to regress to a child in your mind's eye, after which you'll be able to address them by name.

As someone who occasionally struggles to recognise even people I know relatively well, I must confess that I've often floundered, stuttered and searched pleadingly for something to help me place them before asking, as vaguely as possible, ‘How's everything going?’

Yet there's an undeniable pleasure in seeing how the young people you invested so much in have turned out; how they've gone from being class clown to a productive member of society, how they've fulfilled their potential and achieved their ambitions – or at the very least, moved on from eating pencil shavings. It's one of those things that really makes the job worthwhile.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Ryan Wilson is an English teacher and writer, and his teaching memoir, *Let That Be a Lesson: A Teacher's Life in the Classroom*, is available now (£14.99, Chatto & Windus); follow him at @rhwilson83



WHY I LOVE...

David Watkins talks us through the impact that the HUE HD Pro visualiser has had on the engagement levels and outcomes of his geography students

ABOUT ME:

NAME:

DAVID WATKINS

JOB ROLE:

Head of Geography and DoFE Award Manager

SCHOOL:

St Joseph's College, Reading

FAVOURITE FEATURE:

"The camera is well priced and works well, straight out of the box"



TALKING ABOUT: HUE HD PRO VISUALISER

“ One of our departmental aims is to embed excellence.

Our approach is based on Ron Bergers's 2003 book, *An Ethic of Excellence*, which suggests adopting the following principles:

- Assign work that matters
- Study examples of excellence
- Build a culture of critique
- Require multiple revisions
- Provide opportunities for public presentation

Using the HUE HD Pro visualiser has made our quest for excellence much easier. It allows us to display examples of excellence either modelled by the teacher or produced by the pupil, ensuring that pupils are aware of the success criteria before commencing their work.

“ Integral to our approach has been building a culture of critique.

In order for pupils to feel confident when their work is displayed to the class, we have worked on teaching pupils how to be constructive to one another, as well as ensuring a healthy dose of praise. Once this culture is embedded, more work naturally finds itself under the visualiser – in fact, usually everyone wants to have their moment!

This allows immediate feedback from the class and the teacher, and is a great example of live marking, which provides



Contact:

The HUE HD Pro is one of a range of colourful, creative and affordable products for school, home and work available from huehd.com; find out more and follow us at [@HUEcameras](https://twitter.com/HUEcameras) for news, giveaways and fun ideas.

support and guidance to help all learners attain excellence.

“ Geographers need to develop a broad toolkit of methods and techniques in order to understand the world around us.

When teaching how to construct a graph for the first time, we now model it using the visualiser with the pupils following along. They confidently match the steps and listen as I describe the process, leading to fewer errors and saving time once support is withdrawn. As I complete the task, I'm thinking out loud and instinctively informing them of the next task, and why I'm completing it in that order. This helps develop metacognition, and a more conscientious and questioning approach when they then do it themselves.

“ I often now display handouts on the board without having to reel off photocopies for every pupil.

Geography textbooks suffer from going out of date very quickly as the world rapidly changes around us. I use the visualiser to show contemporary articles from magazines, newspapers and wider texts. Using the visualiser, rather than photocopying, is much better for the environment and saves money at the same time. It also plugs and plays into my school computer, without any need to install drivers or hassle the IT department.

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Is your curriculum **POVERTY-PROOFED?**

Could those well-meaning practices and habits intended to support your economically disadvantaged be actually doing more harm than good? **Rachel Macfarlane** takes a closer look...

Freed from the shackles of bubbles, and with COVID restrictions largely lifted (at least at the time of writing), some teachers will have now started to reinstate school activities that had to be shelved over the last 18 months.

Cross-year clubs, educational visits – these are the kind of experiences that add spark to a curriculum, develop students' character and relationships, and create memories for learners that can last a lifetime. Before we leave the sterility of COVID-era curriculums behind us, however, it's important to take stock of the impact the pandemic has wrought on our school communities. As a more expansive curriculum becomes increasingly viable, what pitfalls should schools be aware of if their provision is to be truly inclusive?

The backdrop

By October 2020, nearly 20% of the pupil population (1.63 million) was eligible for Pupil Premium – an increase of just under 200,000 from January 2020. Though of course, there are far more children in our schools living in real poverty than just those eligible for PP funding. The Child Poverty Action Group estimates that even

before the pandemic, some 4.2 million children (approximately 30% of all children) were living in poverty in the UK in 2018-19.

COVID-19 has simply accelerated an already worrying trend. According to statistics from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, on 30 September 2020 the number of households living in temporary accommodation stood at 93,490, up 7% on the

“When we stop and think about it, there are many hidden curriculum costs”

previous year. Between April and September 2020, the Trussell Trust, the UK's biggest foodbank network, gave out 1.24 million emergency food parcels to people in crisis. On average, 2,600 parcels were distributed to children each day during those first six months of the pandemic.

Unemployment between September and November 2020 was meanwhile 5%, according to the Office for National Statistics, even with the protection of the government's furlough scheme – protection that was withdrawn in the latter half of 2021.

It's easy to assume that the education provision offered by state schools is equally distributed to all

learners, given how the vast majority of curriculum experiences are fully funded for all students.

Yet when we stop and think about it, there are many hidden curriculum costs to be found in schools, particularly in relation to certain subjects such as music and PE.

A level playing field?

Achieving a strong pass grade in music at GCSE and A level requires proficiency on a musical instrument, which ordinarily requires years of private tuition that carries significant costs. Passing a grade 8 proficiency exam on an instrument is estimated to cost between £8,000 and £15,000 in tuition per student – though most inclusive music departments will ensure that disadvantaged learners can

achieve top grades through funded tuition using school equipment.

Given the sizeable practical assessment element of PE at GCSE and A level, students belonging to sports clubs outside of school, whose parents pay for regular training sessions and/or are able to participate in sports with significant accompanying costs (such as horse riding or golf) will be unfairly advantaged.

Poverty-aware PE teachers will therefore proactively break down the mystique and sense of exclusivity that surrounds certain sports by including them on the curriculum, teaching the rules and vocabulary to all, and providing opportunities for students to practise with equipment and coaches before and after school.

However, there are many other ways in which



economically disadvantaged children can be let down by well-intentioned school systems and practices. These can include food technology ingredients for PP-eligible children being left at the front of the classroom for collection; class teachers publicly distributing free revision guides to the same group in class, and students eligible for free school meals being given packed lunches for school trips in easily identifiable brown bags.

Economic signifiers

Teachers and leaders are often unaware of the impact such routine practices can have, and the coping mechanisms students will employ as a result. Children are keen social observers, and often quick to pick up on economic signifiers. Students from poorer families will tend to be exposed by the brand of shoes they wear; the stationery they use; the quality of materials they bring from home for practical lessons and the type of weekend and holiday activities they talk about doing.

Like most heads, I was always very keen to minimise the daily costs of schooling for parents and carers, and also determined that those living in economic

poverty shouldn't be stigmatised. We tried to operate in a way that prevented that, (see 'Questions for teachers and leaders'), but I'm certain we could have done more to poverty-proof our school.

We were certainly guilty at times of introducing initiatives that were well-intentioned, but which inadvertently caused stress for economically disadvantaged learners. Take Christmas Jumper Day – we embraced this initiative, arranging for student donations to be collected in buckets at the school gates.

We encouraged festive dress, while stressing that this could simply involve some inventive use of tinsel. On reflection, however, we never addressed the peer pressure brought to bear on the wearing of Christmas jumpers.

The costs of cover

Of course, school trips are the main exception to the rule of a free state school education for all.

There's no doubt that viewing masterpieces on visits to art galleries, seeing a play being studied in drama or English performed professionally, or getting to touch historical artefacts from an era being analysed in history can enhance students' experience of the curriculum, while also improving their knowledge retention, deepening their understanding and generating a lifelong love of learning.

10 POVERTY-PROOFING IDEAS

- 1 Set up a school shop that sells stationery and maths equipment to students at cost price.
- 2 Provide all equipment, including sketch books and pencils, for learners in the art rooms.
- 3 Get into the practice of purchasing whole class sets of curriculum texts and loaning them out to students.
- 4 Ensure that GCSE geography coursework is designed in such a way that it can be completed in the local area for no additional cost.
- 5 Make sure that every text on a departmental reading list is well-stocked in the school's library and available for free loan.
- 6 Maximise access to computer rooms at the start and end of the school day.
- 7 Provide students with a termly printing allowance.
- 8 Provide packed lunches (for which non-PP students pay a fixed price) for everyone when classes go on trips.
- 9 Where possible, mandate the wearing of uniforms on school trips to avoid the stigmatising of disadvantaged learners.
- 10 Introduce payment plans for school trips; avoid trips to more expensive venues and consider bypassing souvenir shops when you're there.

Yet such experiences usually come at a cost that schools are simply unable to cover single-handedly for whole cohorts. At the same time, it's important to always be aware of the pressures that paid-for trips can and will have on families living in poverty.

A 2014 NASUWT survey found that almost a quarter of secondary-aged children were unable to participate in educational trips and activities due to prohibitive costs – though with sufficient effort and will, there are some ways in which your trips and wider school culture can be poverty-proofed.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Rachel Macfarlane was a headteacher for 16 years and is author of *Obstetrics for Schools: a guide to eliminating failure and ensuring the safe delivery of all learners* (£18.99, Crown House Publishing); follow her at @RMacfarlaneEdu

QUESTIONS FOR TEACHERS AND LEADERS

- What are the hidden costs of your curriculum?
- Are there any ways in which you could reduce these, without stigmatising learners?
- Do you oversee any initiatives that might exclude economically disadvantaged learners?
- Can you identify any correlation between consistent school trip absences and the students on your PP register?
- Who determines which trips go ahead, how much parents/carers will be charged and what discount can be applied for families experiencing economic hardship?
- Is someone available to quality assure all trip-related letters, while examining them through a poverty-proofing lens?



LOVE'S LABOUR'S LOST

Give your students a challenging, albeit entertaining linguistic workout with Shakespeare's witty skewering of manhood, Courtly Love and hack sonnet writing...

When should I teach it?

The play is generally considered to be linguistically difficult, since much of the humour comes from puns and other forms of wordplay. It's therefore probably better suited to Y9, or even used as a text for the A Level literature comparative study. It can be an especially interesting text to use in a genre study of comedy, however, as it follows most of the generic conventions of a Shakespearean comedy but doesn't grant its characters the expected happy endings.

How should I teach it?

The play presents an opportunity to explore of the theme of Courtly Love, with the King and his companions writing sonnets to their unattainable women, their beloveds. The comic tour de force of Act 4 Scene 3 is possibly one of Shakespeare's most brilliantly constructed comic scenes – the men catch one another reading sonnets they have all written for each of the

women they idolise, providing an excellent starting point from which to explore the tradition of sonnet writing. As in *Romeo and Juliet*, the play contains embedded sonnets that allow for discussion of the form and an increased level of familiarity with iambic pentameter and rhyme schemes.

Why should I teach it?

If you're teaching *Romeo and Juliet* as your GCSE text, *Love's Labour's Lost* could be a good counterpoint to teach in Y9. Likewise, if you teach *A Midsummer Night's Dream* earlier in KS3, *Love's Labour's Lost* will provide an interesting contrast. These three plays were all written around the same year, at a time when Shakespeare appears to have been experimenting with genre. *Love's Labour's Lost* and *Romeo and Juliet* both begin following the expectations of a comedy, but neither ends in the traditional way, with *Romeo and Juliet* taking a dark turn into tragedy. *A Midsummer Night's Dream* begins with tragic elements – the death threat hanging over Hermia – but resolves as a traditional comedy. All three link to ideas of Courtly Love and the impulsiveness of young love, which could be useful contextual information for studying *Love* through the Ages.

How does it link to the rest of the curriculum?

The writing of sonnets and theme of Courtly Love can be linked to

About the play

Perhaps the least performed and most underrated of his comedies, *Love's Labour's Lost* is one of only two plays with wholly original plots that Shakespeare wrote. It tells the story of Ferdinand, the young King of Navarre, and his three friends who take a vow to give up all excess and the company of a woman for three years in favour of fasting and studying. Their vow is almost immediately tested by the arrival of the Princess of France and her three ladies-in-waiting, the play's comedy emerging from the young men's efforts at concealing their love for the women.

practices in the Court of Henry VIII, when the Petrarchan sonnet was introduced into England by Sir Thomas Wyatt, who was briefly imprisoned in the Tower of London for allegedly flirting with Anne Boleyn. His sonnet, 'Whoso List to Hunt', was believed to have been written about her.

Links could also be made to the gender expectations of the time, with the women in the play exhibiting much more mature behaviour than the men. Like *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Love's Labour's Lost* contains a play within a play, which tells us something about staging and audiences in Shakespeare's time.

How can I watch it?

There are several, very varied options. Dominic Dromgoole's 2010 Shakespeare's Globe production (see bit.ly/ts108-LLL1) is simply joyous, and features Michelle Terry as the Princess of France. The RSC's 2014 version is meanwhile set in the 1940s, with Michelle Terry playing the feisty Rosaline. Kenneth Branagh's 2000 film version cuts much of the dialogue, replacing it with classic 1930s songs, but otherwise sticks to the spirit of the play.



Better teachers sooner

If we want to retain our ECTs and help them thrive, we're going to need fewer drill sergeants and more friendly mentors, writes **John Lawson**

A day spent with a great teacher is worth a thousand hours of diligent study' (Japanese Proverb)

The current focus on reducing formal observations and developing mentoring programmes ought to be encouraging for those of us coaching nervous newbies. However, it's somewhat disturbing that a profession peopled by innumerable brilliant minds has taken so long to embrace a concept with undeniable benefits, including reductions in stress and increased learning in both classrooms and staffrooms.

Teachers should be mentored until they are ready to mentor others. We rarely enjoy or learn much from high stakes, 'snapshot' observations by superiors. We survive them. It's almost akin to being on *The Apprentice* – Lord Sugar sugarcoats nothing, with victory usually going to those contestants least fazed by his hazing.

In a similar vein, there are still too many drill sergeants training ECTs – *'I'm gonna turn you worms into real teachers!'*

Run ragged

For mentoring to work effectively, the process needs to be gentler and more collaborative than traditional observations. I can still vividly recall the rainy Wednesday afternoon when, as an NQT, I was run ragged by an Ofsted inspector watching me teach 10C and 11D. Her excoriating report was accurate, but she pulled me apart when what I needed



most was building up.

As a mentor, I'll now often team teach and take the lead when I sense that an ECT is struggling. Had I been more skilfully and sensitively mentored as a novice myself, I believe I'd have become a better teacher far sooner.

My first mentee was fellow RE teacher James. During our initial observation, I remember being amazed at how polished an NQT could be. He was knowledgeable, articulate, confident and unusually personable. If anything, I was learning from him – but I soon discovered why the principal had expressed concerns.

While James excelled at teaching top set, self-motivated KS3 classes who liked him, he couldn't cope with disenchanted KS4 students and was easily outmanoeuvred by the awkward squad's smartest hombres. The charming pied piper had suddenly morphed into The Incredible Sulk.

Fighting back

One evening I sent James a YouTube clip of a lion surrounded by a pack of

hyenas with the message *'That was you today, my friend. Not even lions die of old age on the Serengeti. Are you ready to fight back?'* James' response was a single, four-letter word that too many teachers are still afraid of using.

'HELP!'

At our first formal mentoring session I asked James to write a short, 50-word paragraph each day on something he'd learned about behaviour management in a learning journal I gave him. And for the next three weeks, that's what we'd do together after school.

Our first topic was 'Respect as a two-way street'. The poor behaviour of James's students was unacceptable, but his gravest mistake had been to meet ire with ire. However poorly our students behave, we'll never get through to them if we're equally disrespectful in turn.

At our next session, we prioritised behaviour and relationships over matters of the curriculum. Though we might temporarily fall behind, it's best to first understand and respectfully address

persistent disruption – any time lost as a result can usually be reclaimed later.

Detailed portraits

Teaching is heavily relational, hence spending time on getting to know who our students are is vital. Once the KS4 students saw James as a 'nicer teacher', they were ready to learn – and after three weeks of evaluating simple pedagogical truisms, James and his students were back on track and equally happy. Left unaided, another talented teacher would have quit and given the fatalists more anecdotal evidence for their 'Quitters lack the mythical teacher gene' assertions.

The beauty of journaling with my ECTs is that they're able to safely share their hopes, fears and weaknesses. I'm a friend and mentor, not the boss, and what's shared with me stays with me. Mentors may not always be right, but their assessments will be based on detailed portraits rather than snapshots.

Incidentally, in that video I sent James, the hyenas eventually backed off when a second lion joined the showdown. James is now a highly respected headteacher, and an evangelist for mentoring himself.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

John Lawson is a former secondary teacher, now serving as a foundation governor and running a tutoring service; for more information, visit prep4successnow.wordpress.com or follow @johninpompano

How to be 'THAT TEACHER'

Gary Toward and **Chris Henley** examine what it takes to become the kind of teacher that students will remember fondly well into adulthood...

We were recently invited to the wedding of a colleague we had taught with some years before. In truth we were surprised, but very touched to have been asked. Sat at a table of eight with other guests we hardly knew, we saw the need for a conversation starter to get things going – so Gary went with, “Who was your favourite teacher at school?”

When it comes to education, everyone’s an expert. Because we’ve all been to school, right? What was interesting, however, is that of the people sat at that table – each of whom must have had 50 or so teachers throughout their time at school – there was only ever one teacher who seemed to stand out from the rest. One who really made a difference to that person when they were young.

A lasting difference

What does it take to be ‘that teacher’ – the one who people remember for the rest of time? Once you’ve made a difference to a child’s life, you can never unmake that difference. Our book, *Celebrating Teachers: Making a difference*, tells the stories of 19 teachers nominated by someone they taught, in some cases many moons ago, for making a lasting difference to their lives.

If there’s one golden thread that runs right through the book, it’s that just about every one of the featured teachers possess

an ability to build unconditional, positive relationships. We’ve all taught alongside colleagues who seem to have an effortless ability to get even the most unbiddable young learner eating out of their hand. We all know, however, that nothing in teaching comes without effort. The craft of the classroom is something that’s developed and finely honed over a number of years, and though we might be teachers ourselves, we never, ever stop learning.

So where to start with the business of building positive relationships? Let’s explore eight different ingredients which, when blended together, will help you become ‘that teacher’ – the one who never needs to set penalties or punishments, because the kids want to do what you want them to do.

1. Learn as much as you possibly can about every child...

...especially the most challenging. What sports team do they support? What music do they like? What keeps them busy out of school? What bike or scooter do they ride?

Do they have any pets? You can then use these golden nuggets of information to engineer mini-conversations, either in class or when out and about. It’s powerful to be able to touch base with a child via a cheery ‘Great result on Sunday! Did you watch it?’ It immediately conveys the message that they matter to you.

2. Start each lesson with total positivity

From the moment they step over the threshold, fizz and buzz with electric enthusiasm – especially with any classes you find hard to reach. Much of what we’re charged with teaching isn’t instantly fascinating. Fronted adverbials and oxbow lakes may have their charms, but they aren’t immediately apparent to most kids. It’s up to the



teacher to generate the wind speed needed to make the lesson fly.

3. Get to know kids outside the classroom

Kids will tend to see teachers as purveyors of subject matter that's often less than appealing, but if they can get to know the real you at, say, a chess club, during the school show or on a chartered coach, they'll begin to see you in a different light. Suddenly, you've become a person worth getting to know.

4. Be Mr or Ms 'Different'

Make sure your students know that in your classroom, they're going to be getting something different compared to other lessons. Spin your own web of magic, and remember that *this*



"Make sure your students know that in your classroom, they're going to be getting something different compared to other lessons"

is your domain. Make your lessons boomerang lessons – lessons that kids actually want to come back to. Use your own quirkiness, and make sure they know how much they matter to you.

5. Harness their interests in class

Borrow formats from some of the video games they play, catchphrases from the TV programmes they watch and the music they listen to, and highlight stories in the news that you suspect they'll relate to. Once you're broadcasting on their wavelength you can get that the river current of positivity starting to flow. Before you know it, you'll soon be carrying every child with you.

6. Drop the ego!

Sometimes our students will get things wrong, necessitating difficult conversations. Kids who don't do the right thing are expecting to be told off. There's a stereotype firmly established within comics, movies and TV shows of the teacher who looms large in the minds of every child (and many parents) – a shouty, naggy, bossy, sanctimonious person who tells you off.

Genuinely great teachers are different, and won't be afraid to say, *'You didn't have the best lesson ever yesterday – and actually, I didn't either! I know I got cross with you, so let's both put it right.'* Kids won't be expecting that – expressing such sentiments will often completely disarm them, and help them see you in a different light.

7. Make them laugh!

Do you have any stories up your sleeve that are guaranteed to make the class smile? When children are

happy, they stand a better chance of learning and remembering. What games always go down well with your learners? Use them in your lessons!

8. Ensure every child knows that they're valued

Tell them that you rate them; that you can help them reach the next rung on the ladder of learning. Give praise for the effort they put in, which will help them with each small step along the journey towards progress.

Triangulate this praise by surreptitiously praising them to their peers behind their backs. Word is sure to travel, and will likely help get the folks at home onside as well.

Texts, reward points that go into the pockets of parents, even a brief phone call to say how much effort their kid put in during your lesson – all will reap huge rewards for you as a teacher.

Adopting the strategies above will help transform you into 'that teacher' – the one who stands out from the rest, and who kids will remember for the rest of their lives. The one who always, without exception, worked from a baseline of total positivity.

Who knows – you could even end up reading about yourself in a book one day...



ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Gary Toward (left) and Chris Henley have over 70 years' collective experience in leading and teaching at schools, and have been colleagues for over 30 years. Through their business Decisive Element (decisive-element.co.uk), they have delighted education audiences with presentations based on six successful books they've co-authored to date. Their latest, *Celebrating Teachers: Making a difference* (Crown House Publishing, 2021) is available now



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Death shouldn't be a taboo

Schools can help tackle the impact of bereavement on students' education by playing a role in addressing the stigma around death, says **Louise Poffley**

Whilst death and bereavement have long been 'taboo' topics for many, the events of the past 18 months have sadly put them firmly on the agenda. As parents and society look to schools and teaching staff to provide young people with the skills and knowledge they need for their futures, there is still the feeling that more could be done to embrace practical life lessons that equip young people to deal with the only certainty we face in life.

A recent survey carried out by Project Eileen found that two thirds of parents in the UK believe schools aren't currently doing enough to sufficiently prepare young people for life, with finances, sex and death identified as three particular areas of focus. The findings represent an opportunity for change; lessons on money and sex have become part of the National Curriculum in recent years, but there's still little being said at school, or across wider society, about death.

Tackling the stigma

It's extremely common for individuals to not want to delve into their experiences of death, or those of other people – often to avoid awkwardness, or because people don't know 'the right thing to say'. We tend to tread carefully around the subject, and don't always express ourselves in the way we need to in order to cope with this significant and life-changing event effectively.

Beyond the pastoral support it can offer individuals, tackling such

them with the skills they'll need to support peers experiencing similar challenges themselves.

Inclusive solutions

It's important that any solutions be inclusive and proactive in nature, given that death and grief tend to be encountered in the context of tragic situations. As a result, bereavement support for young people will usually focus on the individuals most immediately affected, and rarely be extended to friends and others around

believe that introducing young people to death and grief can have significant benefits for their lives, both in and beyond school. Our research has found that a majority of parents believe lessons on death and grief should form part of the curriculum, and we are keen to work with schools to make this a reality with the aid of our dedicated multimedia lesson plans.

Start the conversation

There is still a long way to go before we are able, as a nation, to remove the stigma associated with death and bereavement – but there are some steps we can take right now to move things in the right direction.

Young people need opportunities to talk about, and learn how to handle loss. They should feel able to express their emotions, be willing to support one another and know where to turn if they need additional help. Teachers, for their part, also need appropriate support when it comes to caring for students experiencing grief.

In starting this conversation, we can impact students' lives for the better and enable schools to better cater for their students – not just today, but also in years to come.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Louise Poffley is the founder and CEO of Project Eileen – a charity created to help teachers support students with death; for more information, visit projecteileen.co.uk or follow @ProjectEileen

“Introducing young people to death and grief can have significant benefits for their lives”

difficult situations head-on could help reduce absence rates and support students' academic performance.

The last 18 months have only heightened the need to support students in responding to complex and challenging life events. By introducing the topic of death to young people and encouraging a greater openness around it, there's an opportunity for schools to play a leading role in reducing the

associated stigma.

By breaking this stigma down, we can prepare young people to not only better manage their own experiences, but also equip

them. However, this can mean that when they return to school, their teachers and peers will immediately be presented with the challenge of how to handle their reintroduction to classes sensitively and effectively.

There is no 'right' or 'wrong' way to cope with death. Individuals shouldn't be discouraged from taking time out should they need to – but without adequate support upon their return, some students may find it hard to concentrate for sustained periods. If their teachers and peers are unsure how to respond, bereaved students can become intensely isolated, potentially giving rise to further absences in future.

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Can stressed-out teachers ACTUALLY TEACH?

Given the heavy workloads and distressing situations that can come with the job, let's rethink the emotional expectations made of teachers, says **Billie Krstovic**

For the best part of two decades I've talked to students and teachers about what makes them stressed, and explored how stress affects teachers' ability to do their jobs.

When asked about their state of mind just before we embark on wellbeing sessions, I find that most teachers will report experiencing some form of emotional overload. Anger, frustration, fatigue and instances of low mood are all common responses. Some report frequent illness, while others cite occasional panic attacks. The majority will regularly report feeling overwhelmed and unable to 'switch off', and often point to constant worries about their ability to manage mounting workloads.

Switching off

During one meditation session, a teacher once told me she had no faith in her ability to 'switch off'. She had too many chores that she was unable to complete on time and couldn't stop thinking about them – but was later pleasantly surprised when she managed to relax for a few fragile minutes. Afterwards, however, she felt guilty for spending that brief amount of time on self-care and ended up rushing around, trying to catch up on her prep

while convinced that she'd fail at what she was hoping to teach the following day.

According to the 2014 Emotions and Learning study carried out by the International Academy of Education, *'The emotions that the teacher experiences and displays in the classroom can have profound effects on the emotions experienced by student'* – which in this context means positive and negative emotions.

On another occasion, a male teacher disclosed to me that stress among his students was starting to affect him too, further adding to pressures he was already under. Though widely considered within the school to be a talented and effective teacher, he told me he didn't

agree, since his inability to consistently manage his stress levels was affecting the quality of his work – to the point that he never felt he was doing his best in the classroom.

Education settings are populated by sensitive, emotional learners undergoing accelerated physical, mental, emotional and intellectual development, and run by professional educators who are expected to be in total control of students' teaching, learning and behaviours – as well as their own emotions. While entrusted with the complexities of the learning process and pastoral care, teachers are also somehow expected to place themselves outside of innately human emotional behaviours as part of the job description. This isn't always possible, and it's not sustainable to pretend that it is.

Professional support

I remember walking into my classroom one day to find an ECT in a state of considerable distress, waiting to talk to me. She wanted to know how it was that school teachers had no support at their place of work equivalent to that available to nurses, police officers and other professionals regularly dealing with individuals in personal and sometimes distressing

situations.

She went on to explain that a student had disclosed to her some sensitive information that affected her deeply, but was unable to share the details with anyone aside from the school's safeguarding lead, since it was a confidential matter. She'd been effectively left to deal with the issue alone, and was feeling ashamed at not being able to cope. She doubted her ability to teach her next lesson, and was even beginning to doubt her ability to continue in the job.

As a society, we've long recognised and normalised the notion that certain professionals will require extra emotional support as a routine part of their working lives. Teachers, however, have somehow missed out on this. If teachers are to continue contributing their lion's share of service to society and teach to their full potential, these unrealistic expectations of emotionally unshakable professionals with no need for support has to be re-examined.

The lack of existing research and insight into specific links between stress and teaching thus far hasn't helped. The profession needs something powerful to be provided – and it's not 'a cake at half term...'

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Billie Krstovic is a head of social sciences and teacher of psychology and meditation, providing wellbeing sessions for students and staff for two decades, and author of the book *Using Mindfulness to Improve Learning - 40 Meditation Exercises for School and Home*; for more information, visit groundingformindfulness.com



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Let's close the STEM gender gap

Garath Rawson outlines the steps Doncaster University Technical College has taken to increase female participation in STEM subjects

As a UTC, we are a government-funded, 13- to 19-year-old provision. We offer a blend of academic and technical education, specialising in engineering and creative and digital technologies, while ensuring that we target local skills gaps in order to retain talent locally.

Since opening, I've developed a multi-pronged, long-term approach to diversifying our classrooms, which I hope other schools and colleges can adopt. Here's how we actively encourage women to go into STEM.

Role models

The GCSE science curriculum currently mentions 20 male scientists and not a single woman, reflecting society's wider disinterest in female leaders in this area.

This invisibility can make female students feel they're not welcome, since their achievements likely won't be recognised, or that this simply isn't an appropriate career for them to follow. Schools can help rectify this by shining a light on how the achievements of notable female inventors, physicists, engineers and biologists have shaped the world.

Sharing videos on platforms such as ClickView about these role models can humanise their stories, making a real impact on students and shattering misconceptions.

Schools can also consider their internal role models.



At Doncaster UTC, for example, both curriculum directors for science and engineering are female.

Career options

Many students don't appreciate how many doors a STEM qualification can open. Some assume that engineering students are destined to be car mechanics, or that computer science students have to become IT technicians, but this couldn't be further from the truth.

In reality, STEM qualifications can lead to a veritable smorgasbord of careers, ranging from research, management and sales roles, to jobs within the medical sector or aeronautics industry. Once aware of the exciting and multifaceted STEM career options potentially at their fingertips, students will be more inclined to explore them further.

Schools can also help change the androcentric narrative. Traditionally, STEM subjects are discussed and taught through an androcentric lens, revolving around traditionally 'masculine' topics, such as cars, rockets, construction, finance and explosions. This fuels outdated stereotypes, and risks making STEM seem uninviting to those many individuals who can't relate to said topics.

STEM is about so much more. It spans renewable energy creation and development, architectural structures (both new and ancient), interface design, logos and branding. By rethinking the androcentric narrative, we can encourage many more students to embrace STEM subjects.

Work with parents

Gender stereotypes are powerful and persistent,

but by working with parents, we can break the mould and ensure that today's young people can realise their potential in STEM careers, regardless of gender. With strong familial support, female students are much more likely to flourish in STEM subjects.

Schools can help by sharing curriculum developments with parents via newsletters, highlighting notable female STEM professionals and perhaps passing on messages from those professionals that will help widen students' understanding of the field they work in.

There's a need for significant changes in the way STEM is taught in schools, and we're proud to be leading that change. Doncaster UTC is currently working with other schools across the Brighter Futures Learning Partnership Trust, sharing our gender-balanced resources and best practice, and I hope the strategies that emerge will help more schools tackle STEM stereotypes on a much wider scale.

Schools have a responsibility to give all students the best opportunities possible. For us, that starts with tackling the STEM gender gap in our classrooms.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Garath Rawson is the principal at Doncaster University Technical College; for more information, visit doncasterutc.co.uk or follow @doncaster_utc

Can we teach CULTURE?

If you want to ensure a rich future for your students, make sure they possess cultural capital, advises **Hannah Day**...

Cultural capital' has made it into ed speak. Something of a buzzterm, it's not specifically mentioned within Ofsted inspections currently, but it came up frequently in conversations around the regulator's 2019 framework, and its detail that inspectors would be looking for schools to offer a 'rich and broad curriculum'. So what is it? And why all the fuss?

The term was originally coined by the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu, and is perhaps best understood if broken down into three applicable sections – 'objective', 'embodied' and 'institutional'.

Objective capital

As educators, the institutional element of cultural capital should be second nature to us. This refers to the type of sought after qualifications leading to positive post-educational outcomes we're all helping students to achieve. But what of the other two?

Objective capital relates to less quantifiable qualities, such as being well-read, knowledgeable of the arts, well-travelled or well-versed in other nations' cultures, histories or political structures.

As an A Level art teacher who's passionate about the contextual aspect of art provision, I often see marked differences in students' objective capital. Take Bauhaus – someone with

limited objective capital will be able to assess the visual aspect of said art movement, noting its clean lines, limited colours and simplicity. Someone with high objective capital will be able to engage with, and explain how its founders responded to their time in the WWI trenches and return to a broken Germany by formulating design principles that aimed to make life flow and function accessibly for all.

Understanding people, theories and events in relation to wider contexts can only be achieved by students practised in objective capital. Students able to widen their understanding of topics, beyond what can be covered in class time, will connect more deeply to them.

Contextual understanding

We can help this process along by signposting excellent documentaries, similar to a reading list. Beyond the more common historical dramas (which are known to sometimes play fast and loose with the facts), there are many fine arts documentaries broadcast by BBC 4 and Sky Arts, both of which are free-to-air channels. Those no longer available for catch-up viewing or download can often be found on YouTube.

But watching is not engaging. This should be a family homework, assigning programs for all with key discussion points set for afterwards. The aim is not to

produce 'right' answers, or even to assess learning, but rather to encourage a culture of reflection, discussion and debate.

At Ludlow College we have a long history of deeply taught contextual understanding. Alongside our lessons we produce mini packs that are sent home via email, which help students explore topics further with the aid of additional information and dinnertime discussion starters. A good example is the 1915 photograph 'Wall Street' by Paul Strand. Questions such as, 'What is capitalism and communism' are asked; 'How might these ideologies impact a viewer's thoughts about Wall Street? Where does Strand stand politically? How are his views expressed in the image?'

Many families won't complete the tasks set, but among those who do, their objective skills will grow.

A fuller understanding

Within school, a key way of increasing cultural capital is to organise various trips and speakers. Who can you access? Who will give your students valuable insights

into life beyond your walls?

For the past 10 years we've organised an annual careers day each November, and have been lucky to have had many gifted people visit us. One particularly memorable talk was given by an internationally renowned illustrator, who generously brought along his own A Level work (which, by his own admission, was awful). The look on the students' faces, when they realised that his career had

involved a lengthy journey that they might be able to undertake themselves, was revelatory.

A varied curriculum will also help students build a fuller understanding of the world. The current focus on STEM subjects is limiting – I would hope to see teachers and school leaders adopt a more rounded focus by placing STEAM at the heart of our institutions.

Finally, let students question. Give them open-ended topics and time to explore. As I write, our first year A Level photography cohort have been set a one-week challenge of taking their darkroom knowledge and devising new, creative ways of generating photographic imagery. Some

DOWNLOAD

A sample 'mini pack' for students and their families, as used by Hannah and her colleagues to support the building of subject-related discussion skills

bit.ly/ts108-cc



flounder, but oh, how some do fly...

Embodied capital

Embodied capital deals with what can sometimes be referred to as 'soft skills' or 'social etiquette'. It's an area of cultural capital that deals with language, behaviour and mannerisms, as well as knowledge of what to do in different work and social situations.

In my experience, private education places a laser focus on embodied capital. Visits from alumni don't just involve talks, but will also include lunch in the head's office attended by select groups of students who excel in the related subject and will be expected to participate in an adult discussion. Then there are the regular public speaking competitions, as well as constant linking with the world beyond the school – all of which contributes to making students feel part of the wider culture, rather than simply looking at it from outside.

Privately educated alumni

8 WAYS TO INCREASE CULTURAL CAPITAL

- Widen students' contextual understanding with a home 'watchlist', signposting high quality documentaries and films
- Organise ways for students to meet individuals from different backgrounds and communities and get them conversing
- Familiarise students with public speaking by assigning class and assembly presentations
- Organise weekly visits to the school library, where students can select books based on their own interests
- Use role play and improvisation to better engage students with poor literacy skills
- Find out what students love – recognise and encourage these interests
- Challenge students to talk to older members of their family and find out about their childhood
- Present students with a viewpoint you know they'll disagree with and challenge them to come up with three valid points in its favour

will often feel comfortable in themselves, in the situations they find themselves in and when facing various challenges. They're nurtured to enter the world with ease.

When you have visitors, do you use the post-lesson time? Is there a space usually off limits to students that could be used to give the occasion a greater sense of prestige? How can you go about building a similar sense of ease among your students?

We can build this muscle by assigning students certain subject-related responsibilities. Could your business studies students run a stall at the local market? Could your history students undertake some form of work in partnership with a local museum? What other outside agencies could help you get your students out and engaging with the wider world?

Listening and learning

Discussions around cultural capital should also be sensitive to matters of social diversity. As society has become increasingly fractured, we've seen a growth in initiatives aimed at bringing together people from different backgrounds.

Could your English and drama students talk to

residents at a local care home to gather and record their stories? You could also hold a 'Talking day', where people from all walks of life are invited to openly discuss their backgrounds and livelihoods with students, either one-to-one or in small groups.

This is about listening and learning – not about being right. Help students learn that connections can be found with most people, and that bonds can be formed with those we disagree with – a valuable lesson for almost any career.

By encouraging students to talk to, work with and help people from different backgrounds, sectors and cultures, we will be preparing them for the unknown.

Qualifications, however important, are only part of the story. The reality is that cultural capital is a form of wealth we all need more of.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Hannah Day is head of visual arts, media and film at Herefordshire and Ludlow Sixth Form College, where she has responsibility for overseeing the department's teaching and strategic development

Who's in charge OUT HERE?

Among the many challenges thrown up by school trips is the requirement for teachers to cede their authority to someone else and play second fiddle, observes **Gordon Cairns...**

No one's ever used the expression 'backseat driver' and meant it as a compliment. Some readers may recall Harry Enfield's 'Only me' character from the 90s – an irritating, flatcapped know-it-all forever telling people in the middle of painting a wall or buying tea bags 'Now, you don't want to do it like that, do you?'

If we can recognise and even laugh at such behaviour, why do we find it so hard to avoid emulating it? What's stopping us from stepping back when we're with external specialists and outdoor instructors on school trips?

Learned behaviour

It may have something to do with our learned behaviour in the classroom. The Spanish have their own equivalent to the fabled backseat driver in the form of 'Maestro Liendre' – the insect-brained teacher who knows everything but understands nothing.

In the school environment, we are the autonomous deliverers of learning who possess a certain degree of freedom to lead classes on our own terms, often while enjoying to some extent the privilege of being the central focus of activity within the room. Unfortunately, it can be difficult to quickly adapt our school behaviours to outside environments once we've become the sideshow, rather than the main event.

That's how I've previously found myself

in secluded forests, wondering why the outdoor leader isn't standing at the crest of the mound, rather than at the lowest point, in order to better get the class' fullest attention. Or wishing that the sailing instructor would let my terrified students know that the boat isn't going to sink in open water because the plug is out of the bottom of the tiny yacht. That's would be preferably to saying, 'Maybe...' in response to their worried entreaties.

I'm just thankful that thus far, I've had enough willpower to not say 'You don't want to be doing that' and instead let outdoor teachers make the teaching points they were aiming for, without any unwanted interventions.

The need for control

We really shouldn't feel like this. Busmen don't

actually go on coach trips by way of a holiday and then drive the bus, do they? Besides, outdoor excursions where the teaching is conducted by someone else is the surely closest thing we get to having a perk of the job – so long as we're able to switch off our inner control freak.

We get to spend time outside the confines of our classrooms without having to prepare any lessons, or indeed anything that generates marking. Discipline largely takes care of itself, since the students are all too aware that fooling around in a canoe will, in the best case scenario, lead to a drenching. And we get to try out fun activities, such as kayaking around glorious Scottish lochs, which aren't otherwise readily available to us, given our daily lives and budgets.

But to fully benefit from the de-stressing benefits of the great outdoors, we have



to learn to let go and allow paid experts to do their job. Otherwise, our need for control can easily overshadow what ought to be time best spent appreciating what our students can achieve in a dramatically different environment.

Allowed to be nervous

A teacher's relationship with an instructor can be complicated to navigate. At the very moment you feel able to pass on the reins of responsibility to the person who actually knows what they're doing, they 'volunteer' you to try the activity first in front of the whole class, who observe this with a mix of emotions.

There are the students who can't believe someone of your age and bulk has enough energy to walk the length of the classroom unaided. Then there are the students willing you on to refuse being the first person to abseil down that sheer cliff face, for the ammunition it will give them back in school. And let's not forget the students who are happy to see you as a useful crash test dummy for gauging the safety of the activity before they put their own limbs on the line.

So it is that I've variously edged across deceptively treacherous rocks, surrounded by deep, black

pools of water during a gorge walk up a river; in full spate, tightrope-edged across a single strand wire bridge above a raging river without a harness, while the class speculated whether I'd make it; and mountain biked round a crumbling course, praying I wouldn't make a fool of myself.

It's a great teaching method, though – showing the young people that you're allowed to be nervous without losing face. Best of all, if a teacher does end up falling into the water, coming off their bike or making a general hash of things, their students will see them crash and survive (while also enjoying a good laugh in the process).

No 'get out'

Nor is that the only thing we can learn from instructors. Observing different approaches to teaching is incredibly valuable. It's possible, for example, to develop kids' resilience by pushing them far further than they'd be pushed in the classroom before their teacher offers a get-out.

On one February gorge walk, when freezing water was coming down from the mountains, I remember expecting the instructors to abandon the session, or at

THE ART OF LETTING GO



1. CONTROL-FREAK, ME?

7 out of 10 people report being annoyed by actual back-seat drivers, yet only 20% of people believe they're that type of passenger themselves. Go figure. The first step to avoiding butting in on an outdoor instructor's work is to therefore accept that you just might be that kind of teacher yourself and amend your behaviour accordingly.

2. ABANDON YOUR DIGNITY

Don't be the stand-offish teacher who refuses to get suck in to the activities that have been planned. Facing the same challenges and fears as your students can help create a connection with them. Back in the warmth of the classroom, with those outdoor activities an increasingly distant memory, you'll still have those 'Remember the time that we...' conversations – even if it's just a short chat about how silly you looked dangling from that pulley...

3. BE PRESENT IN THE SESSIONS

It might be tempting to switch off, admire your surroundings and idly wonder whether it's okay to check Twitter on your phone, but the instructor might suddenly need your support. It's not a good look to be shaken out of your reverie and ask 'Who, me?...'

least give some of the teenagers in the greatest discomfort a chance to get out of the water. Instead, the activity was structured in a way that let us all believe there was no such 'get out' once we were in the river. It meant we all managed to complete the activity by walking the length of the river, and got to enjoy the glow of success that comes from conquering a real challenge.

So next time you're outdoors with your students, embrace your unfamiliar role of jacket watcher, packed lunch distributor and spare glove lender – as it's only once we've learnt to let go that we'll be able to get the most from the trip. It's an adjustment that can take a few days, but it's worth it.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Gordon Cairns is an English and forest school teacher who works in a unit for secondary pupils with ASD

When the maternity leave IS OVER...

New mothers can have a difficult time confronting the assumptions and expectations of colleagues upon returning to work – but it doesn't have to be that way, writes **Nikki Cunningham-Smith**

Oh, hey – I didn't know you'd be back so soon. How was your break? Must have been nice! Wish I could have nine months off to chill..."

Those were his final words. I'm currently awaiting trial, but that's another story for another day...

I'm joking, of course. I'd never admit to committing such a heinous crime in print. Would I do it? Well... I'm not so sure. Because that seemingly casual statement was the very first thing that someone said to me in an external agencies meeting upon my return to work.

There was so much to unpack in those words. It took less than 30 seconds for that simple statement to make me feel that the time I'd spent away was going to do serious damage to my much-loved career.

Like a gunshot

In case you haven't already guessed, the throwaway comment described above was directed at me after returning to work following a period of maternity leave. And every part of it fired into my chest like a gunshot.

"I didn't know you'd be back so soon." – BANG. Why aren't you at home with your baby?

"How was your break?" – BANG. You've clearly spent this time off having a jolly...

"Must be nice..." – BANG. Nothing remotely negative could have possibly happened to you whilst you were at home, enjoying all those cake and coffee mornings.

"Wish I could have nine

months off to chill." – BANG. How lucky are you to have had a holiday; not

like me, working hard to the bitter end.

BANG. BANG. BANG.

Now, of course, those sentiments likely weren't what this individual intended to convey.

I'm sure that what he said was genuinely meant as an attempt to catch up with me and see how my absence had been – but that's certainly not how it felt.

Despite being in a world where we've finally accepted the idea of allowing women to return to their pre-birth physical shape naturally, rather than 'snap back' at speed, we're still no closer to confronting expectations



that we should ‘snap back’ mentally.

When I re-entered the workplace, I was very aware that I wasn’t the same leader that had left.

Had I been absent from work due to sickness, I’d have likely had at least one return-to-work meeting so that steps could be put in place for a phased return. This is typically done to help long-term absent individuals acclimatise, and not feel overwhelmed on their return – because if they are, it could result in them needing to take yet more time away.

This kind of phased post-maternity process may well happen in some schools, but I’d say it’s far from being embedded best practice. Who checks up on these members of staff in the weeks, months, maybe even years following their return from maternity leave? Would their mental wellbeing be better supported if they knew they didn’t have to go looking for help, but that it would there waiting for them?

Relentless strain

Some of you might have heard the phrase, “We expect mothers to work like they don’t have children, and raise children like they don’t have work.” Is it any wonder that the resulting strain can be so hard and relentless? If left unchecked, these feelings could pave the way for further stress, post-partum depression and even trigger delayed post-partum psychosis.

The support new mothers receive upon returning to work is often dependent on specific settings, rather than any formal legislation or even solid guidance. Everything is left open to interpretation, with the result that things can sometimes get lost in translation.

Having said that, employers can feel a

certain amount of caution when it comes to putting support in place for returners, since contacting them during maternity leave could be seen as exerting undue pressure.

Beyond that, adopting a maternity policy that closely resembles that used for long-term sickness may imply that the person returning is weaker than they were previously, which isn’t the case. In fact, some women will be raring to go, having spent much of their leave thinking of ways to revive their brain cells after all those nursery rhymes. Just the thought of having an adult conversation,

enjoying a hot beverage and re-engaging with the profession they love will be more than enough to spur them on.

No one left behind

So what can be done for these returners to ensure no one is left behind? First, agree on a process prior to the maternity leave commencing. What will contact with school look like in terms of frequency and the main point of contact?

This person doesn’t necessarily need to be a line manager – just someone able to keep the lines of communication open (assuming the recipient wishes to be contacted) in an informal, yet informative manner. Training opportunities, job vacancies and staff parties can all remain on the table, without the person on leave having to trawl through endless emails in order to keep up with what’s going on.

Second, provide ‘Keep in Touch day’ options. I’ve

seen stressful situations inadvertently develop when a mother has felt unsure whether their request for such days will be accepted, or that their return to work for a day wasn’t successful enough to warrant the temporary childcare arrangements.

If a mother believes they’re simply being used for cover, or that there’s been no meaningful planning around their return, there’s a good chance that they’ll feel less useful and more distant from their colleagues as a result – thus adding to the anxieties around their abilities.

Clarifying the

individual’s expectations prior to them going on maternity leave will allow more time for discussions, as well as any necessary adjustments and replanning whilst they’re still in work ahead of baby’s arrival.

Transparent scenarios

Times are changing, with more opportunities available around shared parental leave and flexible work options. Staff are becoming savvier about what they’re entitled to. Gone are the days of endless October and November babies, so that the six-week summer holiday can be factored in to maternity pay.

It remains important, however, that schools are upfront with what they can and can’t provide. Removing the need for parents to do research on the school’s behalf will enable them to focus on the immediate task at hand – namely growing and looking after a new baby.

I don’t believe that some

of the attitudes I’ve encountered towards maternity come from a place of malice, but rather from a place of ignorance – possibly indicative of dated attitudes from those who have never experienced labour or witnessed their partner undergo it.

Introducing CPD sessions around having such conversations can form the basis of more structured returns and fairer discussions. Exploring open and transparent scenarios will help tackle misinformation and give everyone greater confidence in talking to, and being supportive of new mothers.

Update your risk assessment to account for this period of return. Treating that initial period after pregnancy with the same level of importance as the period immediately before will enable mothers to freely converse with their schools, without needing to fear any discussions that might be damaging to their current status within school.

Finally, make mental health support part of your standard offering. The ability to provide, or signpost to external, support will be gratefully received. The recipient may not know at what point they’ll need it (assuming they ever do), but it’s still nice to know that it’s there.

Oh, and when your colleagues return, ask them how their morning was. Many parents will have already worked an intense shift before they’ve even set foot on school premises!



Nikki Cunningham-Smith is an assistant headteacher based in Gloucestershire

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1

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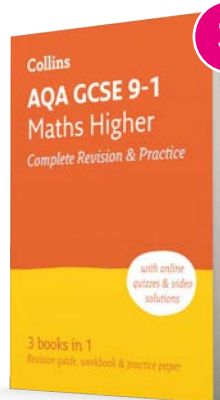


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NEW national schools art competition

Art Bytes is a new national, inter-school art competition that utilises bespoke virtual gallery technology. Open to all primary, secondary and SEND schools across England, entries can be submitted from two eligible age groups – Y5 and Y9 initially, with Y12 to follow. The competition draws on nine years' experience leading dot-art Schools – our forerunner programme in the North West.

To deliver Art Bytes we're partnering with a major cultural venue in each of the nine regions of England, which will host a celebration event every June.

Art Bytes builds confidence and nurtures talent, allowing children and young people to see galleries as places 'for them' and develop their cultural capital. Find out more and register your school at artbytes.co.uk

4



teachwire.net/secondary

2



Plays in brief

Touring theatre company Tamasha has teamed up with play publishers Methuen Drama to produce a free eBook of 10 short plays by young people aged 12 to 17 – the culmination of Tamasha's popular lockdown project for schools, Bitesize Playwriting.

Using Tamasha's accessible 5-minute videos on playwriting, schools and students were encouraged to create their own 5-minute plays. After a huge response from students, Tamasha chose their 10 favourites and offered one-to-one mentoring to perfect the plays. The winners' plays have now been assembled in a free eBook produced by Methuen Drama and hosted at both the Bloomsbury and Tamasha websites. Download your copy of the free Bitesize Playwriting eBook at tamasha.org.uk/bitesize-playwriting

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5



6



Taking the lead

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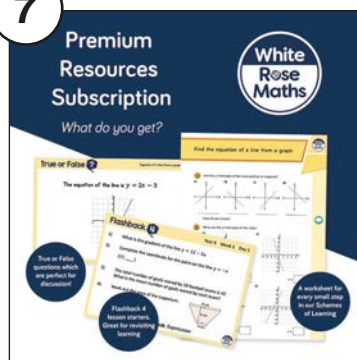
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9



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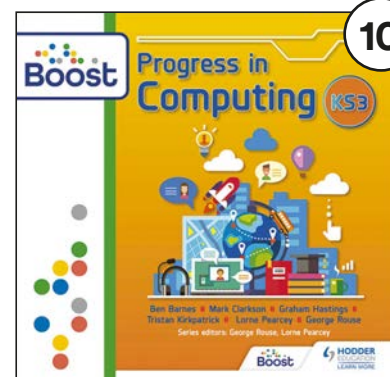
Past episodes have focused on key issues relating to inspiring young people, particularly girls, onto STEM pathways with Carol Vorderman's inspirational daughter Katie King. The show has tackled maths anxiety in the classroom and opening up conversations around diversity and inclusion with Susan Okereke, and used popular culture to promote maths education in a more positive way with Bobby Seagull (pictured). It's also previously looked at engaging learners from disadvantaged backgrounds with the award-winning Nicola Whiston and the future of the Dr Frost Maths website with the infamous Dr Frost himself.

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8



10



“You can’t do SEND in a silo”

Rhian Williams explains how quality first teaching, combined with a team of subject specialist TAs, has helped elevate SEND provision at Henley Bank High School

In my experience, speech, language and communication needs is the main hidden disability that teachers will encounter at secondary school. Too often, children will be identified as ‘naughty’ or as having ‘behavioural difficulties’, when what they actually have is an underlining SLCN.

At Henley Bank High School, the SEND team consists of me and seven TAs providing full-time support. Our proportion of students on the SEND register currently wavers between 26% and 30%, amounting to a high level of need that we have to manage consistently.

Actionable steps

To do that, we employ a model that I’ve developed and used over a number of years, which begins with recruiting high-quality staff – who might possess degrees and/or considerable relevant experience – to fill the required roles. We then examine the four broad areas of SEND, to which we assign staff who have specialised in those areas by undertaking relevant CPD.

We also retain an external professional for speech therapy sessions that I aim to hold at least once a week, an excellent school counsellor and an emotional regulation teacher who assists us with our SEMH needs, which we’ve recently had to scale up.

Another core element to what we do is Quality First Teaching, which I see as important for every SEND child. This involves effective communication with class teachers, and identifying regular CPD opportunities for those class teachers to help raise their awareness. Examples of this might include reminding them of the longer processing time they can expect among dyslexic children, or how helpful it is to include blue backgrounds on PowerPoint slide printouts.

When done well, QFT needn’t be complicated. It’s something that we and the other schools within the Greenshaw Learning Trust schools do well throughout regular CPD sessions, as well as our ‘DDI process’, namely developmental drop-ins. Every class teacher participates in these on a fortnightly basis, and will take away with them one small, actionable step to ensure that QFT continues to play a central role in their practice.

No one-to-ones

We aim to be a very calm school, which obviously helps us meet the needs of our children who have ADHD, or who are on the autism spectrum. We see our encouragement of a calm and inclusive ethos among our staff, and determination for them to genuinely understand the needs of our children with SEND, as something that makes the school quite special.

When it comes to the nature of our SEND provision, however, we’ll never provide students with one-to-one support in class, outside of exceptional

circumstances. I get profoundly annoyed whenever I see evidence of TAs being appointed to one individual child, because there’s clear evidence from the Education Endowment Foundation that it’s an approach that doesn’t work.

Instead, the members of our SEND team all support specific curriculum areas. I currently have two TAs providing support with English, for example – one at KS3 and one at KS4. Through our MITA process, they will complete regular reviews of the children’s needs and collaboratively agree on the support role they should perform for multiple children within the class as the TA, while the classroom teacher focuses on supporting those who need the most assistance. I can’t

“I get profoundly annoyed whenever I see TAs appointed to one individual child”



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The school's MITA form and Principles of Intervention from

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know the curriculum for all subjects, but I can ensure that my team do.

Our TAs also oversee pre-teaching for core subject groups held in the mornings. Our TA subject specialisms presently span English, maths, science and humanities, and we retain an additional TA to cover the school's remaining subjects. They all regularly attend departmental meetings and understand the assessment criteria, so it's certainly not just a case of us following children without knowing what's going on in their lessons.

The professionals within my team all understand the curriculum focus in their respective subjects, what the assessment points will be and the key terms students need to know. The latter will often be fed into the pre-teaching lessons led by our TA team or the school's speech therapist.

Open for business

One challenge we're managing at the moment is that presented by the small minority of children struggling to attend school in person for reasons related to anxiety – which seems to be most pronounced among students whose parents' own mental health was impacted by the pandemic. Our Y10s were particularly affected by the third lockdown and the impact it had on their mental health. Despite them being a small year group, we saw a large volume of referrals to CAMHS and Young Minds Matter.



When I kept seeing it reported that 'schools were closed' it used to make me feel so cross, since we weren't closed. We were welcoming over a hundred children on the SEND register into school each day by dispatching minibuses to drive them in and doing whatever else we could to get them attending in person.

At some point, every SENCo will have dealings with one or more families, individuals or children who take up more of their time, but thanks to my team's effectiveness in dealing with the majority, I find myself better placed to dedicate additional time to engaging with those children who need the most support.

Instant access

Having an excellent provision map can be a lifesaver for SENCos. I once had 60 children in Y7 who all needed SEND meetings to be scheduled promptly. The members of our team each met with eight sets of parents and guardians, while I met with slightly more, after which we reached agreements and produced student passports outlining the type of provision that would be needed.

These student passports were written by my team in collaboration with our young people and their parents and contain important items of information class teachers

need to see.

The software we use, EduKey, lets us give individual students their own dedicated progress page, which parents then have access to. Instead of me overseeing our provision alone, everyone in my team – whether they're running a language group, performing pre-teaching or any other intervention – will enter those provisions into EduKey, which then lets me instantly run a report on any child.

I'll quality assure, check costings and ensure the correct funding streams are being used, but otherwise, come half term I won't have personally had to enter much into our provision map. I can still examine and easily report on all the provision we offer at the school, thanks to the time we've spent training our team.

Embraced by all

We readily acknowledge the need to take advice from experts, but at the same time, a growing number of people are visiting us to see what our SEND support model at the school consists of.

In the short term, we want to further embed the practice of distributed leadership, since the combined responsibilities of a SENCo can't all be covered within a single position held by someone hidden away in a corner of the school. With new classroom teachers and

TAS WITH A DIFFERENCE

- Each TA at Henley Bank High School knows their specialist subject's curriculum well, and will attend departmental staff meetings
- I quality assure and provide each of our TAs with fortnightly individual feedback
- Heads of department can embrace distributed leadership by joining me on my MITA walks, where I'll observe TAs, how they're being used and the impact they're having

heads of year having recently joined us, I've been working with them to help them understand what good quality provision looks like.

In the medium to long term we need to recruit a further TA, whom I suspect will need to focus on language and communication, judging by some of the children we'll have coming through next year.

At Henley Bank High School we have a headteacher who is willing to give the SENCo a voice in other areas of the school. It's always made me sad to see SENCos who aren't involved in the teaching and learning policies at their school, because SEND is so intrinsic to what schools do. SENCos ultimately need to have a voice that's heard across all areas, because you can't do SEND in a silo – rather, they need to play an important part in those ongoing teaching and learning discussions.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Rhian Williams is SENCo at Henley Bank High School; for more information, visit henleybankhighschool.co.uk or follow @HenleyBankHigh



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HITTING THE RIGHT NOTES

Many music students consider composition to be a rarefied, almost unknowable art – but that's really not the case, counters **Paul Clark**...

A decade and a half ago, when I began mentoring local A Level music students in composition, their teachers and I would often be bewildered when their results arrived. Pieces we'd considered worthy of As were being awarded Ds and vice versa. Was it down to the examiners' tastes or prejudice?

A decade and a half later, having now mentored hundreds of A Level students and provided CPD for teachers within GCSE music and music tech, that bewilderment has reduced considerably.

Demystifying the process

The process of composition itself is unnecessarily mystified, as if only gifted geniuses channelling the musical gods themselves can access its secrets. However, we only think this way as a culture because we haven't practised creating music ourselves.

Think how crazy that is. Most of us will never be great novelists or poets, but all of us regularly create sentences – just like I'm doing right now. Creative writing is central to how we learn our native language. Similarly, most of us like

food, and can at the very least make a sandwich according to our tastes.

Conversely, most people only listen to music made by others. So when 16-year-old students, not to mention 25-year-old teachers, suddenly find themselves tasked with composing some music of their own, they quite reasonably get 'the fear'. In a recent Music Teachers Association survey composition was singled out as the area teachers felt least confident in teaching and marking, yet it can constitute more than 30% of a student's overall mark.

Over years of working in London schools with diverse cohorts who typically lack classical or jazz training, my aim has been to demystify the compositional process and deploy tools that help students perceive things in a more helpful way. Our average grade for composition is now A, and our predicted grades never more than a mark off.

Rookie errors

We've gained a much better understanding of the classic rookie errors students make, and devised ways of mentally preparing them for the challenge – the latter of

which are being shared for free via the Ear

Opener YouTube channel.

There you'll find seven hours of content aimed at young music creators and featuring interviews with luminaries including legendary producer Brian Eno, rapper Lowkey, film composer Carly Paradis, classical composer Errollyn Wallen, pop songwriter Tristan Landymore and Radiohead's Ed O'Brien.

This variety of voices is key, since we all have our own ways of working and enjoy different music. The guests all share their thoughts on the writing process, from starting with a blank page right through to learning how to absorb criticism. It's not just crotchets and quavers.

Of particular interest to UK exam students and their teachers will be the two-part '27 'mistakes' to avoid in music exam compositions' video series. Starting with a melody bashed out on a piano by someone who considers themselves tone deaf and has never played a piano before, I show how it's possible to create good music using a rudimentary tune and some specific tips.

The reality is that exam pieces need to demonstrate layers of knowledge. That means that if you write a megahit like Pharrell's 'Happy', it might make you a millionaire, but it won't get you an A at A Level, since there's no melodic development.

Some 'mistakes' are horribly simple. For example, most classroom keyboards are small and don't have keys for very high or low notes, so students don't use them. Big mistake! Another is sticking

to 120 beats per minute – the default tempo of most software – which is enough to drive most examiners mad as they sit through their 30th track of the day. Some tips are more technical, such as how to develop melodies in ambitious, yet achievable ways.

Writing a classic is hard, but writing a really good piece of music isn't rocket science – and the benefits to your musical confidence and understanding may well stay with you for the rest of your life.

9 COMMON COMPOSITIONAL 'MISTAKES'

- Too many ideas
- Plodding basslines consisting of two or four notes per bar
- No tension and release
- Noodling melodies with no phrase structure
- No dramatic contrasts
- Section that don't lead the ear to the next
- Too much cutting and pasting
- Insufficient space in the arrangement
- No intro

The Ear Opener video series can be viewed at earopener.co.uk/videos



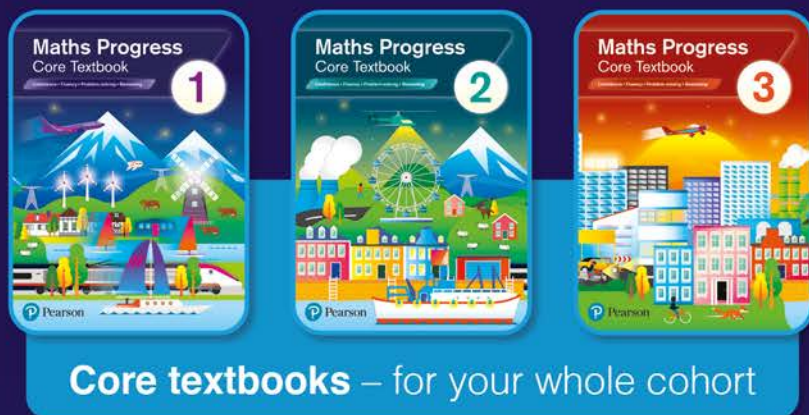
ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Paul Clark is a musician, composer and co-founder of Clod Ensemble; for more information, visit clodensemble.com or follow @clodensemble



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FOCUS ON: MATHS

The content of a typical maths curriculum might be somewhat static compared to other subjects, but in terms of how that content is taught and navigating barriers to effective learning, it can be difficult knowing where to begin...

What should schools prioritise in order to improve student outcomes in maths?

THE AGENDA:

64 MAKING MATHS BETTER

Jemma Sherwood talks us through the ambitious maths-related subject support and curriculum development efforts taking shape at Ormiston Academies Trust

66 HOW SHOULD PUPILS 'SEE' MATHS?

Whether pupils are successful in solving a mathematical problem can sometimes depend on how they're encouraged to look at the question and what's being asked of them, says Peter Mattock

70 WHEN THE NUMBERS DON'T ADD UP...

It could be as prevalent as dyslexia, yet there's still a relatively limited understanding of dyscalculia within the education system, argues Karen Mace

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Making maths better

Jemma Sherwood talks us through the ambitious maths-related subject support and curriculum development efforts taking shape at Ormiston Academies Trust

Ormiston Academies Trust has grown over the last decade to a place where we now have 44 schools around England spanning primary, secondary (including sixth form), special and alternative provision.

About three years ago, the Trust's leadership decided to start building a central 'Teaching and Training' team consisting of subject experts, with the remit of supporting the schools' teachers and leaders in all matters subject-related. The maths team started small, with two regional lead practitioners who were deployed to different schools over the week for short- and long-term placements. These lead practitioners worked with new and existing heads of department, coached and mentored staff, and helped develop classroom resources.

Following its initial successes, the team needed to grow. In Easter 2020 I was appointed as the Senior Lead Practitioner, and by September 2021 there were five of us, covering the north of England down to the Isle of Wight. We now operate in three broad areas: training, in-school support and curriculum development. It's quite a unique role in that we don't manage or lead the maths departments, but sit alongside them as a support network.

Bespoke training

Our 44 schools serve a wide demographic of students. Some have mathematics departments full of specialist mathematics teachers; others include staff who have transferred from teaching other subjects. What they all have in common is a desire to teach maths well.

We deliver a hybrid model of CPD, with live network meetings and training, pre-recorded sessions for schools to access at any time, and face-to-face training sessions held within school. Some of the most-requested training is in the use of manipulatives and teaching for depth (rather than acceleration). Since September, when schools have been operating closer to normal, we've been able to work with quite a few departments in-house and develop bespoke training for them.

We're very fortunate in that our team has experience of working with Maths Hubs and the NCETM, so we're able

to encourage schools to get involved in all the excellent, free programmes the Hubs have to offer. Between our own training and help we provide in accessing what's already out there, we know that we're growing the opportunities available to our maths departments pretty well.

In-school support

The daily support we provide in schools is varied and carefully planned to meet the needs of staff in each setting. Sometimes a programme of instructional coaching will be needed, where a lead practitioner spends a term working with a teacher on specific foci – practising, observing, refining, discussing and working together on embedding good habits.

It may be that a new head of department needs someone to guide

them through their new role, advising them on how to approach the key aspects of the job and tackle unfamiliar situations. Sometimes an existing HoD will need someone to bounce ideas off, since it can be difficult trying to make decisions in an environment as complex as a school, where there's often no clear right or wrong.

It's this daily in-school support that keeps the team of lead practitioners on their toes – not only teaching students, but also helping other teachers explore what can be done and how to grow as practitioners.

Curriculum development

The newest aspect of our role is in curriculum development. We've taken on a huge project to create and resource a coherently sequenced mathematics



curriculum, with all the discussion and debate that comes with that.

The work started with indexing and expanding upon the National Curriculum for KS3 and KS4, before coming up with our own order of precedence. Fig 1 illustrates a snapshot of this – the four columns represent our four curriculum strands while each code refers to a unit, with certain units explicitly using or building upon the content of others.

For instance, unit SP1 (Discrete Data) will use content from units NP1 to NP3 and GM1 to GM2 (which cover place value, the four operations with integers and decimals, a basic introduction to measures of average and spread, essential geometry basics and more).

While it's possible to teach an introduction to statistics without many of these as prerequisite, in our curriculum and the resources that form it, that wouldn't work. We have made choices to build connections in specific ways, interleave learning in specific ways and integrate ideas in specific places, so that students are exposed to solving problems which combine topic areas from the very start.

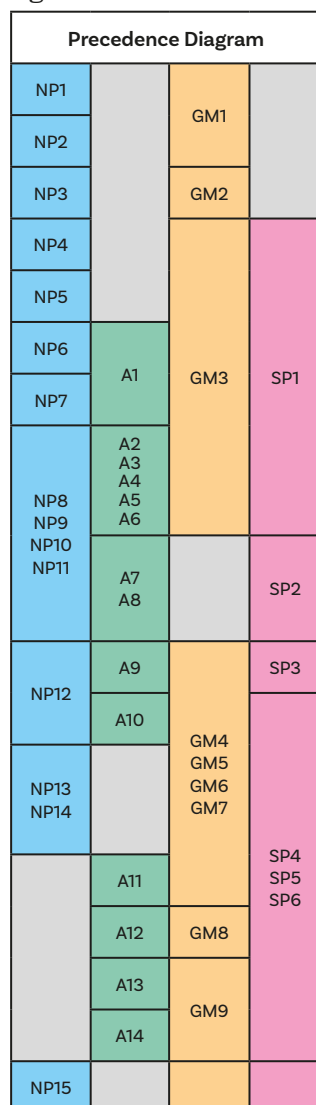
Schools will take this background information and can plan any sequence through the content, provided that doesn't break the precedence we describe.

We're hoping that this gives schools the flexibility to make a curriculum work in their context, while ensuring that what results retains its quality and integrity.

Themes over time

Alongside sequencing content, we decided to map out how we would develop

fig 1



mathematical themes and metaphors over time. We call these maps 'curriculum threads', as they show how the curriculum is woven together from Y7 to Y11, providing a framework with which to start the creation of resources, as well as an anchor to stop us chasing after every 'good looking' task we find.

Fig 2 gives an example of a topic or concept thread. It's our hope that these threads help teachers work together towards a common goal, rather than operate in silos in their own classrooms.

This between-class consistency is important to us, as it sees a student's journey through the school as dependent on every teacher they have. This prompts teachers to think about how what they do

fig 2

Algebra Tiles and Area Models		
Y7	NP1	Zero pairs, mean
	NP3	Area models, grid multiplication, area of rectangles
	NP6	Addition and multiplication with negative numbers
	A1	Representing unknowns with the 'x' bar, substitution
Y8	A2	Collecting like terms
	A3	Expanding and factorising
	A4	Solving linear equations
	SP1	Mean, median
	GM3	Area
Y9	A5	Substitution
	A10	Solving simultaneous linear equations
Y10	A11	Expanding and factorising quadratics
	A12	Completing the square (easier)
Y11	A14	Completing the square (harder)

“We don't manage or lead the maths departments, but sit alongside them as a support network”

contributes to, rather than obstructs a student's mathematical journey.

With all of this in the background, we are now creating a unit-long presentation and student booklet for each unit. The presentations map a journey through the unit, complete with carefully selected worked examples, links to online interactives for further exploration, models that fit our chosen threads and clear explanations of key concepts and words.

Providing the practice

The booklets are meant to provide all the practice that most students will need, and are part-creation, part-curation. Where existing resources from experts such as Don Steward fit what we are trying to achieve, we've included them. Where we can't quite find what we want, we've made it ourselves.

This is the part of the project that takes a huge amount of time, and is the part that most teachers simply don't have time for. It's our hope that this curriculum will simplify teachers' lives considerably, freeing up their planning time for discussing the

mathematics, planning for misconceptions, responding to what happens in class and developing their own practice – all the things that are most important, but which invariably fall by the wayside when you have to find an activity for Y9 on a rainy afternoon and there's no time for anything else.

We currently have eight schools trialling the curriculum as it's being developed, and hope to have more Ormiston Academies Trust schools come on board over the next couple of years. It's an exciting project to be working on, and we're hopeful that in future, it will enable more teachers to enjoy what they do and develop their practice with confidence and enthusiasm.

When we're happy with our progress, we're going to share what we've made more widely – so keep an eye out!



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Jemma Sherwood is the Senior Lead Practitioner for Mathematics at Ormiston Academies Trust; for more information, visit ormistonacademiestrust.co.uk or follow @OrmistonAcads

How should pupils 'SEE' MATHS?

Whether pupils are successful in solving a mathematical problem can sometimes depend on how they're encouraged to look at the question and what's being asked of them, says **Peter Mattock**

There is a great mathematics story that I was told in a lecture at university. It involves two donkeys and a fly.

The problem goes that two donkeys are 100 metres apart and walking directly towards each other at 1 metre per second. A fly starts on the nose of the first donkey and buzzes between the noses of the two donkeys at 10 metres per second. The question is, how long before the fly is crushed between the two donkeys?

One of the ways to solve this problem is summing an infinite series (i.e. summing the terms of a sequence that continues forever): On its way to the second donkey the fly is travelling for

$\frac{100}{11}$ seconds, then on the way back $\frac{900}{121}$ seconds, then another $\frac{8100}{1331}$ seconds, and so on. The n th term of the geometric series is $\frac{100}{11}$ given by $\times (\frac{9}{11})^{n-1}$ and so the sum to infinity of the series is $\frac{100/11}{1-9/11} = \frac{100/11}{2/11} = \frac{100}{2} = 50$ seconds.

The other way to solve the problem is to ignore the fly completely. Each donkey is walking at 1 metre per second. This means that they will meet halfway at 50 metres. If they travel 50 metres at 1 metre per second it will take 50 seconds.

The story goes that a group of university students were told that a natural mathematician would automatically try to solve the problem using an infinite series, and a natural physicist would solve it using the simpler approach. The problem therefore sorted mathematicians from physicists: if a student were able to solve it in a few seconds they were a physicist, and if not, they were a mathematician.

The undergraduates were posing the problem to various students passing through the university library when the famous mathematician Leonhard Euler walked by. They presented the problem to Euler and were amazed when he answered the problem within a few seconds, as they had automatically expected him to begin considering the infinite series.

When one of the students explained that a natural mathematician would have begun by forming the infinite series for the motion of the fly, Euler replied, *'But that is what I did ...'*

Different views

A very similar story exists about the eminent mathematician and computer scientist John von

Neumann and trains, which makes me suspect that this is at best a parable about Euler, and at worst, a case of Chinese whispers.

However, the point of the story is not to show how good at mathematics Euler (or von Neumann) was, but instead to

show that sometimes in mathematics, the way you think about the calculation or problem you are solving has a great impact on how



simple the problem is, or how much sense it makes.

Only the best A level mathematics students would be able to form the infinite series necessary to solve the problem, whereas most early secondary school pupils would be able to work out the simpler solution.

The importance of having different ways to view even the most simple mathematics, in order to build up to more complicated ideas, cannot be overstated. Some ways of thinking about numbers make some truths self-evident, whilst simultaneously obscuring others.

Practical resources

In the same way in physics that it is sometimes better to view elementary matter

as particles and at other times as waves, so in mathematics it is sometimes better to view numbers as discrete and at other times as continuous – as counters or bars, as tallies or vectors.

Crucially for teachers, being explicit about how we are thinking about numbers and operations, and encouraging pupils to think about them in different ways, can add real power to their learning.

Much has been made of the effectiveness of metacognition in raising the attainment of pupils. For example, John Hattie lists metacognitive strategies as having an effect size of 0.6 in the most recent list of factors influencing student achievement (see bit.ly/ts108-vm1).

Ofsted also recognises the importance of using manipulatives and representations to support flexibility in pupil thinking. In their 'Mathematics: Made to Measure' report from 2012 (see bit.ly/ts108-vm2), it is noted that schools should choose 'Teaching approaches and activities that foster pupils' deeper understanding, including through the use of practical resources, [and] visual images.'

In its 'Improving Mathematics in Key Stages Two and Three' guidance report (see bit.ly/ts108-vm3), the Education Endowment Foundation includes 'Use manipulatives and representations' as one of its key recommendations. It is therefore important that we give the pupils the tools they need in order to think about the mathematics they are working with in different ways.

Making connections

The use of representations and structure is also an important part of teaching for mastery approaches. The National Centre for Excellence in the Teaching

of Mathematics lists representation and structure as one of the 'Five Big Ideas' in teaching for mastery (see bit.ly/ts108-vm4). The NCETM makes clear that using appropriate representations in lessons can help to expose the mathematical structure being taught, allowing pupils to make connections between and across different areas of maths.

It also emphasises that the aim in using these representations is that pupils will eventually understand enough about the structure, such that they do not need to rely on the representation any more.

This is often summarised as employing a concrete-pictorial-abstract (or CPA) approach to teaching mathematics.

Recently repopularised in the UK, following the focus on teaching approaches imported from places such as Shanghai and Singapore, the CPA approach actually has at least some of its roots in the 1982 Cockcroft Report, which reviewed the teaching of maths in England and Wales (see bit.ly/ts108-vm5).

The Cockcroft Report advocated (among many other things) the need to allow pupils the opportunity of practical exploration with concrete materials before moving towards abstract thinking. There are several studies on the use of manipulatives across the age and ability range, with most showing that mathematics achievement is increased through the long-term use of concrete materials.

Manipulative materials

The most comprehensive of these studies is Sowell's 'Effects of Manipulative Materials in Mathematics Instruction' (bit.ly/ts108-vm6) – a meta-analysis of 60 individual studies designed to determine the

effectiveness of mathematics instruction with manipulative materials.

Those surveyed ranged in age from pre-school children to college-age adults who were studying a variety of mathematics topics. Sowell found that "Mathematics achievement is increased through the long-term use of concrete instructional materials and that students' attitudes toward mathematics are improved when they have instruction with concrete materials provided by teachers knowledgeable about their use".

I have often noticed that one of the difficulties pupils have in acquiring new mathematical understanding is that we introduce new ways of representing or thinking about mathematics at the same time as we try to teach a new mathematical concept or skill.

I would take an alternative approach, which is to explore representations first and then, once they are secure, examine how more complicated calculations and concepts can be developed.

I wouldn't introduce all of these representations at once with pupils; instead I would introduce two or three. Importantly, though, I would ensure that pupils are comfortable with the representation before trying to use the representation to explore a new concept.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Peter Mattock is a specialist leader of education and accredited secondary maths professional development lead; this article is based on an edited extract from his book *Visible Maths – Using representations and structure to enhance mathematics teaching in schools* (Crown House Publishing, £18.99)





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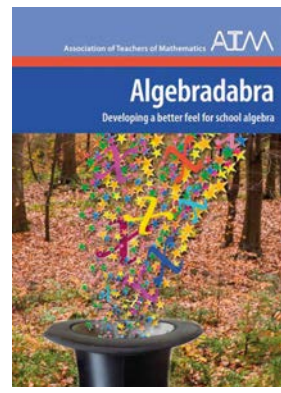




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"One of the best sources of tasks I have" Richard Perring

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The Mathematical Association is pleased to announce that their annual conference 'Mathematical Visions' will be taking place in April 2022. The event will consist of a 2 day virtual conference on 12th and 13th April, followed by an inspiring face-to-face conference and exhibition at the Crowne Plaza, Stratford-upon-Avon on 14th April.

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5 REASONS TO TRY... MyMaths

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of activities. Each activity targets a specific learning objective and can be used front of the class or on individual devices to check understanding. We've also got a wide range of tools designed specially for teachers, to help you demonstrate concepts and generate the examples you need.

4 EASY TO USE

MyMaths is easy to use on any tablet or laptop with an internet connection, and lets students save their work before returning to it later. When a student marks a task, their answers and scores are automatically sent to the teacher dashboard, meaning no more "I forgot to check out!" excuses. Full integration with Google Classroom and MS Teams enables MyMaths to be used seamlessly alongside other resources.

5 REGULAR UPDATES

MyMaths is all about continuous improvement. Our team is committed to giving you and your students the best possible experience. We constantly gather feedback on what's working and what teachers want to see next, and release several updates per month. 2021 has also seen us publish revision material for GCSE grades 1 and 2; release new games for students to enjoy and add print functionality to homework tasks, so that students without connected devices can still benefit from MyMaths.

KEY POINTS

MyMaths can be used flexibly alongside existing resources and curriculum materials; we've matched our content to popular schemes and curricula, including White Rose Maths

We're here to help you set up MyMaths with a dedicated support site, how-to webinars, and personal assistance from Oxford University Press' educational consultants

MyMaths offers you the tools to stay connected and support students' learning wherever they are, with a wealth of learning and assessment resources

Try a free, 30-day trial and gain access to all of our lessons and activities, as well as complimentary training to help you make the most of your trial period

When the numbers DON'T ADD UP...

It could be as prevalent as dyslexia, yet there's still a relatively limited understanding of dyscalculia within the education system, argues **Karen Mace...**

Dyscalculia or dyscalculia? The pronunciation of dyscalculia isn't the only thing about the disorder that people can't agree on; indeed, an agreed definition among academics is still to be made.

And training for teachers remains relatively limited, though we at the British Dyslexia Association did launch our first formal course focused solely on dyscalculia in 2018.

Research carried out around the same time by Queen's University in Belfast served to highlight our lacklustre understanding of dyscalculia, and how supporting the condition might be a much bigger issue than originally thought. Led by Dr Kinga Morsanyi, it suggested that the prevalence of dyscalculia could be the same as its better studied cousin dyslexia, with 1 in 10 people experiencing the condition.

Is struggling the norm?

That study went on to point out that unlike dyslexia, there's no agreed diagnostic protocol to correctly identify the condition, and that children with persistent and serious difficulties with mathematics weren't receiving specialist support. As Dr Morsanyi observed at the time, "In society, there is sadly a widespread notion that you need a special talent to be good at maths, and that struggling with it is normal for some people. But this was not the case, and it's not

something we would accept if a pupil was unable to read."

So what is dyscalculia, and what can be done to improve the assessment of maths learning difficulties, to ensure these young people get an accurate diagnosis and the support they need?

A working definition

Dyscalculia is part of a group of three learning difficulties that fall under the heading of Specific Learning Difficulties – the other two being dyslexia and dyspraxia. The word dyscalculia comes from the Greek word 'dys', meaning 'badly' and the Latin word 'calculia', meaning 'to count'.

Thus, the word dyscalculia literally means 'to count badly'.

Dyscalculia, like dyslexia, is thought to be genetic, as it's often found to run in families. The exact cause is yet to be discovered, but it's generally believed that it's linked to neurological factors, amounting to some sort of brain difference.

The precise definition continues to be debated, but the British Dyslexia Association has drawn up a definition of its own:

"Developmental dyscalculia is a specific and persistent difficulty in understanding arithmetic and basic number sense. It may also affect retrieval of number facts and key procedures, fluent calculation and interpreting numerical information. It is diverse in character and occurs across all ages and abilities. Dyscalculia is an unexpected difficulty in maths

that cannot be explained by external factors."

What does it look like?

Maths difficulties are often thought of as a continuum, rather than a distinct category, with dyscalculia occupying the extreme end. It should be expected that developmental dyscalculia will be distinguishable from general maths difficulties, due to the severity of difficulties with symbolic and non-symbolic magnitude, number sense and subitising (the ability to look at a group of multiple objects and ascertain how many there are without having to count them).

Developmental dyscalculia can often co-occur with other specific learning difficulties, such as dyslexia, dyspraxia and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder.

Alongside the British Dyslexia Association's definition, and other currently available definitions (DFES 2001 and DSM IV 2013), there is common agreement that dyscalculia mainly affects number skills, as opposed to other areas of maths. For example, a learner with dyscalculia may still be able to calculate correct answers when solving calculations, but they may not know how they got there.

Additionally, teachers may notice that a student experiences difficulties with estimation; short and long-term memory; telling the time; assessing numerical quantities; with using

money (due to a lack of understanding place value) and performing calculations. Sequencing and pattern recognition can be similarly challenging, along with following directions and distinguishing between left and right.

Difficulties with retrieving number facts and procedures may indicate an associated processing difficulty similar to dyslexia. It's important to reiterate here that specific learning difficulties tend to be co-occurring, and that a high proportion of learners have more than one condition. Researchers have found that 40% of individuals with dyslexia are likely to also encounter difficulties with mathematics.

Better identification

When making a diagnosis for dyscalculia, the testing would need to reflect different aspects of the definition being used. In this context, a student's ability, or otherwise, to subitise would be a key diagnosing factor. Learners with dyscalculia will likely have to count the number of dots in a group to ensure that their answer is correct. They're also likely to count inaccurately, including some dots twice.

As with dyslexia, it's good practice for a diagnosis of dyscalculia to only be made once a learner has received significant intervention, to see if their difficulties can be remediated. An assessment for dyscalculia would employ a variety of qualitative and quantitative assessments

that explore those difficulties, while also considering the learner's background information, family history and level of support they've received thus far.

These assessments would then be compared with the learner's attainment in other areas of the curriculum, such as literacy, as well as their underlying ability.

Training and progress

A diagnostic protocol is therefore likely to begin with the taking of a full and detailed background history – including any maths difficulties, support received so far, general attitude towards maths and any maths anxiety – to better understand the context.

This would be followed by a questionnaire regarding any visual difficulties, an initial screening test and an assessment of underlying ability (verbal and non-verbal skills), including speed of processing, short term and working memory. A standardised test of maths ability and attainment would also be carried out and compared to the learner's attainment in literacy.

In a practical sense, then, how can teachers help learners who may be showing signs of dyscalculia? It's fair to say that there are many reasons why learners might struggle with maths, dyscalculia being just one specific reason among potentially many. Happily, however, the mastery approach is very dyscalculia friendly, in that using the Concrete-Pictorial-Abstract method can be helpful for learners with learning difficulties in maths. It's also important to ensure teachers of maths understand how maths is learnt generally.

More specialist understanding is certainly

required; which is why, in response to requests from professionals wishing to learn more about dyscalculia and obtain a formal qualification, the British Dyslexia Association developed a Level 5 Certificate in Dyscalculia and Maths Learning Difficulties, to enable education professionals to

become specialist teachers in supporting dyscalculia and maths learning difficulties.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Karen Mace is head of assessment, education and training at the British Dyslexia Association; for more information, visit bdadyslexia.org.uk or follow @bdadyslexia

5 POTENTIAL SIGNS OF DYSCALCULIA

- 1 An inability to subitise – can the learner instantly recognise up to six or seven randomly placed dots?
- 2 Unable to recall correct procedures to use when solving calculations. A learner may, for example, rely on inaccurate methods such as tallying or using groups of dots.
- 3 A learner may reach an answer, but be unable to explain how they arrived at that answer, or whether it might be right or wrong.
- 4 An inability to recall basic learned facts and apply them – for example, in relation to times tables and number bonds.
- 5 Unable to make connections and relationships between different areas of maths, such as knowing that addition is the inverse of subtraction.

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LEARNING LAB

IN THIS ISSUE

- + Resources inspired by COP26
- + Why behaviour management is a team effort
- + Education's deepening digital divide
- + A brief guide to setting routines
- + Could your great teaching ideas net you a £25,000 grant?
- + How expressing gratitude can improve students' resilience
- + The National Literacy Trusts provides some stress relief
- + 6 flavours of classroom feedback

CONTRIBUTORS

ROBIN LAUNDER

Behaviour management consultant and speaker

ADAM RICHES

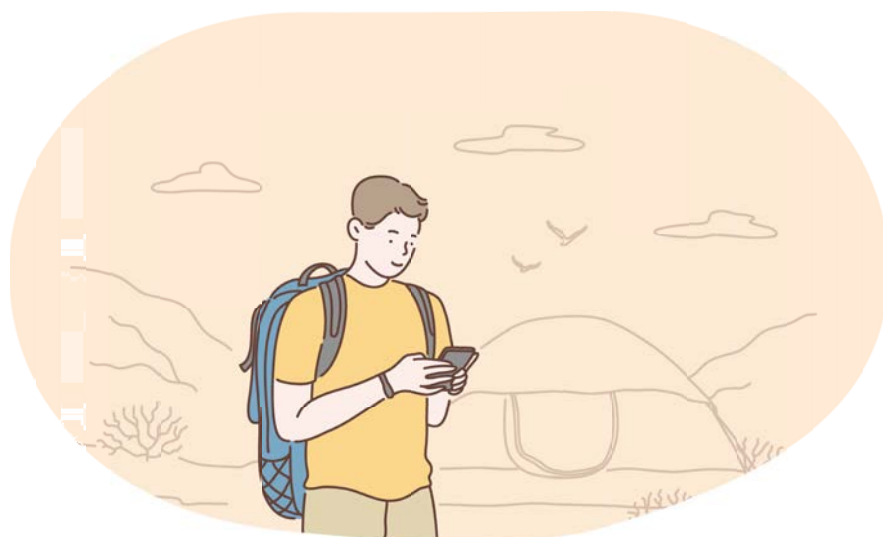
Senior leader for teaching and learning

JULIA KNIGHT

Principal at EtonHouse International School Bahrain

ZEPH BENNETT

PE teacher and school achievement leader



How to harness

THE GREAT OUTDOORS

It would seem that exams, and all the anxiety and stress that surrounds them, are back with a vengeance. Whilst the return to a form of 'normal' is welcome, the pressure on those taking GCSEs next summer is considerable. Moreover, this cohort have been deprived of key extracurricular experiences and rites of passage – those 'outside the classroom' life lessons that can help alleviate mental stress, build confidence, aid memory retention and improve general health and wellbeing. Not to mention providing an antidote to screen time...

A number schools have returned to a more balanced timetable this year that includes residential trips and outdoor activities, but some are still unable to. As an advocate for quality extracurricular learning, I hope the following provides some food for thought.

Environment matters

Revision is obviously important, but busy classrooms and a surfeit of screen time at home aren't always conducive to productivity. Besides the obvious benefits of fresh air and a change of scenery, quality outdoor centres are stress-busting, digital detox havens where physical and emotional challenges and supportive

educationalists can combine to create transformative learning experiences.

Collaboration and connection

Outdoor group activities are designed to alleviate the stress and anxiety levels caused by isolation and disconnection. Their purpose isn't just to reconnect with nature, but to also reconnect with people. Teamwork activities that balance collaborative thinking with individual contributions promote a plethora of inter/intrapersonal positives.

Stimulate and rejuvenate

Outside activities that encourage problem solving and organisational skill-building provide stimuli that's ideal for refreshing overworked brains. While it's difficult to claim that such activities increase memory retention, cross-curricular learning coupled with stimulating environments can encourage different ways of left brain/right brain thinking.

This could involve teamwork activities, such as building a den robust enough to protect an egg from water being poured on it and something being dropped on it; introducing orienteering using just a map and compass; and creating survival SOS scenarios, where fast thinking and teamwork can save lives.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Nigel Miller is group managing director at Active Learning Group (The Bushcraft Company, SuperCamps, Camp Wilderness and Ardmore) and chairman of Outlook Expeditions; for more information, visit activelearninggroup.co.uk

ENVIRONMENTAL TEACHING RESOURCES



The Glasgow-hosted 26th UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties, AKA COP26, may have concluded, but now is the ideal time for teachers to avail themselves of free environmental education resources intended to provoke discussion and learning around the event

ESRI UK / MET OFFICE

A collaboration between a geographic software developer and the Met Office's education department has produced two resource packs – one for KS3 and one for KS4 – that explore weather and climate systems, and the impacts climate change will have on key areas of everyday life, including the transport, agriculture, health and energy sectors.

The resources present Met Office projections from July 2021 via a series of maps and dashboards, in an effort to make complex meteorological analysis more accessible and relatable, and include side-by-side comparisons of climate now and in the years to come, impressing upon students just how far-reaching changes in temperature and rainfall

are likely to be.
schools.esriuk.com

OXFORD LANGUAGES

This division of Oxford University Press has produced two free lesson plans to help shed light on the language used in discussions of climate change. The first looks at how terms now in frequent use – such as 'carbon footprint' and 'global heating' – first came to prominence, and how and why they successfully displaced older terms such as 'ecological footprint.'

The second lesson takes students on an interesting tour of the language deployed in the service of 'greenwashing' – a pernicious practice whereby companies and other organisations seek to portray themselves as more 'environmentally responsible' than they actually are.

bit.ly/ts108-LL2

FRIENDS OF THE EARTH

The well-established environmental pressure group has produced a comprehensive set of KS3 teaching resources relevant to art, drama, English, geography, history, PSHE,

RE, science and technology.

To get the ball rolling, teachers are invited to first make use of PSHE-centric materials grouped under the heading 'Preparatory thinking and grounding activities' that consist of wellbeing and support activities. The remaining resources are then grouped into five distinct sections, each containing a detailed lesson plan, downloadable PowerPoint presentation and set of printable handouts, which can be delivered as standalones or in series to support a themed school environmental week.
bit.ly/ts108-LL3

COP26.TV

Though not specifically aimed at educators, this independent initiative seeking to document the entirety of COP26 in video form will prove a valuable resource for any teachers wanting show their students what took place over the course of the conference as it happened via on the ground reports, coverage and analysis of the speeches and close-up views of the protests taking place outside the conference on the streets of Glasgow.
cop26.tv

TRY THIS

BE A TEAM PLAYER

EXERCISE BETTER CLASS CONTROL WITH THESE TIPS FROM ROBIN LAUNDER...

Behaviour management is a team sport. It might seem more like a game played solo within the four walls of your classroom, but make no mistake – a team sport is very much what it is. Think tug of war or synchronized swimming.

To put it another way, when it comes to behaviour management, all teachers need to 1) pull in the same direction and 2) do everything the same way.

You can't be a maverick. If there's a rule you don't like, you still have to enforce it. If there's a procedure you think is too bureaucratic, it's still necessary to follow it. Even if there's a policy that you can't help thinking is downright silly, you've still got to stick to it.

Why? Because if you don't, that makes it much harder for your colleagues to enforce the rules, follow the procedures and stick to the policies in question. As you'll soon discover if you ever hear a student say, "But why do we have to do it that way? Mr [insert colleague] lets us!"

If everyone is pulling in the same direction and doing everything the same way, then everyone wins. Student behaviour will improve right across the school – in corridors, in the assembly hall and in the classroom. So don't let the side down. Be a team player.

Robin Launder is a behaviour management consultant and speaker; find more tips in his weekly Better Behaviour online course – see behaviourbuddy.co.uk for more details

£13,700

The average annual fee for an English private school, compared with £7,100 spent per pupil in state schools

Source: Institute for Fiscal Studies

Oxford University Press has published a report highlighting the growth of global digital divide in education, following the widespread move to digital learning prompted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

‘Addressing the Deepening Digital Divide’ compiles the responses of 1,557 school and English language teachers spanning 92 countries (including the UK) and sets out a series of recommendations for policymakers and educators on how to prevent millions of learners across the world from being unfairly disadvantaged.

68% of those surveyed identified limited access to connected devices as the most significant barrier to digital learning, with a further 56% citing a lack of the skills needed to make successful use of digital learning among both teachers and learners.

50% meanwhile pointed to a lack of understanding among parents as to how digital tools and platforms ought to be used, thus limiting the effectiveness of the support teachers were able to provide throughout the pandemic.

The report’s recommendations include doing more to encourage a culture of independent learning among students, as well as boosting digital competency skills among educators, students and parents. It also calls on governments to do more to facilitate access to affordable portable devices and internet connections.

The full report can be found at bit.ly/ts108-LL1

YOUR GUIDE TO ...

ROUTINES

There’s no doubt that clear and consistent routines are one of the most important cornerstones of a successful classroom.

Not only will routines ensure that learners feel safe and comfortable in their learning environment, they also help with behaviour management and help reduce cognitive load considerably. In this case, at least, predictability is a positive.

But routines need to be taught. Establishing routines in the short term will pay dividends in the longer term, so how should you go about doing that?

Be explicit

Don’t beat around the bush. Be explicit with the instructions for what you want the learners to do. Give them time to practise what you tell them, and if they don’t do what you ask, tell them again. Routines shouldn’t be left to discovery. The most efficient classes may only need to be told a few times; the process may be considerably longer for others...

Model

When you’re establishing clear routines, don’t neglect to model the

processes yourself. To reduce the cognitive load and make the process of learning a routine easier, show learners what to do by doing it too.

It might sound strange at first, but if you aren’t underlining the titles on the board, why should they be expected to?

Demand 100% compliance

As with anything behaviour-orientated, it’s important to ensure that standards are kept consistently high. Demand 100% compliance and don’t accept anything less than you expect. That way, learners will quickly pick up on the importance of the routines in your classroom. For a routine to become a habit, it needs to be consistently applied – so make sure it’s applied correctly!

Step back

Once routines are established, learners will have built habits that are hopefully aligned with your initial goal. At this point, you can take a step back and focus your attention on learning intricacies. However, it’s still important that you continue monitoring routines to ensure they don’t start to slip!



ADAM RICHES IS A SENIOR LEADER FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING; FOLLOW HIM AT @TEACHMRRICHES

85%

of children admit to worrying about the future of the planet

Source: National Grid survey of 2,000 UK children aged 7 to 16 conducted in June 2021

Need to know

The Education charity SHINE has launched its latest annual funding competition, Let Teachers SHINE, which will see two-year grants of up to £25,000 awarded to teachers with innovative ideas for helping disadvantaged children succeed at school.

The competition is open to qualified, classroom-based teachers, and will specifically be looking for viable early-stage projects with the potential to improve outcomes in English, maths or science for disadvantaged children in the North of England. Applicants will need to show how their project targets disadvantaged children aged 0 to 18, and must be currently practising at school or based in the North, or else be committed to developing their proposed project there if currently based elsewhere.

According to SHINE's interim CEO, Helen Rafferty, "If you're a creative, passionate teacher who has an exciting new idea that will really make a difference, we'd love to hear about it."

Applications can be submitted via an online form, after which shortlisted candidates will be invited to present their idea before a panel of judges. The deadline for entries is **9am, 18 January 2022**, with the winners due to be announced in the spring of 2022.

For more information and to apply, visit letteachersshine.org.uk



WHAT WE DO PRACTISING GRATITUDE

Numerous studies have shown that giving and receiving gratitude can make individuals feel happier, including one published in the *Harvard Medical Journal* which found that, "In positive psychology research, gratitude is strongly and consistently associated with greater happiness. Gratitude helps people feel more positive emotions, relish good experiences, improve their health, deal with adversity, and build strong relationships."

At our school, for example, we encourage students to be thankful and contemplate who and what they're grateful for. This is a really positive activity that can be conducted in multiple ways. A form teacher might ask their students to write a simple thank you note to one of their friends, detailing one thought about them that's kind. These notes can become treasured keepsakes, and a lovely go-to when children need a confidence boost. Another approach can be to ask students to write notes of gratitude to their teachers, which can then be displayed in and around the school.

One of my favourite days in the academic year is our annual 'Say Something Nice Day' that we hold in June, which sees staff and students encouraged to say something positive about each other in messages that are delivered throughout the school.



JULIA KNIGHT IS PRINCIPAL AT ETONHOUSE INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL BAHRAIN; FOLLOW HER AT @KNIGHTWILLIAMS

It really lifts the spirits of staff, and is a simple way of improving wellbeing and happiness right across the campus.

It can be as simple as staff sending an email in which they complement one or more colleagues, or as elaborate as printing out morale-boosting presentation slides that are then hand-delivered to fellow teachers.

Schools can also encourage older students to keep a gratitude journal. Embedding the habit of recording all the nice things that happen to them throughout the day can help students build resilience by seeing that there's always something for them to be grateful for. I love asking students to tell me about the best bits of their day – and helping children relive positive experiences can keep serotonin levels high.

Many schools have introduced mindfulness meditation into their days, which involve focusing on the present moment. A simple breathing technique readies the children for the next lesson, which works well for us, being a school that doesn't use bells or buzzers to signal changeovers.

Encouraging gratitude isn't about forcing children to be happy (or pretend to be happy) – it's a resilience-building tool which, even on dark days, will ensure there's something positive for them to focus on.



Stress support

The National Literacy Trust has teamed up with the financial services firm Wesleyan to launch a new teacher wellbeing website. Forming part of the NLT's wider education recovery efforts, the site aims to provide support for teachers experiencing stress and mental health concerns by providing access to free wellbeing resources and signposting opportunities for further training and teacher-focused services provided by several external organisations.

The free resources include advice on

support networks and reading groups, advice on staying active and eating healthily over the course of the school day and suggestions for practical mindfulness activities.

NLT Chief Executive, Jonathan Douglas, commented, "We know that teachers are regularly very short on time and commit themselves to pupils rather than taking time out to focus on their own wellbeing or relax – and this has only been exacerbated by the disruption and increased pressure of the pandemic. Pupils benefit

from well-rested, happier teachers, so everyone in education stands to gain from the launch of this brilliant new platform."

The site also includes a welcome message from TV presenter and children's author Konnie Huq, who added, "I think that the wellbeing and health of our teachers is so incredibly important, especially at this time. That is why I am really excited to be supporting the National Literacy Trust's Teacher Wellbeing campaign."

FIND OUT MORE, VISIT
LITERACYTRUST.ORG.UK/
TEACHERWELLBEING

TRENDING

Our pick of recent resources and launches teachers might find useful...

URBAN EXPLORERS

The Natural History Museum has launched a new 'Explore: Urban Nature' education programme, targeting 9- to 14-year-olds. The programme will include teacher training on overseeing outdoor STEM investigations into urban nature, plus hands-on student workshops hosted at a number of partnering museums across the country.

nhm.ac.uk/schools/explore-urban-nature

TRAUMA INFORMED

The National Association of Therapeutic Parents has launched a website for schools of that hosts a wide range of resources focusing on trauma in children and the mental health difficulties it can cause, including depression, anxiety and PTSD.

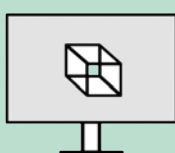
schools.naotp.com

TEACHER WALKTHROUGH

6 TYPES OF CLASSROOM FEEDBACK

FEEDBACK ADVICE FOR TEACHERS, BY TEACHERS, AS VISUALISED BY ZEPH BENNETT...

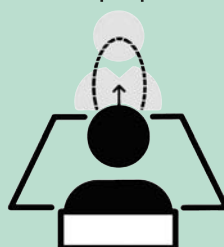
Modelling feedback
Provide model answers, rather than highlighting mistakes



Written and verbal feedback
Provide written and verbal feedback for a piece of work



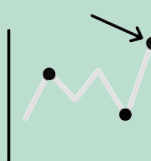
Positive feedback
Give praise and positive feedback where possible



Specific feedback
Give focused feedback rather than generic feedback



Informed feedback
Provide analysis or explanations within your feedback



Interactive Feedback
Include questions in your feedback so that students have to respond and interact

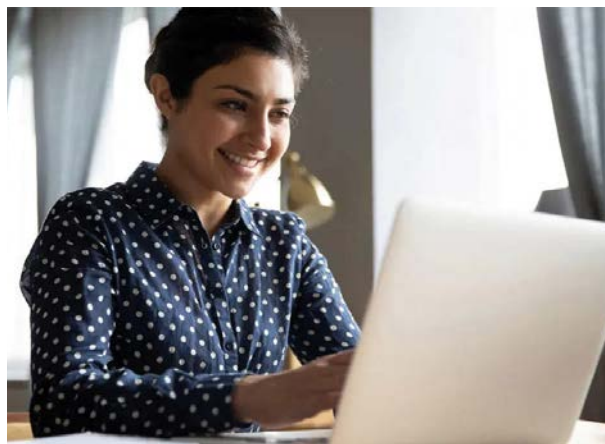
ZEPH BENNETT IS A PE TEACHER AND SCHOOL ACHIEVEMENT LEADER WITH 25 YEARS' TEACHING EXPERIENCE; YOU CAN FIND MORE OF HIS EDUCATIONAL ILLUSTRATIONS BY FOLLOWING @PEGEEKSCORNER

Got a great learning idea? Email editor@teachsecondary.com or tweet us at [@teachsecondary](https://twitter.com/teachsecondary)

ADMINISTRATION

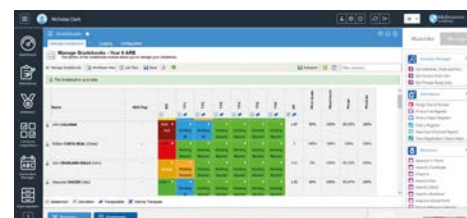
IRIS Ed:gen

A cloud-based MIS that aims to make the complexities of school data easy to access and straightforward to navigate



AT A GLANCE

- A next-generation, cloud-based MIS designed to enable better decision-making
- Unique feature set with streamlined communication tools
- Intuitive dashboard with extensive options for viewing data
- Comprehensive reporting, auditing and timetabling features



REVIEW BY JOHN DABELL

How is your school's management information system (MIS) holding up? Does it offer the functionality you actually need? Is everyone kept in the loop? Is it saving you money?

It's important to regularly review the performance you're getting from your MIS. Systems that are out of date, or more unwieldy than they should be, can easily end up costing you in terms of time and resources, and risk taking you down data dead ends.

At the end of the day – indeed, throughout the day – managing a school effectively comes down to data, and the receiving of accurate information upon which to base your decisions. It's common for such data to arrive courtesy of multiple systems and providers, but this can risk making an already complex task even harder to manage.

Enter IRIS Ed:gen – a revolutionary cloud-based MIS from a provider that genuinely understands just how complex really schools are.

IRIS Ed:gen manages to make traditional server-based MIS options look distinctly second tier by offering an extensive suite of administration features that are fully customisable according to your school's needs. In short, it will do exactly what school leaders want it to do.

Crucially, IRIS Ed:gen serves up accurate, easily accessible and evidenced data in real-time. It covers all the ground you'd expect from a MIS, but goes further by also

taking care of various areas that many schools will have become used to paying extra for.

Ed:gen comes kitted out with myriad dedicated modules, features and advanced tools that seamlessly talk to each other, along with a number of handy tools and apps – its voice-to-text dictation and cloud-based inputting being a particular godsend.

It allows school leaders to gather and analyse data rapidly and proactively, in a way that will help them make more informed decisions and ultimately deliver better outcomes. It can be of particular benefit when adopted across multiple schools, with Ed:gen's Trust Level tools able to deliver useful insights and identify important trends.

Also of note is Ed:gen's impressive teaching and learning curriculum manager, which can be used to define courses, classes and qualifications, and even build grade books to help manage every aspect of your school's grading and assessment story.

The oil of the digital era is data. Ed:gen can help schools centrally manage this vital resource in a way that will help fuel growth and realise students' potential, via high-level reporting and in-depth data analysis. It's sleek, stylish and streamlined; capable of delivering the vital information every school community needs so that it's visible and actionable, while at the same time improving efficiency and delivering value for money.

teach SECONDARY

VERDICT

- ✓ A multifaceted and flexible MIS that simplifies daily tasks while managing massive amounts of data
- ✓ Puts real-time data at leaders' fingertips, enabling them to focus on those areas that matter most
- ✓ Moveable and resizable widgets make for a highly customisable and intuitive interface
- ✓ Can provide a reliable overview of everything leaders and staff need to know about a school's operations anywhere and at any time
- ✓ Fully compliant with current DfE requirements

UPGRADE IF...

You're looking for a feature-rich MIS capable of harnessing real-time data, saving you time and streamlining your daily operations, so that you can pursue bigger and better outcomes for your school(s).



Samsung Chromebook 4

A capable laptop that proves to be a good fit for the daily demands of teachers and students

AT A GLANCE

- A powerful laptop designed to be light, durable and powerful
- Comes with Chrome OS preinstalled
- Driven by a powerful processor with heaps of memory
- Sleek, user-centred design features

REVIEW BY ADAM RICHES



Consumers in the education sector tend to have some key priorities when it comes to procuring laptops for staff and students – not least ease of use, speed, versatility and functionality. The Samsung Chromebook 4 boasts all these, and more besides.

Chromebooks have become increasingly popular among education users in recent years, and for good reason. Between the onboard Chrome OS and its Intel® Celeron® Processor N4000 (with a clock speed ranging from 1.1 GHz up to 2.6 GHz), it's a machine that's more than capable of handling almost anything you care to throw at it in the classroom. Whether accessing shared lesson resources or aiding students in a design task, the Samsung Chromebook 4 has all the power and functionality needed to empower teachers and students alike.

Of course, any school laptop also needs to be robust and resilient, and the Samsung Chromebook 4 ably ticks both boxes. Its construction allows for a complete absence of screws at the rear, while its smooth, clean sides allow it to be easily handled and cleaned quickly. Encased in a well-made shell, it weighs next to nothing and is exceptionally portable. It certainly won't weigh you down, even if you have to carry it around with you all day, and its lack of weight and

heft make it ideally suited to frequent stowage and retrieval from a laptop trolley.

In use, the Samsung Chromebook 4 seems designed for convenience with the needs of end users kept firmly in mind, which is refreshing. Small touches, like the slightly concave keys, make typing a dream and gives users a welcome extra level of comfort and control. Complementing that is the intuitive navigability and extensive functionality of Chrome OS. Users coming to Chrome OS for the first time will naturally find themselves having to adjust a few habits, but can otherwise expect a relatively smooth transition from other major operating systems. Just remember that you may need to find some alternatives for Windows and macOS apps that are yet to be fully supported by Chrome OS.

Following a field test, it's clear to see that the Samsung Chromebook 4 is the perfect classroom machine. It's a good match for teachers, particularly (though very much not limited to) those using Google Classroom – benefits that are mirrored for students, so that whichever applications the Samsung Chromebook 4 is put to, it will prove to be a valuable device to have on hand. Factor in the eminently affordable price, and you have a highly appealing option for those looking to upgrade their laptop offer.

teach
SECONDARY

VERDICT

- ✓ Easy to use, straight out of the box
- ✓ Functional and speedy, making it an ideal device for teachers and students alike
- ✓ Hardware that's robust, yet light and highly portable
- ✓ Users new to Chrome OS can easily make the switch with only minor adjustments

UPGRADE IF...

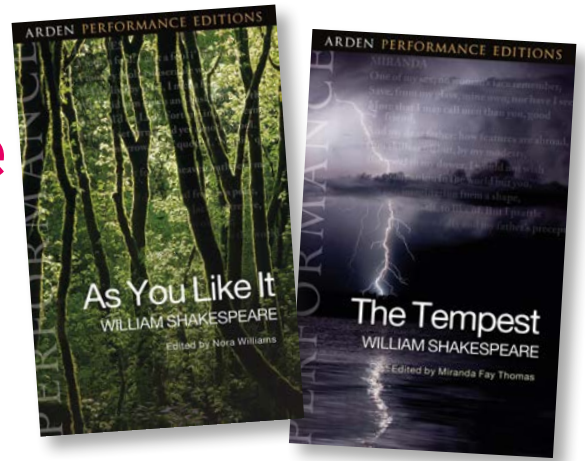
You're looking for a practical laptop that's more than able to withstand the rigours of frequent use within a school

For more details about Samsung's bespoke pricing and volume discounts, call 0333 344 1916 or email samsungexperiencestores@prs-and.com

ENGLISH LITERATURE / DRAMA

Arden Performance Editions

Shakespeare's most notable plays, presented in a way designed to be as approachable and compelling as possible for young students and actors



AT A GLANCE

- Shakespearean performance texts specifically intended for educational use
- Developed in association with distinguished scholars, leading actors and drama students
- Well laid out, with notes on facing pages and large font sizes
- Pronunciation notes on difficult names and unfamiliar words
- Clear word definitions, with space for students to add notes of their own

REVIEW BY JOHN DABELL

The Arden Shakespeare has recently published two new additions to its Arden Performance Editions series of Shakespeare plays – *As You Like It* and *The Tempest* – both of which are really rather good.

Like other editions in the series, they don't overwhelm readers, alienate them or talk down to them.

One of the series' editors has previously criticised other, somewhat 'heavy-duty' Shakespeare editions for schools as akin to 'being hit over the head with scholarship' – and he's right.

We've all come across dense and bulky Shakespeare editions before, complete with their beefy introductions that often burden students with information they simply don't need. In contrast, Arden Performance Editions free the mind, conveying all the energy and intrigue of some of Shakespeare's finest works, while also doing a masterful job of demystifying them.

Published in association with the Shakespeare Institute, these new editions and their precursors in the series prioritise accessibility, complete with facing page notes that include short word definitions, highlight key textual variants and present guidance on metre and pronunciation – often with additional explanations of scene locations, stage directions, verse/prose choices and sources.

The introductory notes for each play are sublime, crackling with intelligence and valuable insights that really delve into the detail of Shakespeare's legacy. They explain

and elucidate, and do much to explain how plays can exist as multiple texts, and what the different word choices and structures of those texts can tell us.

The notes in these editions likely won't be to the liking of Shakespearean fundamentalists. They don't demand that students be slaves to iambic pentameter and never deviate from the construction of Shakespeare's verse. Rather, they allow readers to breathe, and encourage them to bring their own interpretations to bear on the text.

The titles within the Arden Performance Editions series are supremely user-friendly, helping students and actors alike navigate what can be difficult texts without getting lost; there's even plenty of space for readers to add pointers and annotations of their own.

These books let readers decide for themselves how to inhabit Shakespeare's texts – what body language to employ when staging them, and how to approach the study of them. Student editions of Shakespeare texts need, above all, to be accessible and exciting – not bogged down in pedantic debates over punctuation, spelling and capitalisation.

The Arden Performance Editions cut out the superfluous cruft, and nimbly side-step all those age-old discussions that do little more than cloud the timeless appeal, attraction and importance of Shakespeare's work. They can really help to open up a play's possibilities and meanings to actors and students, with style and erudition to spare.

teach SECONDARY

VERDICT

- ✓ Helps bring Shakespeare from the page to the stage without the surplus baggage
- ✓ Easy to read and navigate
- ✓ Informed by the latest textual and historical scholarship
- ✓ Clear explanations of textual variants
- ✓ Ideally suited to classrooms and rehearsal rooms

PICK UP IF...

You're looking to access reliable, authoritative texts of Shakespeare's plays that will empower readers and bring The Bard to life, while providing only as much information as students actually need.

The Arden Performance Editions series is published by The Arden Shakespeare, an imprint of Bloomsbury Publishing, with titles priced at £6.99 and £7.99. Visit bloomsbury.com/ArdenPerformanceEditions for more information.

EDTECH

LanSchool Air

A classroom management system that helps take the hassle out of monitoring students' electronic activities



AT A GLANCE

- A sleek, intuitive and functional classroom management platform
- Helps guide learning, increase collaboration and maximise teaching time
- Connects teachers with students and creates more meaningful online experiences – both in the classroom and remotely
- Key features include screen monitoring, limit web, blank screen, messaging, and push website

REVIEW BY JOHN DABELL



When choosing their classroom management software, schools will be looking for a solution that teachers can use to leverage and guide learning, and encourage student participation. It needs to be on point for both classroom and remote teaching, and provide an immersive learning environment.

The cloud-based LanSchool Air system from Lenovo does precisely that. It's a straightforward software application that's easy to learn and use, and which allows teachers to manage multiple classroom activities via one central interface.

There are a number of features that help make LanSchool Air that extra bit special. For instance, there's its integrated instant messaging feature, which allows students to communicate with their teachers directly, and makes it super simple for teachers to share messages with the whole class.

The extremely useful share feature, meanwhile, lets teachers see precisely what students are doing and how they're working at any given time. A further thumbnail monitoring feature will help identify any areas of concern where students might need help, enabling teachers to address specific needs in a timely fashion and hopefully overcome learning obstacles at an early stage.

Students are likely to appreciate the latter feature in particular, since it offers a way of receiving the help and attention they need, without this being made public

in front of their peers. Students can discreetly request that teachers observe their screens to check that they're on the right track, which is likely to result in improved levels of engagement. It's also possible for teachers to boost students' confidence by sharing the screens of those performing well with the rest of the class.

Teachers can also use the system to temporarily lock keyboards, mice and other input devices with a single click, and enable the sharing of specific content or static imagery when moving from one learning task to the next.

To prevent distractions during independent study and breakouts there's also the facility to limit website access, with powerful 'whitelist' and 'blacklist' features ensuring that only approved sites can be visited – and if needed, pushed out to all screens within the class.

Teachers can even use LanSchool Air to track the battery status of any student devices and attend to any urgent power issues before it's too late. Screenshots can be taken in order to showcase and document examples of exceptional work, and provide insights into student progress during parent-teacher conferences.

With its superb safety features, LanSchool Air can help create a safer digital workspace for students both in school and at home, while the intuitive interface does a great job of putting its powerful functions within teachers' reach in fuss-free and time-efficient way.

teach SECONDARY

VERDICT

- ✓ Helps schools adapt quickly and successfully to new learning demands
- ✓ Can help deliver 1-to-1 programmes and support distance learning
- ✓ Provides great value for the budget-conscious
- ✓ Ticks all the boxes for teacher satisfaction, student safety and engagement
- ✓ Easy to install, scalable and helps keep students safe when online

UPGRADE IF...

You want to drive better learning outcomes, create more meaningful online experiences – whether in person, virtually or via a hybrid of the two – and simplify your classroom management tasks.

For more information, contact 020 8869 1950, email info@its-group.com or visit its-group.com



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Barry Mansfield is the director of Halcyon London International School, Marylebone; for more information, visit halcyonschool.com or follow @halcyonschool



THE LAST WORD

Do we really need physical libraries?



As we move ever further into a digital age, there are some sound reasons for keeping collections of books in schools – but doing so because ‘we always have’ isn’t one of them...

Of all of the changes the digital revolution has brought to our world, for some, the challenge to libraries is among the most deeply felt.

Change is always a challenge, but it can be particularly difficult to lose physical artefacts that feel essential to the experience of being human. Maps and clocks, for example, have played hugely important roles in the human journey, but for most of us, these now exist only as virtual renderings on our phones. Yet when it comes to books, many people see their digitisation as a step too far. Why is that?

Libraries have historically been symbols of civilization – markers of knowledge and power. From the ancient library in Alexandria to the futuristic Tianjin Binhai public library in China, a great library is an outward-looking, physical extension of all the potentialities we humans have. When the Grand Library of Baghdad – the appropriately named Bayt al-Hikmah, the House of Wisdom – was destroyed by the invading Mongols in 1258, it was seen as an epoch-defining, civilizational catastrophe.

Shared memories

However, a modern civilizational disaster would be if the internet were to suddenly vanish, taking with it all our collected human knowledge and potential. If the British Library burned to the ground, it would be a painful and tragic loss, but it wouldn’t cause the world to stop. Like many libraries, it has been busily digitising its resources so that they’re available online, but also for the security that comes from preserving fragile documents remotely in an electronic medium.

School libraries retain some of that House of Wisdom mystique, but none of the jeopardy. Not only can everything in them be accessed digitally, giving students access to vast online libraries will actually provide them with a more comprehensive and convenient service than any school could achieve in a physical setting. It would also be cheaper, freeing up money that could potentially be redirected to other, more essential services.

Arguments for retaining physical libraries are often difficult to evidence. That some people prefer physical books to their digital counterparts is comparable to

hearing from those who couldn’t access literature at all until the arrival of audiobooks.

It may be the case that books have become embedded in our shared cultural memory over centuries, but that doesn’t necessarily mean we should preserve libraries in aspic. The products and processes of the last great social and cultural change – the Industrial Revolution – were thought of at the time as unnatural; harbingers of a mechanistic world where humans would be enslaved by sinister machines. But we still recognised that motor cars were better than horses.

Learning impact

School libraries can serve as vibrant, joyful learning hubs around which many schools are built, as well as places of quiet and sanctuary, but this is a model that can be reimagined. Is it not the case that all locations within a school should be joyful and vibrant? Shouldn’t every school be a sanctuary for those who need it?

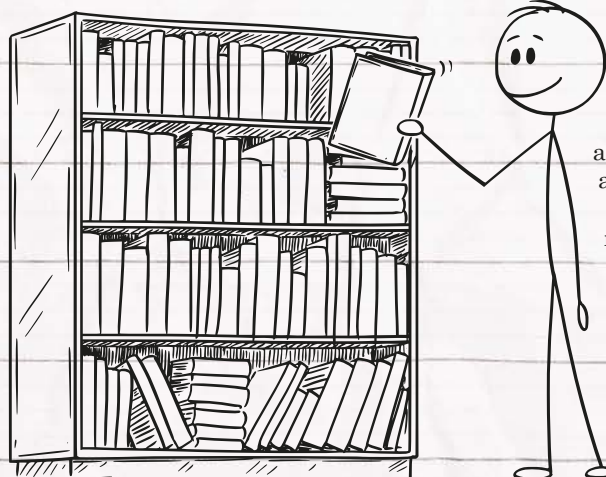
A library can still be all of these things, just with digital media. We still have physical books at Halcyon, but they occupy a flexible common space that also supports readers who log in to digital resources. Once you open the digital box, you can immediately see how rich, endless and frictionless it all is. Our online libraries extend far beyond anything we could ever hope to collect in one building. We are quite literally bringing the world into our school.

Libraries occupy real estate and are costly, so it’s worth considering whether such spaces are providing intended learning impacts and are sustainable and commensurate with that investment. If your school library consists of books on shelves when your students use Kindles, are you really making good choices about where you’re investing in learning?

Yes, we can keep physical books.

They’re beautiful, and can offer a unique, tactile, physical experience of learning. But let’s not keep them because ‘*we have always kept books*’. Keep them if they provide a learning impact that’s better than any alternative.

At a time when most textbooks have migrated online, and when students’ experience of the wider world is increasingly digital, using e-readers won’t present any threats to human potential. Quite the opposite, in fact – to do so is to embrace the reality of a changing world, and a different generation’s civilizational potential.





SAVE THE CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS JUMPER DAY

Friday 10 December

Coach Christmas here!

Want to see the fun – the magic – kids see at Christmas?

Here's how:

Step 1: Christmas jumpers on!

Step 2: See the magic. It's everywhere!

Step 3: Donate £1 to help kids get the food they need to see the fun and wonder in the world.

So jumpers on, people!

Let's protect the magic for children!

SIGN UP NOW

at www.christmasjumperday.org
and get your **FREE** fundraising pack



Photo: Alex Bamford / Save the Children
Save the Children Fund is a charity registered in England & Wales (213890), Scotland (SC039570) and Isle of Man (199).



**Save the
Children**



Proven solutions. Successful student outcomes.



As a pioneer and innovator of classroom management software, **LanSchool** helps teachers connect with students to create more meaningful online experiences, both in the classroom and remotely.

Backed by **Lenovo** and building on 30 years as an **edtech** leader, **LanSchool** helps guide learning, increase collaboration and makes the most of class time.

**30+
years**

**75
countries**

**12M
customers**


**15
languages**

“ We have been using LanSchool for a number of years now and absolutely love it. It has proven to be an invaluable tool for teachers to monitor and assist pupils whilst in IT rooms. From a technical point of view, it's been so easy to deploy and manage. ”

Colin Dean, Network Manager Ferndown Upper School, Dorset, UK

Lenovo

 info@its-group.com

 +44(0)20 8869 1950

 www.its-group.com