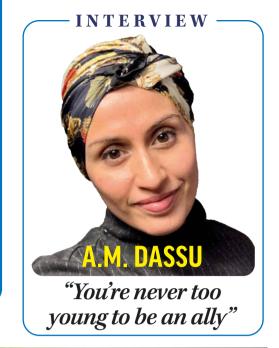
# SECONDARY SECOND

Outstanding advice from the UK's top education experts

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MFL special

Problem porn

Marking and assessment

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SCAN ME

#### FROM THE EDITOR

#### "Welcome...



Everybody knows that ranking school subjects in order of supposed 'importance' is a fool's errand. Academic knowledge comes in many guises, some of which will speak to us more meaningfully than others. Yet it *is* fair to say that certain skills, abilities and forms of knowledge are more foundational than others, and may very well be a prerequisite before learning in some areas can even get off

the ground. And into that category, we can comfortably place literacy.

From tackling persistent spelling issues in subject-specific vocabulary, to harnessing the multiple wellbeing benefits that can accompany regular reading habits among students, we hope you'll find something useful in this issue's literacy special starting on page 27.

If you want to talk about subjects that have been dealt an unfortunate hand over the past few years, you could do worse than point to MFL. The one-two punch of Brexit, immediately followed by the COVID pandemic will have been acutely felt by practitioners of a subject heavily reliant on face-to-face interactions and foreign travel, but as we find out on page 57, you can't keep a determined languages department down.

Elsewhere, Hannah Day takes a nuanced look at the impact that easy access to pornography is having on children's emotional development and attitudes to sex. The issues involved are complex, and addressing them appropriately is perhaps beyond what many schools' RSE provision is currently set up for, but it's an area that schools can't afford to ignore in the long term.

Finally, I'd like to draw readers' attention to three features that tackle well-worn topics, but offer takeaways you might not necessarily expect. On page 70, Colin Foster explains why the supposed virtues of effective group work – having students play to their strengths, the fostering of efficiency – may actually be doing their education a disservice.

Headteacher Armando Di Finizio paints a picture of strong, ethical leadership that no one could describe as being wishy-washy or touchy-feely on page on 40, while on page 42, Sam Strickland takes aim at some supposedly effective ways of addressing behaviour in boys that may actually be doing more harm than good...

Enjoy the issue,

Callum Fauser callum.fauser@theteachco.com

#### On board this issue:



Sam Strickland is the principal of a large allthrough school



Dame Alison Peacock is CEO of the Chartered College of Teaching



Armando Di Finizio is a former headteacher turned education consultant



Zoe Enser is a specialist advisor for English at The Education People



Alex Quigley is National Content Manager at the Education Endowment Foundation



Jennifer Wozniak-Rush is a specialist leader of education in MFL

#### KEEP IN TOUCH!

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

#### Essential reading:

42 What wr

#### What schools get wrong about boys

5 misguided behaviour strategies that do male students no favours

#### Media savvy

How use of foreign media can elevate your MFL lessons

#### Power to the people

Why teachers should be encouraging student activism



JUL/AUG '22

#### **CONTENTS**

#### School of thought

#### **21 DAME ALISON PEACOCK**

Different leadership roles will entail all manner of varying duties and responsibilities, but there are also many commonalities that those with a senior position in their sights can start identifying and practising now

#### **23 MELISSA BENN**

A new book by NEU co-leader Mary Bousted envisages a teaching profession striving to attain different, more meaningful and generally better standards than it does at present - do let's hope politicians in both main parties are paying attention...

#### Regulars

#### 11 VOCAB CLINIC

Alex Quigley's strategies to support word-poor learners

#### 13 MAKING SENSE OF ... **DIVIDING FRACTIONS**

Colin Foster demystifies the art of fractional division with the help of some bar diagrams

#### **38 OFF THE SHELVES**

New titles for you and your students

#### **47 CLASSROOM VOICE**

"I was answering work calls from my hospital bed"

#### 82 JUST SAY 'NO'

John Lawon reflects on how making some seemingly innocuous observations on social media can soon lead to a series of exasperating exchanges...

#### **Features**

#### **14 THINK PIECE**

Alex Standish considers what it will take for geography to shed its reputation as an elitist subject and become more inclusive

#### 19 3 THINGS WE'VE LEARNT **ABOUT ... MARKING**

Teacher Tapp shares some interesting insights into how teachers view the sometimes arduous task of marking

#### **40 ETHICAL LEADERSHIP**

Why the main priority of an ethical leader isn't to be kind, but to be consistent

#### **42 NO SUCH THING AS** A 'BOY' THING

Sam Strickland sets out five key misconceptions when it comes to tackling challenging behaviour in boys

#### **48 ACROSS THE BOARD**

Rebecca Leek breaks down what a holistic approach to school improvement looks like in practice

#### **51 STRESS-FREE STUDIES**

Nine evergreen revision strategies that should serve your students well

#### 53 OFSTED, THE LAW AND YOU

If something doesn't seem quite right during an inspection, who can you talk to?

#### **54 ADULTS ONLY**

Hannah Day looks at how schools ought to tackle the issues presented by teens' ready access to pornographic material

#### **65 CANNABIS EDUCATION**

When it comes to drugs and alcohol education, we need less didacticism and more nuance, says Helena Conibear

#### 66 RISE UP

If students feel sufficiently moved to campaign for a cause that's important to them, let that be a learning opportunity, writes A.M. Dassu

#### **69 POWER OFF**

John Galloway queries why the government's Edtech Demonstrator programme was brought to an end

#### **70 GROUP WORK**

Your students might be getting along famously and making rapid progress in groups, notes Colin Foster - but how much are they actually learning?

#### **TS Special - Literacy**

#### 28 WHAT'S GONE WRONG?

Alex Quigley considers the factors that can cause whole school literacy initiatives to fail

#### 31 TRUTH FACTORIES

How school libraries are assuming a new and increasingly important role in the age of disinformation

#### **33 COURSE CORRECTIONS**

If students are struggling with the spelling demands of your subject's terminology, start thinking like an English teacher and give Zoe Enser's practical suggestions a try

#### **34 READING FROM SCRATCH**

Molly Bolding finds out how one school forged its own path in order to get students reading more often

#### Subject focus - MFL

#### **58 SPEAK NOW**

Jennifer Wozniak-Rush suggests some strategies for boosting students' verbal confidence

#### **61 THE JET SET**

How a mix of careful timetabling and grant applications helped students at Impington Village College cross continents



#### **62 DO ADJUST YOUR SET**

Keep your lesson content current by drawing on the media output of other countries, says Fiona Easton

#### **Learning Lab**

#### **75 BE INSPIRED**

The CPD benefits of adopting an 'open door' policy during teaching hours; why 'do no harm' should be every teacher's guiding principle; how to correct class behaviour without any escalation; and 5 starter activities to help your students get into the right frame of mind...

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# The newsletter

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





#### **CRAIYON**

Take a thing, person or place. Take another thing, person or place. Type them into a text box, and then watch as both are smashed together to form a new image via the magic of a neural network powered by artificial intelligence. In a nutshell, that's craiyon (craiyon.com).

If you're worried about its potential for enabling the fabrication of 'evidence' showing people having meetings or performing deeds that never happened, don't be. Right now, its only practical application is to produce simultaneously horrifying and hilarious grade A nightmare fuel for social media clicks - with results that often resemble scenes from German Expressionist cinema peopled by flesh monsters with imploding faces. Witness the haunting visuals here, courtesy of the terms 'Stonehenge' and 'quantity surveyor'.

The citizenship and digital literacy leads at your school needn't lose any sleep over it. But be advised that your head of art is now planning a Y11 showcase of experimental work that no one's going to forget in a hurry...





age range? Y6, Y9, Y10, Y11

#### What's on offer?

A series of lesson plans aimed at helping pupils identify links between

Think of a number...

academic subjects and their potential career options, plus access to a set of wellbeing training courses for staff and Hays Education's learning management system.

How might teachers use the resource? The lesson plans are tailored to primary and secondary pupils at key educational milestones, and are designed to support schools in meeting the Gatsby Benchmarks.

Where are they available? hays.co.uk/hays-inspire

#### What are we talking about?

Hays Inspire, from the employment agency Hays Education

#### **DON'T QUOTE ME...**

"We're comfortable with the story of abolition, but not comfortable with the story of two and a half centuries of slave trading that necessitated abolition"

Address by historian and broadcaster David Olusoga to the Confederation of School Trusts' annual conference

#### 80%

of secondary schools in England are now academies or free schools, accounting for 79% of secondary school pupils

Source: DfE

#### 22.5%

of pupils in England are now eligible for free school meals, up from 20.8% in 2021

Source: DfE

#### 59%

of the NASUWT's LGBTI members say they have experienced homophobia, biphobia, transphobia and related discrimination in their workplace

Source: NASUWT members survey

#### **ONE FOR** THE WALL

"I hate writing; I love having written" **Dorothy Parker** 



teachwire.net/secondary



#### Strikes on way?

The NEU and NASUWT have announced plans to ballot their members for national industrial action in autumn, based on the outcome of the teachers' pay award for 2022/23.

The NASUWT has publicly argued for a 12% pay award, while in a letter sent to Education Secretary Nadhim Zahawi, the NEU's joint general secretaries Mary Bousted and Kevin Courtney called on the government to commit to 'an inflation-plus increase for all teachers'.

The School Teachers' Review Body on teachers' pay is due to publish its recommendations in the latter half of July.

In making its case, the NASUWT has pointed to a 20% slump in the value of teachers' salaries, coming on the back of a 12-year period that's seen pay erode across the profession. The demands come at a volatile time that's seen a cost of living crisis combine with historically high increases in inflation and the prospect (at the time of writing) of further industrial action in other sectors, notably the rail industry.

The NASUWT argues that an increased pay award will be necessary in order to stave off an 'unprecedented retention crisis and protect the future of education'. According to Dr Patrick Roach, NASUWT General Secretary, "Our message is clear ... We will not allow cuts to our members' pay and attacks on their pensions. If a pay rise is not awarded, it will be won by our members in workplaces through industrial action."



#### SAVE THE DATE



#### STATEMENTS AND CORRESPONDENCE

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



#### THE SPEECH:

#### **Amanda Spielman addresses trust leaders**

WHO? Amanda Spielman, Ofsted Chief Inspector WHAT? Speech given at the Confederation of School Trusts' annual conference WHEN? 16th June 2022

"Gaps have widened. Younger children are often behind in language, communication and social skills. We hear that more effort is having to go into teaching older children behaviour and routines, and more work in managing behaviour.

There is still too much persistent absence. And many vital SEND, mental health and other support services have yet to return even to their creaking pre-pandemic levels, while needs continue to be exceptionally high.

We all recognise the importance, now more than ever, of using assessment well to identify pupils' knowledge gaps, and of making changes to curriculum and teaching in response. Please don't be afraid to make curriculum changes because you are concerned that inspectors won't understand or will take a dim view. Nothing could be further from the truth. In fact, I encourage you to continue to work to understand your pupils' needs, and to make the curriculum changes that they need with confidence.

And we are finding that, despite all the challenges, many schools have managed to improve over the past couple of years. More schools than before are raising their grade to Good, and although some are losing a historic Outstanding grade, others are achieving what is undoubtedly an exacting standard."



#### THE LETTER:

### School leaders, unions and support organisations call for FSM expansion

WHO? NEU, NAHT, Teach First and Institute of School Business Leadership, among others WHEN? 30th May 2022

"Now is the right moment for the government to commit to an expansion of free school meals, providing a nutritional safety net that supports all children to learn and achieve. The clear solution to ensuring fairness and equity across our schools is to extend universal provision, as Wales and Scotland are now committed to deliver. But as an immediate first step, free school meal eligibility criteria need to be expanded to all families receiving universal credit (or an equivalent benefit)."

7-8 JULY 2022 Festival of Education I 29 SEPTEMBER 2022 Free and Equal? #2 I 10 NOVEMBER 2022 The Education People Show

#### 7-8 JULY 2022

Festival of Education Wellington College educationfest.co.uk

Following a COVID-prompted two-year hiatus, the 12th Festival of Education will once again be held at Wellington College this summer. The organisers plan to host stimulating talks and presentations by more than 200 speakers drawn from across the profession, and attract a crowd of more than 5,000 educators to what remains perhaps the most relaxed and convivial event on the education calendar.

#### **29 SEPTEMBER 2022**

Free and Equal? #2 Lytchett Minster School in Dorset and online beyondthis.co.uk/standup2

Following on from last year's inaugural 'Free and Equal?' human rights education conference for teachers and school students, teacher and speaker Peter Radford has once again partnered with Amnesty International and Unicef for the in-person and online event 'Free and Equal 2'. This year's theme is 'Sexism, Misogyny and Harassment', with talks and seminars set to cover a range of areas, including gender bias, how patriarchal views shape society and strategies for challenging sexism.

#### **10 NOVEMBER 2022**

The Education People Show Kent Event Centre, Maidstone theeducationpeopleshow.co.uk

Formerly the EduKent EXPO & Conference, the retooled Education People Show is pitched as a freeto-attend, major networking event for school leaders and policymakers across Kent and neighbouring counties, combining inspiring keynotes with engaging workshops and an extensive exhibition of leading school and academy suppliers.



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#### Give that man an Oscar

In the late 70s, my school in Paddington was among the first to use the indoor cricket nets at Lord's Cricket Ground. Having taken a mixed group of students to the Ground's indoor training facility, it was decided that we should eschew the individual nets in favour of using the full length of the hall for a game.

Just as we were about to start, a rather imposing gentleman appeared from the changing rooms in immaculate cricket whites. He approached the head coach and asked if he could join the game. I agreed, and he took up position behind the stumps, keeping wicket for both teams

As the game progressed, I wondered how many of my students realised that their wicket keeper had, some 20 years previously, played Lawrence of Arabia. As our game finished, Peter O'Toole thanked my students and retired – possibly to the nearest hostelry...

You just need to make good use of the

shape, size and properties of the material.

#### From in-tray to litter tray

I recall once hearing how a time-stretched form tutor took home a full set of collated annual subject reports – back in the days when these would be hand-written with a carbon copy underneath – and placed them on floor of his living room, still stored in an office in-tray, ready for checking later that evening.

During the time it took for said form tutor to pour himself a large glass of wine to fortify him for the task ahead, the family cat became very taken with this new litter tray and took full advantage of the opportunity. Word has it that the form tutor's colleagues were less than impressed at having to rewrite their reports the following day...

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







#### **CURRICULUM LINKS:**

History, politics, geography, PSHE

This film traces the life of Nelson Mandela, former President of South Africa, and one of the most important historical figures of the 20th century. From his humble beginnings growing up in a rural African village, through to his imprisonment for alleged terrorist activities and eventual election as President, this is the true chronicle of a man who put everything on the line to fight for what he believed in.

#### Discussion questions:

- What words do you associate with the name 'Nelson Mandela'? Did you know what apartheid was before seeing the film?
- Did anything surprise you about the way that this film portrayed Nelson Mandela's life?
- How do you think Winnie Mandela contributed to the anti-apartheid movement
- did her behaviour and actions have a positive or negative effect on the cause?
- The story is set over many years were there any sections of the film that you think worked better than others?

Head online to our educational streaming platform, Into Film+ (intofilm/plus) to stream the film and download our fantastic film guide, containing Teacher Notes on these discussion questions and much more. You can also mark Mandela Day on 18th July with the help of IntoFilm's new Mandela resource, available via bit.ly/ts115-mandela



#### **Retweets**

Who's been saying what on Twitter this month?

#### Karen Knight @KKNTeachLearn

One piece of advice I've remembered from being a new teacher is 'do less but do it well'.

So I'll admit that I don't always get to the bottom of my to-do list.

But the things I have done, I've done properly.

#### Sam Freedman @Samfr

Not sure where they're going to find an "army of supply teachers" given there aren't enough supply teachers even when there's no strike.

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



# write, erase, repeat.





highlight



refillable







### The Vocab Clinic

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

#### TRY THIS TODAY: 'SO THAT...'

To ensure pupils develop their vocabulary, we must get them to elaborate upon their ideas in writing. By extending sentences, we encourage our pupils to use a broad and deep vocabulary. 'So that' sentences are a simple way to stretch out sentences and nudge pupils to develop their expression and the words they use.

For instance, if pupils are evaluating their products in design technology, they can use 'so that' in the middle of sentences to explain the thinking behind their design decisions: 'I designed a robust base so that...' or 'Paint was added so that...'



#### Cracking the academic code

Truculent teenagers can often be reluctant communicators. When it comes to their writing, we need to scaffold their sentences so that they produce

4

extended academic writing. The strategy of 'sentence signposting' deploys familiar academic terms, such as 'first', 'furthermore' and 'in conclusion', but offers a variety of choices that pupils can master over time.

In RE, for example, simple signposts like 'due to', 'consequently', 'on the other hand' and 'on the contrary' can scaffold an entire argument or debate, both verbally and in writing. By selecting subject-specific 'sentence signposts' we can provide pupils with the tools to extend their ideas and use more elaborate vocabulary.

#### ONE FOR: BUSINESS STUDIES STUDENTS

#### ENTREPRENEUR

**Derives from:** French 'entreprendre', meaning 'to undertake' ('entre' being 'between' and 'prendre' being 'to take')

**Means:** A person who has the vision and initiative to make business ideas happen

**Related terms:** Enterprise, businessperson, speculator, opportunist, venturer **Note:** The root '*entre*' links to the more common root 'enter' – e.g. an 'enterprising entrepreneur'



#### One word at a time



The word 'quarantine' remains an all-too-familiar one, given that we're still amid a global pandemic. It's a term that can now trigger an emotive response in light of our recent lived experiences, and is – perhaps unsurprisingly – one that emerged from the first great global pandemic, The Black Death, which swept across Europe in the 14th century.

The word has its origins in Italian, and the names of shipping ports such as Venice. The phrase 'quaranta giorni' in Venetian dialect meant '40 days', back when this was the amount of time sailors needed to spend in isolation aboard their ships while docked at nearby islands before they were allowed ashore.

#### DO THEY KNOW?

More than 60% of all English words have Greek or Latin roots

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

#### **CALORIE**

#### In physics

A unit of heat which describes the energy needed to heat 1 gram of water by 1 degree Celsius.

#### In food and nutrition

The energy value of foods, and the energy people use in physical activity



Alex Quigley is a former teacher and the author of a number of books, most recently *Closing the Writing Gap*; he also works for the Education Endowment Foundation as National Content Manager.

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Launching in autumn 2022, our My Revision Notes textbooks will be available in print and as Boost eBook format. As well as covering the key content of examined units, they will contain practical study tips and effective revision strategies, helping students to build knowledge and confidence.

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#### Confidence-building

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#### Supports all learners

Designed to be easy and straightforward to use for students of all abilities and teachers with varying levels of experience and confidence

#### [MATHS PROBLEM]

## DIVIDING FRACTIONS

Students are often confused about dividing by a number that is a fraction

In this lesson, students make sense of fraction division by drawing bar diagrams.

#### THE DIFFICULTY

This task is intended to bring to the surface students' confusions about division of fractions.

What is 6 divided by one half?

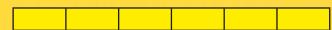
Many students will think that the answer is 3, whereas the correct answer is actually 12. You could respond to students who say '3' by asking another question:

What is 6 divided by 2? They will be sure that the answer to that question is 3, and this may make them doubt **that**  $6 \div \frac{1}{2}$  can really also be 3.



#### **THE SOLUTION**

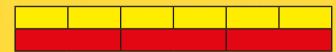
Bar models can be a good way to address what is going on. We can draw a bar for 6:



and a bar for 2:



And it is clear that 3 of the red bars will fit exactly into the yellow bar.



This corresponds to  $6 \div 2 = 3$ . (How many 2s fit into 6? The answer is 3.)

What would a bar of length  $\frac{1}{2}$  look like? It will be.



and so it is clear that 12 of these purple bars will fit exactly into the yellow bar:

So,  $6 \div \frac{1}{2} = 12$ . (How many  $\frac{1}{2}$  s fit into 6? The answer is 12.)

Can you draw or imagine bars to work out  $5 \div \frac{1}{2}$ ,  $2 \div \frac{1}{3}$  and  $4 \div \frac{1}{2}$ ?

The answers to all of these (10, 6, 18) are integers, but students also need to be able to divide fractions in cases where the answer is **not** an integer.

We have seen that  $6 \div \frac{1}{2} = 12$ .

If we started with a number that was  $\frac{1}{7}$  as big, the answer would also be  $\frac{1}{7}$  as big:

So, 
$$\frac{6}{7} \div \frac{1}{2} = \frac{12}{7}$$
.

Now for the hard bit.

If the fraction we **divided by** were **5 times as big**, the answer would be **5 times smaller**.

So, 
$$\frac{6}{7} \div \frac{5}{2} = \frac{12}{35}$$
.

This shows us that  $\div \frac{5}{2}$  is equivalent to  $\times \frac{2}{5}$ , because  $\frac{6}{7} \times \frac{2}{5} = \frac{12}{35}$ .

So, to divide by a fraction, we can instead *multiply by its reciprocal*. (This is analogous to how subtracting 8 is equivalent to *adding* the additive inverse, which is -8.)

#### **Checking for understanding**

These questions will help to assess how well students have understood this way of thinking.

Explain why  $5 \div \frac{1}{4}$  must be larger than 5.

Explain why  $5 \div \frac{1}{4}$  is equal to 20.

Use this to explain why  $\frac{5}{2} \div \frac{1}{4}$  must be equal to  $\frac{20}{3}$ .

Use this to explain why  $\frac{5}{3} \div \frac{11}{4}$  must be equal to  $\frac{20}{33}$ .

Students may benefit from some time in pairs to refine their explanations before sharing them.

They could then create their own fraction divisions to explain.



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

### Let's end geography's elitism

To become a more inclusive subject, geography should focus less on the partisan and do more to prioritise the universal, writes **Alex Standish** 

In recent years, we've seen much concern expressed over the need for schools and universities to 'widen participation' in certain subjects; to move away from Anglo-centrism and ensure that a range of ethnicities and genders are 'represented' in the curriculum.

These calls have often led to demands for disciplinary knowledge to be 'decolonised', but it's important to ensure that curriculum subjects retain their appeal to *all* young people – regardless of background – so that everyone can have equal access to the fruits of knowledge and culture.

#### The 'soft option'?

Geography is a subject that's long struggled to reflect the multicultural and class constitution of British society. From the 19th to the early 20th century, geography teaching supported and furthered the

ideology and practices of the British Empire overseas. The geographer Halford Mackinder once described it as a subject for learning how to 'think Imperially' and see the world as a 'theatre for British activity'.

More recently, Danny Dorling, professor of human geography at the University of Oxford, has written about how geography became the degree of choice for students from privileged backgrounds. In his paper Kindness: A new kind of rigour for British Geographers, Dorling traces the subject's links with privilege back to the 1970s. This was a time when public school families increasingly expected their offspring to attend university and obtain a degree, and came to view geography as a 'soft option' (which it wasn't then and isn't now).

In a similar vein, Alex Singleton, professor of geographic information science at the University of Liverpool, carried out a geodemographic analysis of GCSE entries in 2012 to reveal that pupils living in more affluent and less ethnically diverse areas recorded the highest rates of participation and attainment in GCSE geography.

(While objections to the term 'Black and Minority Ethnic' are understandable and noted, this is the form in which data is often collected, hence 'BME' will be tentatively used here).

#### Shedding the privilege

Today, the numbers of students from BME backgrounds taking geography in higher education is low, compared with those who are Caucasian British.

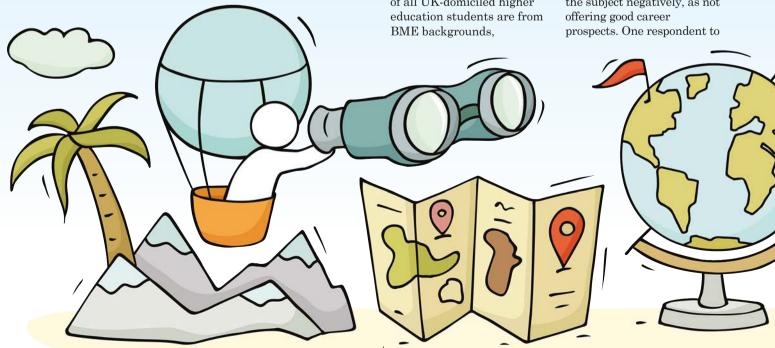
According to research by Vandana Desai of Royal Holloway University of London, approximately 20% of all UK-domiciled higher education students are from BME backgrounds.

compared to 13% of the general population. Yet only 6 to 7% percent of those BME students are studying geography.

The figures for university teaching staff are even more skewed, with 4.4% from BME backgrounds overall, only 1.4% of whom are professors. Geographers evidently have some work to do if they want to shed the subject's association with privilege and widen participation.

Further research in 2018 by Hafsa Garcia of UCL Institute of Education found that differences in attitudes towards geography among A-Level students could be linked to cultural background. Students of Indian and Chinese heritage, for example, were more likely to select geography at GCSE level.

Conversely, other ethnic groups – particularly Bangladeshi and Black students – tended to view the subject negatively, as not offering good career prospects. One respondent to



teachwire.net/secondary

Garcia's research explained that for her, geography is "An easy subject that doesn't result in high profile or high paying jobs."

This is a helpful starting point for recognising that some of the differences identified in the data derive from differences in cultural outlook towards education. Rather than getting us off the hook, however, it suggests that geographers need to convince a broader range of people of the subject's value, including its links to careers.

#### Signs of change

That said, there are at least some signs of change within schools. The Royal Geographical Society has found that between 2010 and 2018, the number of Black/Black British students taking geography had doubled from 18.6% to 37.3%. The proportion of Asian and mixed student entries grew slightly, but turned out to be highest among pupils of Chinese ethnicity (52%).

Overall, entries from pupils with a BME background accounted for 23% of all 2018 GCSE geography entries, compared with an ethnic minority school population of 30% in England. Entries for pupils from poorer families (those eligible for free school meals) still

remains lower than other groups, but the gap between them has at least narrowed from 14.4% in 2013 to 11.1% in 2018.

While much of this is probably linked to shifting cultural attitudes between generations, the knowledgeconference. Small steps, but thoughtful ones.

#### Different priorities

However, too many geographers continue to place privileged, middleclass political preoccupations and Western-centric views

#### "Too many geographers continue to place middle-class political preoccupations at the heart of the subject"

rich geography curriculum in place since 2013 has hopefully also played a part. The RGS and Geographical Association (GA) have both formed committees and devised projects aimed at widening participation, while also undertaking listening exercises to survey young people's views of geography and its institutions.

Efforts have additionally been made to co-opt more geographers from BME and lower socio-economic backgrounds into positions of responsibility and encourage them to write for journals. The RGS runs a project aimed at disseminating geographyrelated careers information; the GA has added a prayer room at its annual

at the heart of the subject, seemly unaware that many outside of academia think somewhat differently.

Scanning the pages of some recent geography education journals reveals a series of prominent articles promoting environmentalism, climate activism, decolonisation of the curriculum and identity politics – thus illustrating the continuing influence of postmodern thought, including postcolonial theory and scepticism towards economic development.

For instance, while climate change continues to be a dominant issue in geography, the UN's global 'We the People: 7 million voices' survey actually found that this was a low

political priority for most people,

ranking

behind

food.

access to

healthcare, job
opportunities,
education, clean water,
sanitation, energy,
equality and reliable
government.
Climate change is a big
issue that needs to be
addressed, of course – but
by presenting the issue
in ways consistent
with the beliefs and
perspectives of
radical organisations,
there are some

within the profession who risk being out of touch with the priorities of wider society.

#### Open to diversity

In a 2016 article titled 'The Challenges of Environmental Education', geographer Charles Rawding expressed his concerns regarding the subject's promotion of Green and anti-capitalist ideology, and whether these might be fostering an anti-modern, anti-development view of the world. Rawding rightly concluded that "An uncritical adherence to such an orthodoxy will result in negative geographies."

Partisanship and activist teaching may well attract like-minded students, but will likely discourage those who prioritise other issues and express different political opinions. Teachers should encourage students to explore many contemporary political issues in geography. However, to avoid indoctrination, this means examining different perspectives and alternative ways of thinking, such that students can formulate their own views and learn to empathise with others.

In academic settings, moral and political questions should be opened up to include diverse ways of thinking about the issues at hand. It is only through being open to diverse ideas that geography will ultimately establish that path towards wider participation – a lesson that needs to start in school.



#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Alex Standish is an associate professor of geography education at UCL Institute of Education, and coeditor of What Should Schools Teach? Disciplines, Subjects and the Pursuit of Truth (UCL Press)





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# 3 things we've learnt about... MARKING

It's been an ever-present bugbear across the profession for many years, but it seems that schools and teachers can approach the demands of marking in very different ways...

#### Are teachers told how long to mark for?

Marking, love it or loathe it, is a constant within schools. Frequently cited as a key factor in concerns over excessive teacher workloads, 'marking' is a broad term that can assume many forms between different departments, let alone different schools.

To start with, let's look at whether teachers are told via school marking policies how long they should be marking for. School leaderships seem fairly evenly split on this, with 48% of secondary teachers confirming that their school's marking policy specifies how often should mark, and 52% saying it doesn't.

Just over one in three secondary classroom teachers say that their marking policy is clear, whereas 57% of heads think the same. One in four classroom teachers meanwhile think their department's policy is mainly centred on marking, rather than feedback. Perhaps the most enlightening finding is that only 27% of classroom teachers say that their marking policy fits their subject!

#### Do policies lead to different implementations?

Unsurprisingly, those teachers given specified durations they should mark for reported spending more time marking than other teachers – though not as much as you'd expect. When asked how much marking they'd done in the last week, those teachers working under more restrictive marking policies spent an average of two hours and 10 minutes on the task. Teachers at schools with more liberal marking policies spent one hour and 50 minutes – a difference of just 20 minutes.

Other differences could be seen in teachers' experiences. 42% of teachers whose marking policies specify how often books should be marked feel they spend too much time marking, compared to 26% of teachers who aren't given such directives.

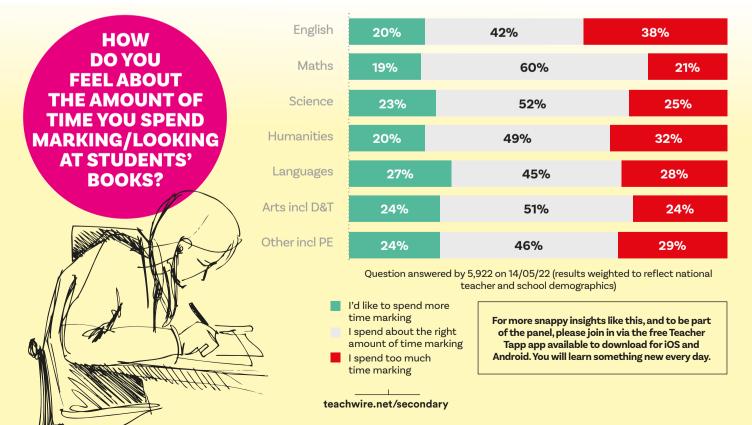
34% of teachers who *weren't* given prescribed marking times were also more likely to say they'd continue performing the marking they currently do if all monitoring stopped. Just 18% of teachers with prescribed marking times said the same.

Does telling teachers how long to mark for inevitably generate such responses?

#### It's all about the subject

Naturally, teachers in different departments will spend different amounts of time on their marking. On average, English teachers report the most hours, and maths and arts teachers the least. That's perhaps to be expected, given how 50% of English teachers describe their school's approach as 'books expected to be marked.' That was true of just 33% of maths teachers, who were more likely to describe their school's approach as 'flexible.'

Teachers of different subjects display different attitudes towards the value of written teaching comments. A huge 93% of maths teachers and 91% of science teachers believe that their students would learn just as much without written comments. English teachers, on the other hand, are far firmer believers in written comments – though it's still the case that a remarkably large 75% of English teachers agree that students would learn as much without their written comments...



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Different leadership roles can involve different challenges, but there are some core attributes that any teachers considering a move up the career ladder can start honing right now

### **Alison Peacock**

Over my career in the education sector I've been a teacher, headteacher, governor, and researcher before my current role as CEO of the Chartered College of Teaching. Whilst each of these posts have presented their own unique challenges and rewards, the golden thread has been the need to connect with others – to engage people and pupils in how to think critically, and support them in their learning.

The way you support students, and the need to develop and encourage a team of colleagues, are key aspects of any senior leadership role — but how should you go about gaining those crucial skills needed to become a great leader? Here are some tips and tricks I've picked up throughout my own career, which may help to empower any readers contemplating taking their step into senior leadership.

#### 1. Judge whether you're ready

Like all professionals, teachers achieve their best results by being challenged in their role. A key factor when deciding whether to advance into senior leadership will be that your teaching job no longer challenges you as it previously did. If that's the case, consider those elements of the role you enjoy and excel in the most, and how you might be able harness these when taking on the challenges involved in senior leadership.

Senior leadership roles span all sorts of responsibilities – from subject to pastoral, and managerial to exams. The passion you have for your specialist subject could be an advantage when applying for a head of department role, or as a core subject leader/co-ordinator. By way of an initial step, you could demonstrate your

level of interest and capability by taking on a Teaching and Learning Responsibility (TLR), such as running a club or coordinating a revision programme.

#### 2. Look further afield

Advancing to a new, more senior position may well involve joining a different school. It's worth researching the senior leadership posts being advertised on recruitment websites, such as Teaching Vacancies (teaching-vacancies.service.gov.uk) — a free service provided by the government that will let you filter roles based on location, job title, phase and working patterns, and sign up for job alerts so that suitable SLT roles can be sent straight to your inbox.

#### 3. Set yourself apart

A great way of demonstrating your eligibility for a new role is to undertake a National Professional Qualification (NPQ), which are free voluntary qualifications designed to support the professional development of teachers and leaders. The current suite of NPQs are presently too new for any impact data to be available, but a 2017 DfE study showed that 87% of NPQ



increased their readiness and confidence in leadership roles.

Leadership NPQs support development of the knowledge, behaviours and networks educators will need if they're to become wellperforming leaders. They can be taken at any time in your professional journey, and will demonstrate good initiative and care for your profession. You can then opt to go further and seek accreditation as a Chartered Teacher, which will formally recognise an individual's career-long development via a rigorous suite of assessments. More information about this can be found visiting the Chartered College of Teaching's website at chartered.college.

#### 4. Be proactive

Look out for any opportunities to observe and learn from your colleagues first-hand in various everyday situations. These might include taking part in formal classroom observations, and asking questions such as, "How do you manage your department and teaching responsibilities?" or "What are the best ways of managing a team that you've found?"

Stay engaged, and continue to seek additional opportunities for learning outside of your standard formal development. Understanding what's expected of those at a more senior level in your school will help you to develop a bank of your own examples, which you can then use to make your case for promotion.

There's no standardised approach to career development. Everyone will feel ready to take the jump to senior leadership at their own pace, but by reflecting on your own strengths, learning from colleagues and through professional training, you'll be able to confidently advance your career.

Dame Alison Peacock is a former secondary teacher and primary headteacher, and is currently CEO of the Chartered College of Teaching; for more details, visit chartered.college or follow @CharteredColl



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The time has come to properly interrogate the 'standards' against which schools are constantly being measured, and restore the sense of autonomy and space for meaningful interaction that educators have lost

### Melissa Benn

When it comes to schools, there's no word that politicians love more than 'standards'. Governments will insist that said standards are strong and forever rising under their watch, while oppositions will maintain that they have an even better plan for improving state education.

Both sides will bandy about bundles of numbers, often stretching into the billions, to prove what resources are available for the task. It's a familiar political dance, but one that often bears little relationship to what we *really* need to do to improve what goes on in our classrooms.

#### Interconnected issues

How refreshing it would be to instead hear a politician admit that beneath that seemingly simple nine-letter word 'standards', there's actually a hugely complex set of interconnected issues, ranging from the state of our National Curriculum to the poor conditions of numerous school buildings.

I'd particularly like to hear a prominent politician acknowledge that the reforms of the past couple of decades got things very wrong with respect to how we treat the nation's educators. For too long now, politicians in each of the two main parties have viewed teachers as merely 'vested interests'; vessels of mediocrity chiefly concerned with just maintaining an easy life and improving their pay.

We've seen teachers gradually become subject to ever more state control and increasingly less autonomy, robbing many of their sense of professionalism and joy in the job that they do.

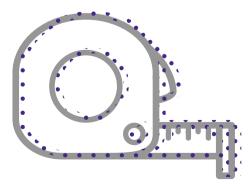
#### **Crushing impact**

No one grasps this better than Dr Mary Bousted, who has had a 40-year career as a teacher, school leader, academic and latterly union leader, as joint general secretary of the NEU alongside Kevin Courtney,

Bousted has now published a thoughtful treatise on the profession's current crisis entitled *Support, Not Surveillance: How to solve the teacher retention crisis* (John Catt, £15). In it, she observes that in Japan, 80% of teachers describe the job as having been their first choice of profession; in England, the figure stands at 60%. She also highlights England's very high turnover of ECTs, noting that in 2019, just 67% had remained in the profession five years after joining it. In 2010, that figure stood at 72%.

Bousted doesn't pull her punches. In what's perhaps the book's most powerful chapter, she focuses on the crushing impact of poverty and its "Savage effect on poor children's educational attainment." As Bousted explains, simplistic pieties stressing the importance of a 'powerful knowledge curriculum' can't overcome the huge obstacles involved. For that, we need a more economically equal society.

Bousted's view is that putting pressure on teachers to close the attainment gap has created more problems than it's solved, resulting in punishing workloads, as well as inappropriate and often unfair Ofsted judgements.





#### Meaningful interaction

A friend with secondary age children recently told me that since the pandemic, meetings with his children's subject teachers had been reduced to brisk, five-minute sessions conducted online. Parents might well groan at this, but imagine how such constraints feel to the teachers involved.

There is, however, an alternative approach – one that eschews quick fixes in favour of meaningful human interaction. Bousted cites the Australian researcher Raewyn Connell, who maintains that the best teaching "Consists of human encounters...(that) may be intense or formal, short or sustained, one-to-one or one-to-many."

Connell rightly avers that the education profession draws on complex intellectual and emotional labour that involves 'Encouragement, humour and sometimes anger.'

#### **Key reforms**

Teaching therefore shouldn't be merely concerned with driving up numbers — rather, it should be about meaningfully engaging young people in the task and joys of learning.

This will only be achieved, Bousted argues, if bureaucracy is reduced, Ofsted is replaced with a more supportive inspectorate and the National Curriculum is made less prescriptive. She also calls for more flexible working to help retain experienced staff, and a pay structure that rewards long service and experience.

No-one could describe this book as a manifesto for mediocrity. On the contrary, it sets out a clear case for urgently improving the conditions of teaching and learning, so that we might attain – to coin a phrase – 'high standards'...

Melissa Benn is a writer; her latest book is Life Lessons: The Case for a National Education Service, published by Verso

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# WHYI

Find out how the NBA is not just developing young people's interest in basketball at school, but also helping to equip them with some important life skills...

#### **ABOUT US:**

NAME: MR LEIGHTON

JOB ROLE: PE teacher

**SCHOOL:** Kettlethorpe High School

**FAVOURITE FEATURE:** "The students' eagerness to learn and play has been fantastic to see"

TALKING ABOUT: NBAIN

THE CLASSROOM

A brilliant new experience
At Kettlethorpe High School, one
of our key priorities is to introduce our
students to new experiences that can
engage them in a range of creative ways –
and the 'NBA in the Classroom' programme
fits the bill perfectly.

Our students' passion for staying active and playing sports like basketball has helped them to buy into the many different aspects of the resources. They were intrigued to discover that there's so much beyond just the game of basketball itself – from the positive mental attitudes it can help encourage, to the wide range of careers it can potentially lead to, such as sports journalism, social media consultancy and physiotherapy.

There's something for everyone. Our students were particularly excited to discover that they could be a part of, and play an important role in the NBA, even if they weren't especially strong at sports. For example, some of the resources encourage them to engage their imaginations and apply their creativity skills to the task of designing and marketing a range of clothes and shoes. The exercises contained within the resources are all similarly inclusive, in that everyone can take part and enjoy them – whatever their particular skills and interests happen to be.

#### 66 It's given students a welcome boost.

In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, we've seen a significant portion of our young people struggle with their mental health. The various tasks they've undertaken as part of our 'NBA in the Classroom' activities have really helped them in a number of ways, such









CONTACT classroom.nba.com @NBAUK youtube.com/NBA



as learning about strategies that can help them cope more effectively with adversity."

#### 66 "It's given our students many more paths to explore.

The resources have really helped to bring their attention to other, different career options they might not have considered before. For many of our students, if they're not a footballer or a basketballer themselves, then they've often not seen what they can gain from engaging with sport. The resources make it clear just how many opportunities there are within the sport sector.

Even among those students who enjoy the sport, but can't realistically picture themselves as professional players, they might have previously seen themselves as one day able to coach others or referee games. Now, however, they're seeing all these different sides to it – the sport journalism side, the physiotherapy side, what goes into marketing it, all the social media considerations around teams and players. The resources have helped bring all of that to the forefront of their minds.

#### WILL IT WORK FOR YOUR SCHOOL?

- + The resources teach students about the variety of careers that exist both within the NBA and throughout the wider sport industry
- + The resources cover a diverse range of interests, and can engage even those students who aren't particularly 'sporty'
- + Detailed notes are included to help teachers, coaches and other users of the materials plan their lessons more effectively
- + Teachers can access the resources by signing up for the NBA in the Classroom programme, entirely free of change





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# THETS GUIDE TO ... LITERACY

High levels of literacy can boost students' outcomes across the board and help them cope with often demanding subject-specific vocabulary

- so what practical steps can staff and departments take to improve reading and writing standards?

#### IN THIS SECTION

#### 28 WHAT MAKES LITERACY INITIATIVES FAIL?

Between time-pressed teachers and complex subject demands, improving whole school literacy standards can be an uphill struggle – which is why it's best to tackle one area at a time, advises Alex Quigley...

#### 31 EVERY SCHOOL LIBRARY IS A TRUTH FACTORY

Alison Tarrant explains how, in a world awash with more information than ever, school libraries can continue to play a vital role in developing critical literacy

#### **32 THE ABC TEAM**

If poor spelling has become a cross-curricular sore point at your school, it might be time to borrow some tried and trusted techniques from your English teachers, suggests Zoe Enser...

#### 34 ALL SUBJECTS NEED LESSONS IN READING

English teachers and external programmes alone can only do so much to improve cross-curricular literacy – but get other departments on board, and the sky's the limit, discovers Molly Bolding...

#### **IN FIGURES:**

WHAT DO WE CURRENTLY KNOW ABOUT CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S ENGAGEMENT WITH, AND ENTHUSIASM FOR WRITING?

34.5%

of children and young people, when surveyed, say that they enjoy writing - the lowest level of writing enjoyment to be recorded by The National Literacy Trust since its first such survey question in 2010

92.4%

of children and young people's preferred form of writing is texting, direct messages

61.9%

of children and young people state that they write social media content at least once per month

Source: National Literacy Trust research carried out in 2021



#### SCHOOL LEAVERS LACK LITERACY

One in eight disadvantaged students don't own a single book, says Jonathan Douglas – so what are we going to do about it?

bit.ly/115special1

#### WHY WE USE TUTOR TIME FOR READING

Liz Alexander describes how her school sought to boost its students' vocabulary by making reading a core component of the daily timetable bit.ly/115special2

#### **WHAT IS KS3 LITERACY FOR?**

Jo Heathcote recalls her
determination to stop GCSE
English preparation from
encroaching on the spirit of discovery
and enquiry that ought to characterise
students' learning at KS3...
bit.ly/115special3



# What makes literacy initiatives fail?

Between time-pressed teachers and complex subject demands, improving whole school literacy standards can be an uphill struggle - which is why it's best to tackle one area at a time, advises Alex Quigley...

veryone recognises the crucial importance of literacy, but too few recognise that our best laid plans to develop whole school literacy typically fail.

Why does whole school literacy routinely fall down? The problem of how to support struggling readers and writers in secondary school is simply so complex and multifaceted, that it often proves too difficult to resolve

Any given student may have problems with spelling, handwriting, reading complex curriculum texts, extended writing, using academic vocabulary, and much more. Not only that, but such individual issues are also subtly interrelated, and not always easy to diagnose using our standard assessment tools.

And so it is that busy teachers will press on, while too many students lose motivation and struggle to access the curriculum.

#### Too little time

To help illustrate some of the causes behind whole school literacy struggles, let's meet Adam.

Throughout KS3, Adam has struggled to read the daily texts in most subjects – from worksheets in science, to Shakespeare passages in English. With effort, he would wade through academic texts, reading robotically word for word, before tripping over the trickiest terminology.

Given his slow, effortful reading, Adam doesn't have the time or mental bandwidth to write and think fluently. His ability to simply navigate the school curriculum is compromised by his inability to read and write at age-related expectations.

So where should we start with Adam? We may need to identify high quality interventions that improve his reading fluency. He may need each of his teachers to carefully calibrate the texts they share with his level of understanding – but in order to do so, those teachers will likely need

#### Disciplinary literacy

Many secondary teachers who have previously sat through whole school CPD sessions on literacy will complain that they haven't impacted on their practice. Too often, when it comes to literacy training, school leaders will resort to strategies like marking policies that centre on correct spelling and polished presentation to keep things simple for busy teachers.

Such strategies aren't necessarily flawed, but will do little to improve Adam's access the school curriculum, since a marking curriculum. It recognises that literacy skills are both general and subject-specific, emphasising the value of supporting teachers of every subject to teach students how to read, write and communicate effectively."

In practical terms, this helps reveal an important truth about literacy — that reading, writing, and speaking like a mathematician has some parallels to literacy development in history, but that there are also some important differences.

When reading a multistep word problem in maths, for example, it's necessary to re-read the question carefully, but you don't need to think about the question's author. In history, you'll similarly need to re-read the question, but also think hard about any authors and sources it cites, corroborate their claims,

#### "Whole school literacy should involve a concerted shrinking of the problem we're seeking to solve"

ample professional development on how to best utilise timely literacy strategies for students like Adam. The challenges soon

We're left asking why whole school literacy initiatives often struggle and fail students like Adam, but the answer is clear: the issues are too complex, and there's too little teacher time to address them. The only viable solutions are likely too generic and superficial to satisfy Adam's needs in every classroom.

policy won't teach him how to correct his spelling or write more accurately.

It's more helpful to make whole school literacy initiatives more subject-specific – an approach termed 'disciplinary literacy'. The Education Endowment Foundation guidance report, 'Improving Literacy in Secondary Schools' describes it thus:

"Disciplinary literacy is an approach to improving literacy across the



reliability and more.

When we adapt whole school literacy to 'disciplinary literacy' we broadly gain favour with subject teachers, but also make our approaches more precise, purposeful and better matched to the specifics of the subject curriculum.

#### Working on writing

We can reduce the likelihood of whole school literacy failing by focusing more deliberately on disciplinary literacy. This will likely win over busy teachers, since it more accurately addresses the issues of curriculum access they may be seeing in their classrooms. That said, we'll typically need to go one step further and shrink the 'disciplinary literacy' issue too.

Whole school literacy should involve a concerted shrinking of the problem we're seeking to solve. Let's consider some of the literacy issues students like Adam will routinely exhibit.

There will be weak writing organisation, with extended writing that isn't coherent or sustained.

Complex, subjectspecific vocabulary
will be regularly
misspelt.
Teachers
will see
Adam

produce persistently awkward sentence structures and demonstrate slow, dysfluent reading in the classroom. He will appear to have background knowledge gaps when reading informational texts.

From these, we can cluster an approach to writing and 'disciplinary literacy', thereby addressing the 'weak writing organisation', 'misspelling' and 'awkward sentence structures' issues. By focusing more narrowly on writing, we can offer a more pragmatic approach to disciplinary literacy that just might work.

Digging into the research evidence indicates that mastery of handwriting and spelling should come first, which will then produce a positive knock-on for students' planning skills and organisation of writing. From here, it's a good bet that we should then prioritise solving 'misspelling'.

High quality spelling instruction goes beyond spelling lists or weekly tests, but each subject can start with identifying common misspellings of high frequency

teachwire.net/secondary

subject vocabulary. We can single out particular strategies, such as teaching morphology (word components like 'photo-' and 'epi-' in science, for example) or getting students to compile an annual 'spelling inventory' of their own misspellings.

#### Narrow the challenge

Having initially shrunk our 'whole school literacy' improvement down to just spelling, we can then move on, a couple of school terms later, to writing brilliant sentences. Professional development at this stage could cohere around 'sentence combining', 'sentence expanding' and similar, so that pupils, across all subjects can learn how to master academic sentences.

We can, for example, attend to disciplinary literacy by focusing on 'so that' sentences in design technology, or how 'sentence signposts' can be used in history to help build an argument.

For students like Adam, there will be no quick fixes to long-standing literacy issues, but we can narrow the challenge down to improving his writing first of all, starting with his spelling. Each step thereafter will then prove to be meaningful and manageable - for Adam and his busy teachers alike thus giving the whole school literacy efforts at his school a chance to succeed, against all the odds.



#### **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

Alex Quigley is a former teacher, now National Content Manager at the Education Endowment Foundation, regular Teach Secondary columnist and author of the recently published Closing the Writing Gap (£16.99, Routledge); TS readers can claim a 20% discount when ordering a copy via routledge.pub/Closing-the-Writing-Gap by quoting the code CWG20

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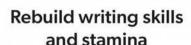


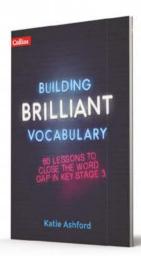


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# Every school library is a truth factory

**Alison Tarrant** explains how, in a world awash with more information than ever, school libraries can continue to play a vital role in developing critical literacy

he role of school library staff has always been to support students in retrieving important, relevant and credible learning content from any appropriate source – whether that be from reading books, newspapers, magazines or even research papers.

Over the years, the internet has been an added and, of course, 'faster' route to accessing information, providing access to relevant websites and numerous other sources on the topic we're researching. But while they may be relevant, they're not necessarily factually correct.

#### **Critical literacy**

The sheer volume of information on the internet grows exponentially by the day, but with that comes an increasingly high level of misinformation and disinformation.

The National Literacy
Trust's 2018 Commission on
Fake News and Critical
Literacy in Schools (see bit.ly/
ts115-SL1) found that only
2% of children and young
people in the UK possessed
the critical literacy skills
needed to tell whether a
news story was real or
fake. Children with
the poorest literacy
skills – such as boys

and those from disadvantaged backgrounds – were those least likely to be able to spot fake news.

The Commission further found that 53.5% of teachers believed the National Curriculum didn't equip children with the literacy skills required to identify fake news, while 35.2% felt the critical literacy skills that were taught didn't transfer to the real world.

Developing every child's digital literacy - including their ability to vet information presented to them and identify whether it's factually correct or false - is now a key educational priority. The School Library Association's courses and training materials ensure that all school library staff know how to educate students in spotting and combating misinformation, while minimising information overload.

have been steadily declining since lockdown began, with many struggling to access appropriate factual information.

Reading remains vital to every student's success in exams. For many, their vocabulary has become narrower in the past few years, which in turn impacts upon their ability to explain and articulate their response to a question – even if they know the answer.

Our online training courses, such as 'Building a whole school reading culture', along with our advice line and free teaching resources, are designed to develop school library staff's skills in broadening students' vocabulary and implementing 'reading for pleasure' policies in their schools. All of this can help boost students' exam outcomes.

#### Missing out

The pandemic has also negatively impacted children's mental health. Families and schools alike now possess a keen understanding of how important reading for pleasure is for students' education, but also for their wellbeing. Libraries are well placed to deliver this, yet many remain underfunded, and run by staff lacking appropriate training and support.

By under-utilising their library staff, or deploying them in unsuitable roles, schools are missing out on valuable teaching and learning opportunities and the potential to create attractive and engaging spaces that promote literacy across the wider school community.

To find out more about how we could help you and your school library thrive, visit our website and follow us on Twitter.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Alison Tarrant is CEO of the School
Library Association; for more
information, visit sla.org.uk or
follow @uksla

#### Steady decline

The pandemic has had a negative impact on children's reading

reading rates, which

## THE ABC TEAM

If poor spelling has become a cross-curricular sore point at your school, it might be time to borrow some tried and trusted techniques from your English teachers, suggests **Zoe Enser**...

earning about spelling patterns, tips on tackling common elements of our language, how to recall those knotty problems presented by our irregular words – all are core components of English lessons.

And yet, the use and spelling of complex terminology is a curriculum-wide issue. In certain subjects, the sheer volume of new terminology that must be learned can be overwhelming.

According to the noted English Professor Teresa Thonney, "Learning a science is like learning to speak a foreign language", with some studies showing that "Typical biology textbooks introduce students to even more new vocabulary than foreignlanguage textbooks."

To a greater or lesser extent, all subjects have a language of their own that pupils are required to speak and write. Thankfully, however, there's much that teachers can do to ensure pupils develop a firm grasp of subject-specific terminology — so from an English teacher's perspective, here are some strategies that might be worth pursuing.

Careful sequencing
Sequencing the
introduction of new words
is an important part of
curriculum design. There are
thousands of words we might
want pupils to learn to use

over the course of our subjects, so decide which are needed *now* and look at ways of clustering them, based on which words are most likely to open conceptual doors and allow pupils them to think, talk and write in the way your subject requires.

This will provide a firmer basis for future study than a scattergun approach. That's not to say you shouldn't use or teach any other words to which this might not apply, but deciding on key terms for different stages will put you and your pupils in greater control of the language you want them

**Etymology and** 

Explicitly teach the

morphology

structures) of the words you

can understand the origins,

components and patterns of

these initially

words, they'll

be more likely

to remember

them.

unfamiliar

want pupils to know. If pupils

etymology (origins) and

morphology (forms and

geocaching and geometry. Playing around with the components 'graph-' and '-graphy' can help introduce students to terms as diverse as 'biography', 'graphic' and 'grapheme'.

'grapheme'.

Knowing how such words initially entered our language can help secure their meanings in memory, along with how they're spelt. Once familiar with their patterns, students can then

more flexibly when encountering other new words at a later stage.

Employ mind tricks
To help students retain more complex spellings, it's worth deploying some tricks.



For instance, understanding that 'geo' relates to the Earth can put them on track to being able to write more confidently about

geology,

to acquire.

When introducing the word 'onomatopoeia', I'll break it down into its component parts. I tell students that the final section can be easily remembered when you think about how often onomatopoeia is used in 'poems', and have the 'poe' act as a prompt.

In other examples, I'll teach the irregular word 'rhythm' using the mnemonic 'Rhythm Has Your Two Hips Moving' accompanied by an appropriate wiggle. I'll overemphasise the 'c' in 'scissors'. All ways of ensuring that I don't get driven mad by repeatedly seeing incorrect spellings of such.

The Frayer model
The Frayer model can
be a useful approach
when exploring unfamiliar
vocabulary, for the way it
introduces examples and

non-examples. This is where you present a definition, an example of what the word *is*, examples of what it *isn't*, and then opportunities to see the word used in action.

This can be represented visually via a grid displayed on the board, or communicated verbally as part of your explanation and instruction. Pupils enjoy exploring their own examples of new words in action, and seeing where something doesn't work can be as powerful as seeing where it does - so long as time is taken to explore why incorrect examples don't work. We don't want to embed misconceptions that can later lead to inaccuracies.

Use it or lose it
Once words have been broken down and clearly defined, and students have had opportunities to

#### "If pupils can understand the origins, components and patterns of initially unfamiliar words, they'll be more likely to remember them"

hear and see them in action, the next and arguably most important stage is for students to practise using and spelling said words themselves.

Initial repetition of a word, followed by writing it correctly several times, is key to retaining it. Follow this with time spent practising use of the word in context, which will increase the chances of this particular information being stored in a student's long-term memory. We ultimately want students to fluently recall words until they become embedded and their use is effectively automated.

Create plenty of opportunities for retrieval of key vocabulary – especially soon after introducing it – via speaking, writing and reading activities. These don't have to involve a quiz, though low stakes quizzes can be highly effective tools when it comes to vocabulary acquisition, and pupils will often appreciate the quick feedback they receive from them.

Spaced retrieval and practice is also important, so circle back to words which have been taught earlier to ensure they're still being used correctly, and that pupils can recall them quickly..

Share the load
Something I've found really useful has been to not have it just be me that's spotting spelling errors, by passing some of that responsibility onto pupils. If I've taught them correctly and provided embedding opportunities, but pupils are still getting

words wrong, it might be down to them cutting corners.

Before marking a piece of work I'll remind students of any key spellings or vocabulary I want them to use correctly. This is typically tailored to each class, focusing on centralised key terms needed for the scheme while highlighting some common errors, and ends with me asking pupils to check their own or a partner's work for any errors relating to those key terms.

The responsibility is therefore on them to check and correct themselves. There is power to be had in being an active participant in this part of the process, as opposed to simply being a passive receiver. If they can be motivated by not wanting to make extra corrections to their work at the end, pupils will be less likely to make similar errors in future.

Learning new vocabulary is challenging. There really aren't any shortcuts or quick fixes, but as outlined above, there are ways of making the process more efficient so that we and our pupils are having to put in less effort later on. Implemented appropriately, these strategies should help ensure that our pupils can speak and write our language more accurately and fluently.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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

# All subjects need lessons IN READING

English teachers and external programmes alone can only do so much to improve cross-curricular literacy - but get other departments on board, and the sky's the limit, discovers Molly Bolding...

lacing a whole school focus on reading can benefit all departments and subjects. As well helping to build cross-curricular literacy, it can also develop a culture of comprehension - but when it comes to improving whole school literacy, where should you start?

The 'obvious' answer may be to look to a school's English department, or certain external providers and programmes - but relying solely on these can limit the scope and potential of whole school literacy improvement efforts.

#### No escape

To find out more, I spoke to Harriet Cornwell, a history teacher at Lodge Park Academy. Her school uses Accelerated Reader, but incorporates it into a broader whole-school offering that also includes six Classroom Reading Strategies and the school's 'DEAR' initiative ('Drop Everything And Read') which sees 30 minutes set aside for reading at the same time each day, irrespective of subject. The school additionally organises a wide variety of literacy-focused activities in each subject, fostering the view that reading is an essential practice, no matter which department you're in.

As a teacher whose subject relies on comprehension and source analysis, Harriet is acutely aware of literacy's significance in improving student performance across the board. "Fundamentally, I think every subject has got an element of literacy," she suggests. "We have a mantra, 'Every teacher is a teacher reading'. I think you can't really escape it."

Harriet was keen to explain to me the many ways her department has found to work literacy skills practice into students' historical learning - starting with making the department's reading materials much more accessible. Almost the entire history curriculum, from KS3 to Y13, has been 'bookletised' - a process that involves converting traditional textbooks and other heavy tomes into straightforward, student-size reads. Students, Harriet intuited, would learn more easily if

The information contained in the booklets is organised by lesson, rather than topic, with each important passage of text given plenty of surrounding space for annotations and highlights.

the materials they were given

were more streamlined.

#### Significant impact

Among the different strategies Harriet has tried, the most significant has been 'Teacher Reading', whereby teachers read aloud to students from a booklet or text, and then follow up with short-form comprehension exercises.

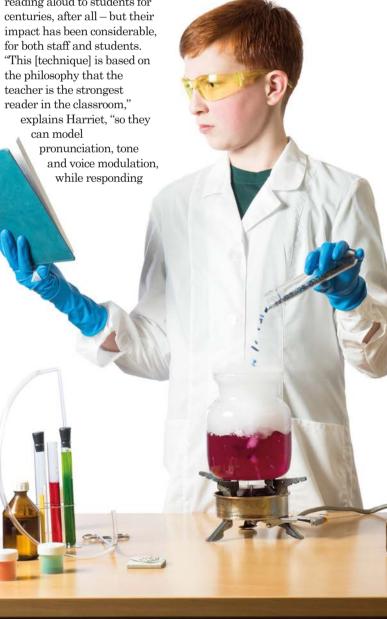
Two further notable strategies include 'Stop and Jot', which sees students summarise paragraphs

in their own words, and 'Everybody Writes', where every student makes the same annotation together, thus reinforcing good reading and writing habits.

These strategies may sound obvious - educators have been reading aloud to students for centuries, after all - but their impact has been considerable. for both staff and students. "This [technique] is based on the philosophy that the teacher is the strongest reader in the classroom,"

to punctuation or syntactic changes, and much more.'

Harriet goes on to describe how, as they read aloud to the class, the teacher "would introduce, through the text, 'pinch points' or a brand new



character. You might heighten your voice, lower it down, or maybe quicken through a particular passage," lending the practice an emotive and distinct performance aspect which can help to engage reluctant readers.

#### Shifting responsibility

This method of modelling good



practice means that students feel more confident reading aloud themselves, but it also encourages them to ask questions, make notes on spelling and pronunciation, and create their own summaries of key information as they listen.

Teacher Reading' has further helped Harriet to take a step back and give her students more opportunities to correct themselves independently, rather than simply relying on her. "I feel like one of the biggest things I've improved upon this year ... is when a student reads something wrong, and your automatic instinct is to read it correctly for them. Now, I say, 'Sorry, can I just check that with a say.' And then say

that with you? And then say the word they misread", thus giving them time to have another go or ask a question.

For Harriet, the school's cross-curricular literacy efforts have involved shifting responsibility

for improving reading skills away from the English department, and towards a more general understanding of the importance that

reading confidence plays across all areas of school life.

"Every subject has got an element of literacy ... Every teacher is a teacher reading"

This might seem overly restrictive to some teachers, but as Harriet points out, "It's not like a straitjacket; it's about adapting it to your subject". In practice, this might mean adapting literacy exercises to suit certain subject-specific vocabulary, as Harriet does with substantive knowledge in history.

Lifelong habit

Harriet will also deploy the school's 'DEAR' activity among the students each day, so

#### RECOMMENDED READING LIST

For more ideas and suggestions regarding literacy strategies that can make a difference, try the following...

 Reading Reconsidered: A Practical Guide to Rigorous Literacy Instruction

Colleen Driggs, Doug Lemov and Erica Woolway (Jossey-Bass, £25.99)

This tome by several renowned education writers takes a fresh look at literacy in all subjects

• Disciplinary Literacy and Explicit Vocabulary Teaching Kathrine Mortimore (John Catt, £15)

A guide stuffed with case studies for schools wanting to balance a knowledge-rich curriculum with a granular awareness of subject-specific vocabulary in every discipline

 The Writing Revolution: A Guide to Advancing Thinking Through Writing in All Subjects and Grade

Judith C. Hochman and Natalie Wexler (Jossey-Bass, £24.99) A book that asks the question, "How do I help my students to write better?" and provides useful answers for every subject

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

A general guide to improving boys' attainment with a chapter dedicated to whole school reading

as to demonstrate that reading is a lifelong habit. "It's important that students see us as readers, reading a whole variety of texts, but I do stick to history, mostly."

While her students are digging into their library books, she will use the time to read historical fiction, or texts by historians that can be later quoted in the students' booklets. That way, "They can see that I've actually read this book, I wrote this lesson, and that said book is actually quite useful to their learning."

Due to the disruptions of COVID, online schooling and cancelled exams, it's been difficult so far to measure the initial impact of these new strategies via grades or results. Anecdotally, at least, Lodge Park Academy's students seem more confident and involved.

"Teaching through text, and leading under the visualizer, gives a really good grasp of student engagement," Harriet notes. "For example, you can say, 'Right, students – turn to page one.' and see that everyone is on page one. You might then say, 'Right, we need to be looking at line one and we're going to read it.'

"When I'm reading, I'll often underline and add annotations [for them to copy]. You're all doing that together; it's like a secret world of learners, because you can actually see the engagement. When you ask them questions, and they're able to answer without thinking or checking the text, it gives you live feedback as to how well they're understanding the knowledge you're imparting."

One tangible outcome the school has seen is an increase in the uptake of GCSE history in particular. Other comments from students indicate, according to the school, that the literacy strategies described above have been "Really good for consistency and those home/school routines" across all year groups.



#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

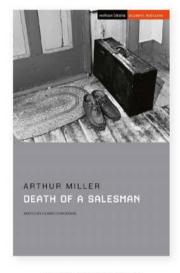
Molly Bolding (@themollybolding) is a freelance journalist, inclusion consultant and online educator. To find out more, head to mollybolding.com

#### TEACHING ARTHUR MILLER THIS YEAR?

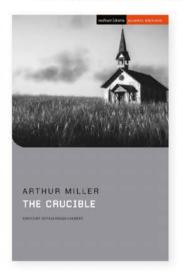
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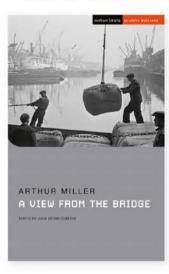
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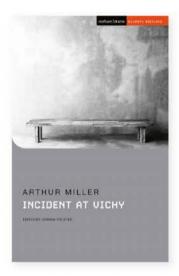
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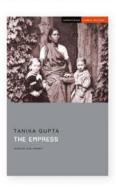
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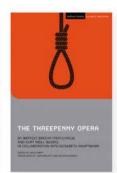
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# 岩**VOV** FACTOR

Help your students develop their levels of understanding and empathy, and broaden their worldview with the British Army's free LGBTQ+ Voices resource

Since its launch in 2021, LGBTQ+ Voices has been downloaded more than 2,000 times and was crowned 'Best Free Resource' in the Teach Secondary Awards. The resource consists of a lesson plan and supporting assembly with interactive tasks. Together, they aim to challenge perceptions of the LGBTQ+ community, and help KS3/4 students develop a better understanding of just how important diversity and inclusion are. LGBTQ+ Voices enables students to explore the contributions of LGBTQ+ Army personnel past and present, and features four fascinating case studies – including Deborah Penny, the first trans soldier in the British Army.

#### **USEFUL TOOLS**

For more details regarding the British Army's services and initiatives for educators, visit apply.army.mod.uk/base/lessons

Teachers can feel ill-equipped to answer students' questions around trans rights. LGBTQ+ Voices will help teachers provide students with the tools and information they'll need to become allies, and play a part in addressing the inequality and discrimination felt by the trans community even if they don't identify as LGBTQ+ themselves.

#### **TEACHER INPUT**

LGBTQ+ Voices was developed with input from teaching professionals and support from the Army LGBTQ+ network. Teachers have in turn fed back to us about how the resources provide powerful learning opportunities and are simple to use – particularly for non-specialists and those less confident in discussing LGBTQ+ topics.

#### **POSITIVE FEEDBACK**

According to Lizy Watson, lead practitioner for teaching and learning at Philip Morant School and College in Essex, "This resource challenges perceptions ... It's a powerful and engaging resource, without being overly complicated or time consuming. As a form tutor myself, I consider this a 'must use' resource."

#### **ENGAGING CONTENT**

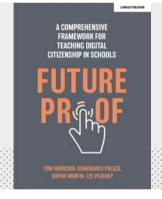
Major Jennifer Close of the British Army adds, "We developed LGBTQ+ Voices to help students understand the importance of inclusive spaces for LGBTQ+ people. Ethel Mary Smyth and Alan Turing are figures we all recognise -LGBTQ+ Voices addresses the selfless contributions of Ethel, Alan and every single LGBTQ+ service personnel.".

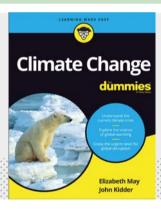


# Off the Shelves

Brilliant titles for you and your students to explore







#### No Excuses: Turning around one of Britain's toughest schools

(Alison Colwell, Biteback Publishing, £16.99))

Six months after a failing secondary school was closed by the DfE, its old building was back in use as the site of a new academy. Written mainly in the form of a diary, this is an account of how Colwell's headship changed the culture of a community's school such that five years later it was sending kids to Oxbridge. While a very moving story, it's a shame that its '10 lessons' for turning a school around are scattered over several chapters and not detailed in an appendix for easy reference. Structuring aside, No Excuses is essential reading for any aspiring school leader, authoritatively written by someone with a proven track record in a way that pulls no punches. The author's open letter to the Secretary of State in particular ought to be read by every newly appointed head. Reviewed by Terry Freedman

### Future Proof: A comprehensive Framework for Teaching Digital Citizenship in Schools

(Harrison, Polizzi, Murphin, Peachey, John Catt, £15)

Certain aspects of digital literacy and citizenship can be found in general education frameworks, but as the authors of Future Proof correctly point out, there's currently no formal recognised framework for digital citizenship education in England. The growing importance of digital citizenship isn't just evident from what we hear in the news, but also recent findings from Ofsted that students often aren't as digitally literate as teachers tend to assume. This comprehensive book makes an excellent attempt at giving teachers the information they'll need to remedy this, and includes an especially good section on learning expectations and school policies. From past experience, I'd venture that the authors are perhaps a little optimistic in their proposals for implementing a whole school version of such a framework, but otherwise there's lots here to help address the digital literacy issue.

Reviewed by Terry Freedman

#### Review of Climate Change **For Dummies**

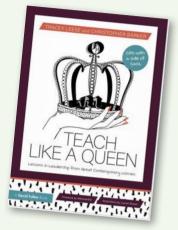
(Elizabeth May and John Kidder, Wiley, £17.99)

Arriving in the wake of the DfE's strategy for sustainability and climate change, and announcement of a new Natural History GCSE, this book comes across as a timely addition to the debate around climate change. As well as being bang up-to-date in the information it contains, the book presents a balanced account of the issues and evidence involved. It's a volume that lives up to its series' 'Learning made easy' tagline, successfully making complex processes and principles eminently understandable. For British readers, though, there's one obvious drawback to using the book for classroom inspiration in that there's a fairly heavy focus in places on US-centric systems and proposals. The authors also present some very bold and optimistic assessments of our collective renewable energy sources, when it still seems we're not quite there yet...

Reviewed by Terry Freedman

#### ON THE RADAR

What senior staff can learn from high profile women with track records of succeeding...

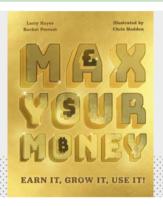


#### Teach Like a Oueen

(Tracey Leese and Christopher Barker, Taylor & Francis, £16.99)

This might not be the first book to examine the challenges and rewards of leadership from a female perspective, but it could lay claim to being among the most entertaining. Across seven chapters readers are presented with a series of different 'Queens' – each a well-known woman (with one notable exception) that you'll almost certainly recognise. After a mini introduction, each chapter outlines three distinct teaching and/or leadership lessons readers can take away from the relevant Queen's public profile and personal philosophy, before concluding with an anonymised true life case study illustrating how said lessons can be applied in practice.

How receptive you are to the book's advice will likely hinge on how you view Leese and Barker's cast of Queens (which they define early on as 'someone who rises by elevating others'). The inclusions of Michelle Obama, Jacinda Ardern and Malala Yousafzai are the least complicated, though their chapters offer interesting frames through which to view the achievements they're known for. More contentious are the choices of Kim Kardashian and especially RuPaul – but the authors' arguments are nothing if not interesting to read...





#### **Max Your Money**

(Larry Hayes and Rachel Provest, Welbeck Children's Books, £14.99)

In recent years there have been growing calls from various quarters for lessons in finance to be taught from an early age. Well, here's a book aimed at older children and early teens that sets out to do precisely that with the aid of friendly, approachable prose and an array of appealing illustrations. Divided into three parts ('Earn it', 'Grow it' and 'Use it'), Max Your Money takes readers on a whistlestop tour of economic terms and concepts, touching on matters relating to employment (including a very pointed comparison between the average salaries of teachers versus Premiership footballers), savings and investments, how to avoid being a victim of fraud and the virtues of charitable giving. All told, it's a worthy and largely successful attempt at explaining to children how they can be savvy, yet principled in their use of money both now and in future.

#### **Unpacking School Lunch**

(Marcus Weaver-Hightower, Palgrave Macmillan, £17.99)

How much is there to say about the humble school lunch? Well, judging by this far-reaching treatment of the topic by a Virginia-based academic that weaves together social history, political analysis and astute polemic, rather a lot. Not for nothing is the book's subtitle 'Understanding the hidden politics of school food' - the US politics in question being an often extraordinary parade of battles against unbending ideologies and questionable lobbying by vested interests, making for a compelling read. For British readers, however, there's the added attraction of a chapter dedicated to school food reforms in England, which provides an interesting perspective on Jamie Oliver's campaigning around school meals in the mid 2000s, the academies revolution and, in a timely coda at the end, the public and political response to Marcus Rashford's free school meals activism during the pandemic.

# Meet the author PROFESSOR MARCUS B. WEAVER-HIGHTOWER

### What orginally inspired you to write a book on the politics of school meals?

I've had the topic, and ultimately this book on my mind for about 15 years. My interest is partly personal, having had a lot of interesting school cafeteria experiences growing up, be it the shame of what some brought in for lunch, or disgust at what was sometimes served. I also see it as one of the most complex policy topics there is. School Food can be covered from so many different angles, from health and economics to government policy. It almost seems like everybody's got some stake in happens with school dinners.

### Are there any groups in particular that you're hoping to reach with the book?

When writing it, I was mainly thinking about educators, who I think will benefit from understanding more about how 'school food' actually comes about. In some ways, it's like this magical process that takes place in the cafeteria, but there all these many different processes going into it.

I've also found that when I tell people I'm working on a book about school food, they'll often have all these stories to tell about wonderful dinner ladies they knew at their school, or the terrible dish they always dreaded seeing on the menu. I think a lot of people are really interested in the topic, or at least have a very personal connection to it.

# In the book, you posit that the UK has traditionally been ahead of the US when it comes to the general direction of school food policies. Do you still see that as being the case now?

In some ways, COVID brought the two countries closer together – though I don't think the UK did quite as much in terms of expanding the eligibility of free school meals. Over the last couple of years here in the US, we basically made it so that any school district could serve meals completely free to anybody.

Had the Biden administration not been elected, I think you would have seen the continuation of Trump-era policies, which were essentially 'We're going to give you free school meals for as short a time as possible, then get them out of your hands as soon as we can.' From what I've seen, I think that's the road the UK has gone down, albeit with Boris Johnson's repeated U-turns because of Marcus Rashford's campaigning.

# What do we mean by 'ETHICAL LEADERSHIP'?

Many school leaders want to demonstrate kindness and empathy - but as **Armando Di-Finizio** observes, what really matters is being consistent in your ethical judgements, and examining what your ethics actually are...

o my mind, leadership isn't about being kind. It's about being ethical in your decision making and day-to-day actions.

By nature, I'm someone who has always wanted people to like me. Some might call that a failing, especially in leaders. If you're always making decisions based on whether those at the receiving end will continue to like you or not, you won't always make the correct choices.

I quickly learned that early on in my teaching career. I wasn't there to make my students like me, but to help them to learn whatever that day's topic was, in as effective and engaging a way as possible.

I could have interpreted 'effective' as having them sit them in rows participating in rote learning, while 'engaging' them through threats of detentions and letters home to parents if they lifted their heads from their books. A few years earlier, as a pupil in Scotland, many of my own lessons had been just like this, only with the threat of the 'taws' (leather belt) across the hand to keep me engaged.

That general approach didn't feel right to me as a pupil, nor as a new teacher. And so my students took advantage of me during those

first few years as I became very inconsistent, lurching from being an authoritarian one minute to trying to be their best friend the next.

It took a year or two to finally find the right balance, which involved applying ethical principles – not that I realised this at the time. Concepts such as fairness, equality, rights and responsibilities, empathy and compassion began to inform my lessons, underpinning all that I did. The process took a while, and at times of stress these virtues would often quickly vanish, but the more consistent I became, the more my lessons began to improve.

on capability procedures was never something I enjoyed, so I'd put it off for as long as possible. I'd also avoid 'difficult' formal conversations regarding concerns I had about certain colleagues. It was far easier to gossip and moan about such situations to my senior team, rather than take concrete action.

In schools, there will typically be a set of criteria that specifies our expectations for staff and students. Failure to meet these then result in capability or disciplinary procedures for teachers and sanctions for students, and

policies that protect us, but I'd also argue that they should be used as a *reference*, and only when required. The ethics underpinning our actions should always be considered first. This form of 'ethical leadership' will allow all those 'grey area' mitigating circumstances to be fully examined, and prevent us from moving someone up the disciplinary ladder too quickly (or, indeed, too slowly).

In practice, I'd define ethical leadership as encompassing the following...

## 1. Consciousness and curiosity

When asked what principle should underpin ethical leadership in schools, a common response will be something akin to 'Putting students first'. However, this becomes more complex when we try to distinguish between actions that are utilitarian (i.e. resulting in the greatest good or value for the greatest number), and those that consider the kind of individual rights utilitarian actions tend to

For example, I've worked with many children in deprived schools who had multiple adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), and who would tend to disrupt lessons more often than children brought up in more stable backgrounds.

## "Effective ethical leaders will always model the behaviours they want to see in their staff"

## Hiding behind the rulebook

Later, as a headteacher, I again struggled at first with my natural tendency to want people to like me. This proved especially difficult when faced with a failing school, where some staff were consistently failing to manage their classes or certain areas of responsibility, even after multiple attempts at supporting them.

Placing a member of staff

potential expulsion in the most extreme cases.

It's commonly assumed that these outwardly black and white policies, procedures and expectations make it easier for teachers and leaders to enforce standards and implement disciplinary measures fairly and consistently. But do they give due consideration to the interests of those being held to account?

I accept that today's litigious culture necessitates the need for school-wide

Following the 'greater good' argument to the letter would condemn these children to a constant churn of sanctions, potentially leading to a cycle of disengagement and ultimately exclusion.

An ethical leadership approach, on the other hand, would involve encouraging staff to look at each child as an individual, and ask questions such as, "What are we doing to support this child across the school?" We can sometimes pour too much of our limited resource into one child, so it's vital that this balancing act is constantly reexamined.

In terms of staff management, the 'greater good' for the children would be to remove all failing teachers straight away. We obviously don't do this, often due to those aforementioned policies and procedures — but we can still strike an effective balance and ask the right kind of questions.

Has this teacher received any professional development, or undergone any performance reviews within the past few years? What have *I* personally done to support this colleague? Do I know this colleague well enough? Are there any external mitigating factors that might be affecting their performance?

Ethical leadership thus involves interrogating the morality of your own actions, and demonstrating the curiosity needed to find alternative solutions. Before seizing on the 'greater good' option, ask questions that will take into account the individual and force you to be honest with yourself, your own abilities and actions.

### 2. Modelling

To what extent is the support you offer proactive? At my school, we try to model the behaviours we want to see. For example, we

expect pupils to be punctual, so are our teachers arriving on time for every lesson? We don't want pupils using phones in class, so all staff will ignore their phones when they buzz in their pockets.

Effective ethical leaders will always model the behaviours they want to see in their staff – whether it's timely lesson changeovers, picking up litter, remaining calm in a crisis, not shouting or consistent use of professional language.

## 3. Transparent principles

We have a responsibility to ensure our students leave us with a passport for life. Working alongside parents, we want to instil in them the confidence, aspirations and general wherewithal to use that passport effectively and go on to flourish.

The ethical leader will be careful to explore their own values and principles, and question whether they're putting students' needs first. Below are two key principles to which our school subscribes, and the thought processes that my staff and I followed when forming them:

• We want our school to be community focused, within an environment that young people themselves want to attend daily – not because they're forced to by law, but because the school belongs to them too, and plays a meaningful part in

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their

lives. We believe in developing and maintaining a sense of belonging.

• We want to address the factors that put young people off attending. Initially, we discussed the tension between staff and students when a student did something wrong, or was asked to do something they didn't particularly want to do. Following further discussion, we acknowledged that young people are still developing and will therefore make mistakes, and that it's important we accept that fact while helping them through this period of their lives.

The process of exploring and forming values such as these must be carried out in partnership with staff. Ethical leadership in any institution or organisation requires shared values developed collaboratively with those you lead, which will then be regularly revisited, reviewed and evaluated.

Leadership isn't simply about being kind, since being kind can easily conceal a false virtuosity. Ethical leadership enables leaders to be genuinely kind when appropriate. It carries with it all the values and principles that will support, nurture and guide those we lead and manage — in an honest way, which won't leave those you lead guessing as to your intentions, or struggling to interpret your actions. Ethical Leadership works!



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Armando Di-Finizio has taught at seven schools in deprived areas of London, Bristol and Cardiff, and successfully led three schools from being among the lowest performing in the country to achieving outcomes well above expectations; his new book, A Head Full of Ethos: A holistic guide to developing and sustaining a positive school culture, is available now (£18.99. Crown House Publishing)

# Is it actually a 'BOY' THING?

**Sam Strickland** highlights some misconceptions, and some strategies that can make a genuine difference, when addressing challenging behaviour among boys

very summer, under ordinary circumstances, school exam results are published. And every summer, many headteachers and senior teams will scratch their heads at the outcomes of boys.

For this, we can thank a persistent attainment and progress gap between the performance of boys versus girls, especially at GCSE, which sees girls tending to outstrip their male counterparts. I've worked in schools where boys' performance and the behaviour of boys becomes *the* focus.

In response, a myriad silver bullets are cited as the Holy Grail that will unlock the Pandora's Box that is boys. There's often a feeling that if only the behaviour of boys could be fixed in KS3, where the underlying historic issues surely lurk, then KS4 will fix itself.

#### **Five fallacies**

Sadly, there are endless misconceptions surrounding boys and how they should be handled, dealt with and encouraged to behave. Some of the key and common misconceptions that I regularly see include:

## 1: Boys should be treated differently

This is a dangerous misconception, and as misplaced as stating that Pupil Premium pupils should be questioned first in lessons, or have their books marked first. If we treat boys differently, many unintended consequences will manifest as a result.

## 2: Boys respond to competition

This may be true of some boys, in the same way that it may be true of some pupils. However, not all boys like competition. If you make everything a competition to inspire boys to behave better and achieve more, then you should be extremely mindful of those boys who lack confidence and selfesteem, and have an inbuilt fear of failure. Competition

#### 4: Try to be their friend

I've seen this approach used first-hand, whereby teachers will try and get to know key pupils and befriend them, in order to better understand how they think or how they 'tick'. There's a huge danger when you try to befriend pupils, in that the line between teacher and pupil can become blurred and confused, ultimately doing more harm than good. I would not, however, dispute the value of developing professional teacher-pupil relationships that are built on a trust in you and your professionalism to serve as the teacher.

consider the interplay between the holistic whole-class approaches that we employ, and the bespoke, personalised support that we offer our pupils.

When any teacher assumes a new class, it's critically important that they plan out the routines for learning that they want to employ. This actually needs as much time and thought as your subject knowledge.

You should give careful consideration as to how you want pupils to enter your classroom, how you want them to transition from one aspect of your lesson to the next, how you want lesson resources to be distributed, the entry and exit routines you employ, when you want your class to be silent and when you want them to speak up.

Routines, once they've become habitual, will allow you and your pupils to think more freely, enable lessons to be more creative and imaginative, and give you greater confidence as a teacher to take more risks.

### "For every boy that enjoys sport and loves a good sporting analogy, there will be one that doesn't"

can simply serve as a vehicle to reinforce a sense of imposter syndrome in young boys.

## **3:** Use sporting references to engage boys

For every boy that enjoys sport and loves a good sporting analogy, there will be one that doesn't. Adopting this sort of approach is likely to be divisive and put boys off from engaging with you. Educationally, this is also serves to restrict the cultural diet they're exposed to, and should therefore only be used sparingly and with caution.

## 5: Pace carefully and use different learning styles

These approaches have been largely debunked in recent years, with plenty of evidence to suggest that both actually work to shy pupils, especially boys, away from learning. We need to remember that learning is hard, that learning is not linear, and that the content should be the engager.

#### Forward planning

If we are to truly engage boys – as per any subgroup of pupils in our classes – then we must carefully

#### **Clear expectations**

Underpinning these considerations should be a clear set of expectations for your class to live up to. I would argue that you should employ no more than three expectations, while ensuring that these are highly visible and on display.



cheapened. Boys, girls, all pupils need to know that they can achieve and that they can succeed, which will in turn support their self-esteem and self-belief.

You can build this by purposefully employing carefully crafted retrieval activities into lessons to build pupil confidence. Direct instruction techniques, modelling and scaffolding are also key.

It's important that you continuously check for understanding by paying specific attention to your questioning techniques – not only to ensure that all pupils understand, but also that they know the key disciplinary knowledge that you want them to have learnt. You can then celebrate, by employing the use of proportionate praise to reaffirm the successes of your pupils.

Boys, as with all pupils, respond best to teachers who have lessons that are well structured, who are consistent in their approach to behaviour, and who support their pupils to learn. They will also respond well to teachers who care and seek to build positive relationships. Pupils won't respond to tricks, nor gimmicks – at least not for any length of time.

Whilst we shouldn't dismiss the relevancy of peer pressure, the influence of social media and the need to conform, we also shouldn't lose sight of what makes for effective teaching. If that happens, then we do our pupils a disservice.



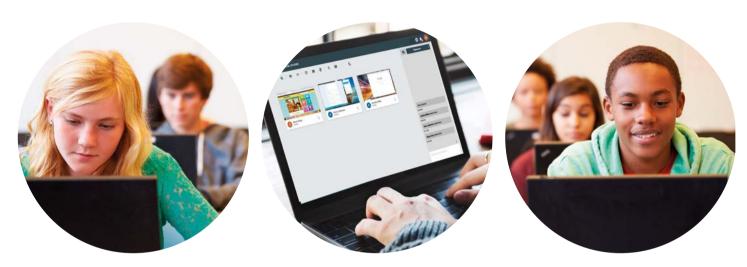
#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Sam Strickland is the principal of a large all-through school, having previously been a head of history, assistant headteacher and associate principal

For more strategies and approaches to support positive behaviour, read Sam's new book, The Behaviour Manual - An Educators Guidebook (£15, John Catt Educational)



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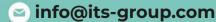


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Colin Dean, Network Manager Ferndown Upper School, Dorset, UK

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# Digital upskilling

**Victoria Temple** highlights how the right kind of training can help schools rapidly build a successful and sustainable form of computer science provision

necessity for all of us in our work and personal lives, it's essential that new teachers be given the skills to deliver computing in schools.

When maths teacher Tim Ash was asked to teach computing for the first time, like many non-specialists, he was unsure where to start. "Maths is a well-established subject, but computing is evolving all the time and much of it was new to me," he tells me. "My headteacher asked me to investigate what CPD and support was available to make the switch and develop our computing provision."

That was two years ago. Today, Tim teaches computing up to GCSE, alongside maths, at Rugby Free School in Rugby. "I'm really enjoying the combination of skills and experience maths and computing gives me," he says. "It's made my teaching role much richer."

#### **Building resilience**

Tim's experience as a non-specialist is typical of many new computing teachers, says Steve Clarke, programme manager at the National Centre for Computing Education (NCCE), which is supporting schools to upskill their teachers and build resilient computing departments. "While maths and computing have a natural affiliation, we see



teachers from an array of specialisms wanting to expand their skills and teach computing, be it maths, music, PE or geography."

Funded by the DfE, the NCCE provides training and support to teachers and schools in England via a network of 34
Computing Hubs. With bursary funding of £1,800 currently available until the end of July 2022 to enable teachers to access NCCE training, now is the ideal time to develop computing within your teaching team.

As Tim recalls, "I undertook the NCCE's Computer Science Accelerator programme to improve my subject knowledge and get ideas for how to deliver the content in a classroom. The sessions were excellent, and the content was delivered in an accessible way — especially as I didn't have much prior knowledge of computer science."

#### **Growing demand**

With many schools relying on just one or two teachers

to deliver their computing curriculum, staff absence and turnover can have a major impact. Providing training to staff who may not have previously considered teaching computing as a second subject can greatly expand your computing capacity and resilience.

"The last couple of academic years have been challenging, but have also shown the value of computing and digital skills, and how demand for these skills will continue to grow," remarks Steve Clarke. "If you're planning your September 2022 timetables, now would be the perfect opportunity to match new teachers with the CSA programme."

The NCCE is run by BCS, the Chartered Institute for IT, STEM Learning and the Raspberry Pi Foundation, and offers residential, short and intensive courses in response to teacher demand. Its residential and intensive CPD options include two- or three-day packages focused around the CSA programme.

The NCCE also offers

broader whole school computing support. This year has seen the launch of its Computing Quality Framework (CQF) – an evaluation framework that enables schools to review their progress in developing all aspects of their computing curriculum. Further support is additionally available from NCCE Subject Matter Experts, based at 34 regional Computing Hubs across England,

each with their own bespoke School Engagement Programme.

These Computing Hubs work with eligible schools to help develop action plans that can be especially useful for schools that don't currently offer computer science GCSE, and those at the early stages of developing their computing provision, with bursary funding available.

"Schools and students are increasingly experiencing how exciting and creative computing can be," Steve concludes. "Upskilling teachers is the first step on a school's journey to deliver this."



#### **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

Victoria Temple is a lecturer in communications and media at the University of Gloucestershire and press and community engagement officer for the NCCE; find out more about the CSA programme at teachcomputing.org/cs-accelerator. Further details about the NCCE can be found at computingeducation. orguk or by following @WeAreComputing

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# "I was answering work calls from my hospital bed"

An anonymous contributor shares their experiences of the toll teaching has exacted upon both their physical and mental health...

eaching tends to attract allround 'nice' people with hearts the size of the Moon, as well as those, like me, with a saviour complex. Both groups will often compete to say 'Yes please!' to official requests, always go the extra mile and do their best to ensure everyone around them is safe and cared for.

Their reward? A toxic environment and mediocre pay. If you're a former teacher who left the profession before the pandemic, well done for getting out before catastrophe struck. If you're still a teacher now, I can only suggest for the sake of your future sanity, just get out.

#### **HIGH RISK**

In September 2021 I was starting at a new school, having accepted a big promotion to head of department after just two years of teaching. That period of my career, transformed as it was by the experiences of COVID, is mostly one big blur to me now. I'm still not sure how any of us made it through.

Many of us were considered 'high risk' individuals, but the government seemed to scarcely care. Even our own bosses didn't seem to care, yet we continued to push through tirelessly, until one by one we were falling victim to burnout or worse.

Some of us – the lucky ones – left their classrooms, never to return, having found new jobs elsewhere. Those of us who stayed were soon having to step up our game significantly. For months on end, we'd regularly perform the jobs of three to four people without complaint, purely

out of love for our students and our profession. No one was asking the most important question of all - 'For how long can we continue like this?

#### 'THE NEW NORMAL'

My working week rapidly expanded during this time from 40-45 hours to 50. No one batted an eyelid. This was 'the new normal'. We had to accept it.

I've so far contracted COVID three times in just this academic year, with devastating effects for my health that resulted in four hospital stays between January and March 2022. Things got to the stage where I'd be sending cover lessons from the A&E ward at 5am and answering work calls from my hospital bed. My bosses didn't care if I was ill. All they wanted was for work to be sent, meetings to be arranged and paperwork to be completed.

Upon returning to the school, I was once again asked to provide cover for colleagues, while also carrying out extra lunch duties and attending additional meetings each day until 5pm. It was around this time that I received a diagnosis of irritable bowel syndrome, brought about by workrelated stress. My GP wrote to my employer, recommending that my working hours be reduced, and that I be allowed to go home

after lessons instead of 'clocking out' at 5pm.

My employer chose to ignore those recommendations and instead continued to add yet more things to my plate, including the organisation and running of this year's speaking exams, but without any of the assistance from colleagues that this stressful and timeconsuming process requires.

#### REPEATING THE CYCLE

My mind and body could barely take any more, which I believe was at least partly responsible for a lifethreatening miscarriage I experienced soon after the events described above.

Since then, insomnia, panic attacks and anxiety have become part of my daily routine. I can hardly eat most days, due to having too much work to do during my 30-minute lunch break. Arriving home in the evenings, I'll drink myself to sleep before repeating the cycle all over again.

I don't feel like myself any more. Some mornings, while riding my bike to school, I catch myself wishing that a van would run into me. If you get to a point where being dead seems more

appealing than going into work even just for a split second – then something is deeply wrong.

The nature of my experiences might be different, but I know that many teachers feel as I do, and that they need support from those closest to them right now. In a world where the system has failed us, I find myself desperately hoping that our friends and family don't fail us too.

#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

The author is a secondary school teacher and head of department based in London

# Everything feeds into EVERYTHING ELSE

It's possible to treat issues in isolation, but genuine school improvement becomes much more likely when you adopt a holistic approach, says Rebecca Leek...

n education, we're quite good at coming up with ambitious, allencompassing canned phrases. When facilitating a leaders' strategy meeting recently, I heard many examples bouncing around the room - High expectations'; 'no excuses'; 'opportunities for all'; 'no child left behind'...

However, there was one phrase that really stood out: Every child matters'.

The emergence of that phrase originally marked a historic policy shift in this country's approach to safeguarding. Assorted policies and papers may have since superseded what it originally referred to, but it persists as a tagline we still hear frequently, and rightly so. Every child does matter, but I'd take this further.

A phrase you'll often hear me use is 'Everyone and everything'. This is my starting point when explaining what I see as a genuinely holistic approach to school improvement, and how crucial it is to ensure that schools are dynamically improving all the time.

#### Recognise the whole

The word 'holistic' is one weighed down with lots of connotations. When I asked a few colleagues what images the word conjured up for them, the replies variously included 'incense', 'salon', and 'treatments'.

Yet the concept of holistics is one that's played a serious role in social and medical sciences throughout history,

and more recently featured in systems theory, ecology and permaculture. It asks us to recognise the whole, the constituent parts that make up that whole, and the often complex interplay between them.

We're all becoming better at doing this, thanks in part to increased knowledge around mental wellbeing. the links between physical and mental health, and how you can't have one without the other.

Maslow's hierarchy of needs is, in a sense, a holistic model - one which recognises that in order to unleash a learner's potential, that child will need to be supported in other essential ways. It's not enough to give a scared child a pencil and simply tell them to learn.

#### Stepping back

In the context of a busy classroom, 'taking a holistic approach' is, put simply, a reminder for us to step back and look at those things we perhaps don't pay enough attention to. Midway through yet another frantic week, we'll be largely focused on delivering lessons and getting through the hour ahead of us. Taking the time

to notice and reflect on the patterns around us is usually something we have to force ourselves to do.

One of my favourite system thinkers, Frijtof Capra, once observed that "The understanding of life begins with the understanding of patterns." By scanning some of the wider forces at play in our professional lives, noting the areas where different groups intersect and considering the differences between those groups can prompt some important insights, and trigger small changes that ultimately deliver valuable rewards.

But what does this look like in practice? Here are five ways in which you can start practising a holistic approach.

#### 1. Classroom layout

The layout of the classroom itself is a pattern that has a tangible impact on learning. We can start with a seating plan that we go on to tweak over time - but what would happen if you were to completely rearrange the seating to create more space, or provide opportunities for different student groupings?

Post-COVID, we're all now veterans at shuffling tables into rows, so this might not seem



particularly novel. Yet sometimes, even just changing the distance between rows, or adjusting how far desks are from windows can have a measurable impact.

Where is the teacher's desk positioned in relation to the class, and what's on it? Assorted clutter, books, neat piles, healthy food? These are all environmental details that your students will see and react to.

#### 2. Interior infrastructure

There may seem little point in thinking about more significant classroom alterations, but it's always worth raising any concerns or queries. It might take a year or two - perhaps once your school's next desk order or technology review is due – but there won't be any change at all unless you prompt it.

Does the placing of certain cupboards facilitate learning or disrupt it? Are the blinds

adequate, and what happens to them when the windows are open? Be mindful of problems and potential solutions that no one else has previously identified.

#### 3. Teaching assistants

As a former SENCo, I remember how much I valued the TAs that provided care and support for our students, but also how they could be sadly somewhat neglected by teaching colleagues.

yourself to notice such details and make changes if needed.

#### 4. You

When we say 'everyone matters', that includes yourself. I began the year by talking to staff in our trust about the importance of wellbeing and was very straight with them. I explained that fostering wellbeing isn't dependent on employers providing comprehensive 'life support', the impact was significant. I resolved that the last five minutes of each day would now be spent clearing and resetting my desk. Subsequently, I worked faster during PPA time, could provide students with what they needed more quickly, and was soon putting objects and books on display that made for positive additions to the learning environment. Overall, I just felt calmer.

#### 5. Valuing diversity

'Valuing diversity' is a key permaculture principle, stemming from an awareness that ecosystems are always stronger when they contain variety. When did you last visit the classrooms of a different department? A maths teacher will probably find that their school's art studio functions very differently from what they're used to, but it's still worth taking a look, if only to see what works for them. Every teacher has their own way of working, which is why I've yet to visit a new classroom without gleaning something useful from it.

There's also the possibility that you notice something your colleagues haven't seen themselves. Maybe a board partially covering a window that's only there because someone absent-mindedly left it there a decade ago.

If the eyes and brains of staff at your school are all busy observing, reflecting, seeking out what works and what might work better, then a school can only improve over time, holistically.

### "When did you last visit the classrooms of a different department?"

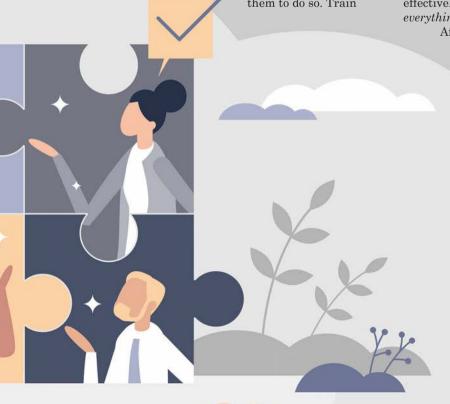
Consider what you can do to help your TAs beyond the standard routines that should be in place already, such as sharing advance information about upcoming lessons and key students. If they're often carrying equipment between rooms, could you set aside some dedicated storage space? If they roam during lessons, check that there's enough

space between desks for them to do so. Train

but is actually a two-way process which starts with a commitment that has to come from each individual.

In my case, I'm highly sensitive to the space around me, but it took me a while to realise this when I first started teaching. A messy desk with piles of clutter would cause me stress, which in turn meant I missed opportunities to use classroom space effectively – because everything matters.

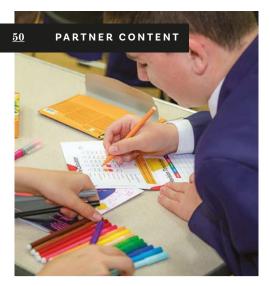
> After taking the decision to change my habits,





THE AUTHOR

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







#### **ASK THE EXPERT**

# "Challenges remain"

Natalie Craig-Wood from Positively You shares her thoughts on students' learning and revision, following a time of unprecedented change and uncertainty

## How well are schools recovering from COVID-19?

As recently as January this year, the government reported that school leaders had highlighted learning gaps in key areas such as numeracy, writing and social skills. There are signs of students making a strong recovery, but challenges remain, for both schools and students. This could explain Ofsted's accelerated inspection cycle, as alluded to in its recently published five-year strategy.

# What are the long-term repercussions of the disruption caused by the pandemic?

Aside from the tangible concerns, such as exam results and higher levels of student and teacher absences, it's important to remember that human beings are creatures of habit. The national lockdowns and missed school days presented a break in routine for students.

It's this routine, particularly in regards to learning and studying, that is key to exam success and continuing personal and professional development.

# Can you elaborate on how you're helping students recover from this break in learning?

Some of our most popular workshops fall under the umbrella of 'accelerated learning', which reflects the need for schools to play catch-up after the pandemic.

We use techniques such as mind mapping to help students visualise and retain information, and introduce study methods like dual coding, interleaving and spaced repetition to promote the idea that learning and revision can be a fun and relaxed activity, rather than a chore that needs to be done.



### EXPERT PROFILE

NAME:
Natalie Craig-Wood
JOB TITLE:
Workshop presenter
AREA OF EXPERTISE:
Personal
development and
accelerated learning
BEST PART
OF MY JOB:
Engaging with
students of all
abilities and from all
backgrounds

## How do you determine whether your workshops have had a positive impact?

We know from our many years of experience in the education sector that information is absorbed and retained better when it's taught within a fun, interactive environment. This is something we've worked hard to create when delivering our workshops.

We also offer schools the opportunity to complete pre- and post-workshop questionnaires, which have thus far indicated that the skills and ideas we teach really do make a difference.

# What differentiates yourselves from other educational workshop providers operating within this market?

We've been delivering workshops for over 20 years. During that time, we've helped over 2.5 million students in more than 7,000 schools discover tried and tested techniques to improve their motivation to learn, revise and succeed with exams. Our partnership with BIC, as well as our unrivalled range of resources means we can offer much more value than other workshop providers. In addition, our postworkshop surveys allow us to monitor feedback and constantly improve our service.

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# Beat that exam stress

Simon Hay presents some useful revision tips and advice that teachers can share with students before the next round of exams...

ll secondary teachers will be aware that exam seasons have been particularly challenging in recent years.

The periods are always a stressful time for students, of course – and indeed teachers - but following two years of pandemic disruption that saw normal service suspended, 2022 marked the first time that GCSE and A level students will have sat (almost) normal exams since taking their primary SATs.

The best way of ensuring full potential is to devise a good revision strategy - one that helps them absorb and remember all that they've been taught, and then successfully deploy that stored knowledge on the day itself.

Here, then, are some ideas for effective revision techniques and exam day coping strategies that you can share with your students:

Ploughing through past

rarely a useful revision

papers in isolation is

you're ready, attempt the question without referring to your notes, and then mark your answer from the answer scheme. This will help you see where any gaps are and give you pointers for how to improve.

You can't teach something until you know it well yourself. When you finish learning some content, find someone else to teach it to – maybe a friend, your parents or other members of your family. If you're unable to get them to understand it, chances are you probably don't yet know it well enough yourself.

These force you to distil what you need to know into bite-sized chunks. There are various technological options you can use in addition to traditional physical cards, but whichever approach you

choose, it's the task of thinking how to condense the information and actually writing it down that are the most important parts of the process.

#### 4. Spread your notes.

Have your revision notes everywhere! To help you memorise specific quotes or formulae, for example, try noting them down on multiple Post-it notes and sticking them around the house.

Check what time your exam starts and where you need to be. Have your bag packed and ready to go, think about what equipment you'll need for the exam and make sure it's all there. This will make your morning routine less of a rush and help to calm you, so that you can (hopefully) get a good night's sleep!

Set your alarm early enough to give you time to get ready and eat a good breakfast – vou don't want to be sitting in the

your breathing, listening to your favourite music or going for a walk, find a relaxation technique that works for you. Being calm as you approach each exam will be vital in ensuring that you perform at your best on the day.

However hard you revise for a subject, there will often be that one question that crops up and throws you. Should this happen, don't panic – if you've read the question through a few times and it's still really stumping you, simply leave it and move on to the next one.

If you finish the exam early, then check them again. There's nothing more frustrating than missing an easy fix that could gain you a few more marks on the day. Revisiting your answers can help to avoid this.



#### Simon Hay is co-founder and CEO at the school engagement platform, Firefly - readers can ownload a short student revision guide produced by Firefly via bit.ly/ts115-r1



# REASONS TO TRY... Smart Revise

Find out more about this course companion that redefines the meaning of revision...

### 3 B

#### 30 SECOND BRIEFING

Smart Revise supports computer science students and teachers, helping to raise attainment by redefining revision as a continual practice throughout the course – not just at the end. Smart Revise is a course companion and sandbox assessment system built to address the forgetting curve, enabling students to retain more knowledge over time.

#### CAREFUL CURATION

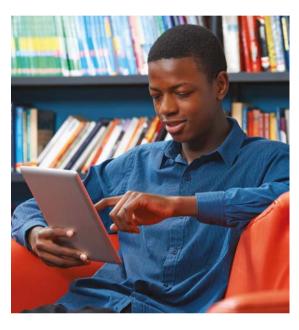
Students can access hundreds of multiple choice, shortand extended-answer questions independently, or join a class where teachers can direct their learning by expanding content throughout the course. Smart Revise content is carefully curated to ensure an exact match with each point of the specification, taking the subtle nuances of every individual course into consideration. After each examination series, the content is adapted to ensure a perfect fit going forward.

#### PERSONALISED LOW-STAKES QUIZZING

Smart Revise silently adapts to each student, presenting them with their own unique, neverending playlist of multiple choice questions based on their current understanding. With a focus on continually revisiting taught material, low-stakes quizzing has a remarkable effect on addressing the forgetting curve over time, helping students remember more of the fundamental knowledge they need to excel in their examinations. Smart Revise is ideal for lesson starter activities and homework.



Smart Revise calculates which aspects of the course each



individual student needs more practice in, and will focus on those areas. A progress bar shows the student how close they are to answering a question correctly three times in a row and mastering it. However, because the question set adapts dynamically, a student cannot know when they will be asked the same question again. Even when a question is mastered, it will occasionally reappear to confirm retention.

### Contact:

smartrevise.craigndave.org admin@craigndave.co.uk

## IDENTIFICATION OF LEARNING PRIORITIES

Discover the top ten least- and most-understood questions. Drill down into topics and focus on the misconceptions that Smart Revise has automatically identified. Use class matrix reports to identify topics that need to be revisited and individual students who may need more support. Smart Revise incorporates a complete range of question types and can be used in many ways – including for baseline assessments, end-of-topic tests and even online mock exams.

## TIME AND MONEY SAVINGS

Smart Revise saves teachers time by automatically creating and marking differentiated, personalised quizzes. Additionally, teachers can set the same multiple choice and extended-answer questions for whole classes in under five minutes using the simple task creation wizard which allows for easy submission of answers electronically, with no printing or photocopying required. There's no need for teachers to upload their own content or class lists, while innovative reporting allows teachers to focus their interventions without engaging in complex data analysis.

### **KEY POINTS**

Harness Smart Revise's
in-built algorithms and
personalised course content
- including a never-ending list
of low-stakes quiz questions
- to help students beat the
forgetting curve

Use hundreds of original extended-answer questions throughout the course, complete with command word help, guided marking and model answer videos Smart Revise isn't a crowdsourcing platform - all content is carefully curated by a select team of experienced, practising teachers and examiners By signing up for a free trial at smartrevise.online, you can get to try out all of Smart Revise's features for yourself today, using a small question set with your students

# When an inspection doesn't feel right, where can you turn?

As Ofsted prepares to embark on more inspections than ever, **Katie Michelon** looks at what schools ought to know ahead of their visit - and the options available if something seems amiss...

fsted's inspection schedule is back in full swing. Inspections of formerly exempt Outstanding schools are now well underway, and with the government having recently consulted on further intervention measures linked to Ofsted judgments (see bit. ly/ts115-ofsted1), the stakes appear higher than ever.

Whilst Ofsted is keen to stress that it doesn't expect teachers to be overloaded with preparatory work, there are some relatively straightforward steps all schools can take to place themselves in a stronger starting position.

## First impressions The school website will

probably be the first piece of

evidence an inspector considers, so review it to ensure that it's compliant — there is DfE-issued guidance setting out the information schools and academies are required to publish online (see bit.ly/ts115-ofsted). A website that includes useful and accessible information will give a good first impression.

As well as checking that the school has all required policies in place, consider the cycle and processes through which these are reviewed and updated. If, for example, Ofsted visit in September, will your school have already adopted an amended child protection policy, reflecting the new statutory guidance (see ts115-ofsted2) that takes effect from 1st September 2022?

Inspectors will always seek to meet governors during an inspection. Their report will include a specific paragraph on their effectiveness, which will in turn impact upon the report's 'leadership' and 'management judgement' areas – but governor experiences of inspections can vary.

Some knowledge-sharing on the part they will play in the process can therefore instil confidence, ensuring that they have a clear

> understanding of their role, and are comfortable and consistent in talking about the school's vision and ethos.

#### Inspection deferrals

Whilst the timing of an inspection is ultimately not within a school's control, it's worth noting that Ofsted 'rebalanced' its guidance on inspection deferrals in December 2021, in recognition of the impact of COVID-19.

The reality is that many schools are still grappling with the impact of the pandemic. If your school's particular circumstances are likely to restrict the inspection process in some way, it may be worth asking Ofsted to consider a deferral of the inspection. According to Amanda Spielman, "The great majority of deferral requests were agreed" at the start of this calendar year.

Where a school is unhappy with an inspection, there are various ways in which to raise objections. Ofsted encourages schools to raise any concerns as early on as possible during the inspection process. We would also advise recording in writing the response given by the lead inspector or Ofsted's central team.

Your school should also look to make full use of the opportunity it will have to comment on the draft report. Ofsted is required to consider these comments and respond to them on issuing the final version.

Once the final report is received, there is the option of issuing a formal complaint under step 2 of Ofsted's complaints procedure (see bit. ly/ts115-ofsted3). As long as this formal complaint is submitted within five days of receiving the final report, Ofsted will not publish the report until the complaint has

e.net/secondary

been investigated and responded to. The school does not therefore need to be immediately concerned about a contested report entering the public domain.

## **Exceptional** circumstances

Beyond step 2 of the complaints procedure, Ofsted will only continue to withhold publication of a report in exceptional circumstances. The only other way to prevent Ofsted publishing will be to seek an injunction from the Court.

We usually advise exhausting Ofsted's complaints procedure as far as possible before resorting to formal legal action against the regulator – both from a cost perspective, and because the Court will have expected you to do so.

Successful judicial review cases against Ofsted are quite rare, and particularly difficult where a school is looking to challenge the merit of a judgement alone. As such, whilst a school's comments on a draft report or formal complaint aren't legal documents, there is value in seeking legal advice at these stages to focus the arguments, understand the desired and possible outcomes, and the prospects of achieving them.



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follow @brownejacobson

# Could your school have a PORN PROBLEM?

**Hannah Day** examines the phenomenon of 'playground porn' - the sharing of sexual content via smartphones on school property - and what staff can do to prevent it...

martphones and wall-to-wall internet access are here to stay. Unfortunately, their arrival has put instant access to pornographic material within easy reach for practically everyone, including your students.

As teachers, many of us have often worried about the impact this can and is having, but lack the knowledge or confidence to ably support young people as they navigate their way through the sexual images and ideas presented to them by porn.

With the government's RSE guidelines having received a major overhaul in 2020 – the first in 20 years – now is a great time to consider your school's existing policies and approaches, and whether they too might need updating.

#### Limit the influence

Let's start with the obvious — the kids in your school have seen porn. According to research by the British Board of Film Classification, more than half of 11 to 13-year-old admit to having watched porn, rising to 66% among 14 to 15-year-olds.

This will inevitably influence the views they hold on sex in general, sexual relationships and bodies — both theirs and those of others. Stopping the deluge of pornographic material that so many are now exposed to might not be possible at this stage, but we can at least

limit the influence it's having via appropriate education. To that end, we should train staff, communicate with parents and implement effective, clearly publicised polices in schools.

It's illegal to show porn to anyone who is below the age of 18. In effect, this makes the showing of any and all pornographic material within your school illegal, though it should be noted that there's no law currently governing messages. Instead, we should be prepared to have more honest, yet positive conversations, so that students can genuinely learn about why sex is great, and interrogate what's meant by 'normal' or 'real' sex. If not, porn will serve as their main reference.

Yes, we want our students to not contract STIs, and to prevent unwanted pregnancies – but isn't sex about so much more? We

# "Stopping the deluge of pornographic material might not be possible, but we can limit the influence it's having"

the age at which pornography can be *viewed*. As such, pupils watching this type of material on their own will most probably be breaking school rules, but not the law.

#### Open up the conversation

A report by the campaign group Our Streets Now (ourstreetsnow.org) found that RSE provision in school currently tends to focus on the mechanics and dangers of sex, while dedicating very little time to matters of inclusivity, celebrating differences, body positivity, consent and pleasure.

We must be careful that RSE lessons don't create fear, encourage silence or offer simplistic 'Just say no' need to confront the fact that young people's sexuality, rather than developing organically via experience, is now being routinely presented to them, prepackaged, by an industry whose sole focus is profit, rather than pleasure.

#### Involve the parents

One key issue we educators face — which is perhaps partly responsible for why the latest 'statutory' guidance can feel so vague at times — is parental attitudes. In my experience, most accept the place of sex education, but it's important that we continue to bring parents into the fold wherever we can.

Do your students' parents know what you teach? Are they aware of the nature and ready availability of online porn, its potential impact on young people and what they can do about it? Do they feel confident and comfortable talking to their children about sex-related matters, so that they can back up and support your endeavours?

I'll often invite parents in, allow them to see the content we're using, help them understand its purpose and importance and answer any questions. This isn't just about what schools can do, but about how schools can work effectively with homes and families.

Is there a member of staff who might be able to offer training for parents on how to talk to their children? It can be helpful to emphasise the importance of starting early, being open and answering their children's questions honestly.

## Clarify the context

With trained and informed staff and parents in place, you can start work on implementing a new programme. Ensure that all polices have been consulted on and refined. make staff aware of what the expectations are, and be clear as to the educational approach you'll be taking when talking to students about the topic of sexual representations and imagery.

Bear in mind that this

55

exercise doesn't just concern pornography in itself, but also the attitudes and behaviours that exist around sex, sexuality and gender. The latter should all form part of a wider school initiative aimed at fostering positive and inclusive sex education.

Where possible, consult with specialists. Is there a relevant charity operating in your local area, an experienced colleague, or even a psychosexual therapist via your local NHS that could help you? These parties will offer informed insights and clarity, where teaching staff may

feel uncomfortable. They will also be used to answering a wide range of questions in ways that students will respond well to.

Focus on helping students understand that sex per se isn't wrong, but that context and consent is vital for distinguishing between what is acceptable and unacceptable sexual behaviour. In tandem with this, the school should have clear polices in place concerning what will happen if unacceptable behaviour does occur.

Ofsted's 2021

review into sexual abuse in schools makes for sober reading, and contains some startling statistics - such as how '90% of girls and nearly 50% of boys' have been sent explicit pictures or videos either 'a lot, or sometimes'.

Educating our students about what's acceptable will only work if we act when unacceptable behaviour occurs. Sanctions need to be agreed within the school

and followed to the letter, with parents informed as needed.



#### **STUDENT EXPERIENCE:** "THEY ONLY FOCUSED ON PORN ADDICTION"

"In secondary school, the only time we ever got told anything about porn would be during assembly. It made us feel awkward because, well, it's a bunch of early teenagers learning about porn.

They'd barely scratch the surface as to what it's really like. They didn't talk about the actual porn, ever - they only focused on porn addiction, which was good to know about early, but I feel they could've talked about the other issues.

For example, in my year group there were a lot of nonstraight people, and I feel as if that made them extremely uncomfortable in that situation. My school's only approach was to drift us completely away from watching porn.

As for the impact on me, I'd say it definitely made me a lot more cautious about what I'm doing online. Other than the fact that my friends talked about porn websites and videos, I was lucky and never made to feel as though I needed to watch anything."

The bar for unacceptable behaviour and sanctions should be made known to all staff, students and parents via a clear set of guidelines that can be easily followed. A flow chart displayed around the school and kept in offices and staff rooms can convey key information in a simple and practical way that enables staff to act quickly.

As laws continue to catch up with modern behaviours, our polices must also be regularly reviewed. We all want more for our students, and to stem the invasion of sexual imagery into our schools, with all the changes in behaviour it entails. But to do that, we must be ready and able to talk honestly and openly to our young people,

so that they can develop for themselves those fulfilling and consensual adult relationships that will become the bedrock of their adult lives (and in turn produce the next generation for us to teach).

Life, and indeed sex, really is beautiful. Let's help our students to discover that in their own way.



#### **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



#### THE NEXT BIG THING

## AGE VERIFICATION

The government's incoming Online Safety Bill is set to overhaul how online age verification systems are maintained and enforced - so what does that mean for your school?

#### [ THE TREND ]

Children's online safety and data protection have been major focuses for officials of late, with 2022 set to be a turning point in terms of the legislative activity that those efforts have been leading to. The introduction of new strategies for mitigating internet-related harms, and the setting of new minimum standards will change the digital landscape for good – so how will this impact schools and the edtech services they rely on?

#### WHAT'S HAPPENING?

The arrival of smartphones and ubiquitous internet access has put age-inappropriate material – including sexual, violent, illegal and dangerous content – within easy reach of children. Many teachers have rightly expressed concern at the spread of certain types of online material promoting, for example, eating disorders, self-harm and suicidal ideation, but feel overwhelmed by the sheer scale and extent of the issue.

The incoming Online Safety Bill, currently at the committee stage in Parliament, contains provisions that will see regulators take an active role in enforcing age verification processes aimed at protecting children online. Among these is TrustElevate's age verification and parental consent service, which is being increasingly recognised as a valuable tool for preventing children from accessing inappropriate content and making harmful online contact with adults.

#### WHAT'S THE IMPACT?

Age verification isn't a silver bullet, but can significantly improve companies' capacity to create safe, online spaces. TrustElevate's service is the only secure, accurate and privacy-preserving provider of child age verification and parental consent. We facilitate safe digital parenting opportunities that build transparency and accountability into the digital ecosystem, while reducing schools' regulatory exposure.

Our founder, Dr Rachel O'Connell, wrote her PhD on tracking and preventing paedophile activity online, and has spent the last two decades working to make the internet safer for children. TrustElevate's service functions as a preventative measure, ensuring that children are catered to appropriately while at the same time transposing real-world children's group dynamics and parental consent requirements into digital environments.



#### WHAT'S NEXT?

TrustElevate has been working with schools, parents and children to learn more about their experiences and tailor our services accordingly, as well as educating these groups about online risks, ranging from harmful content to data protection issues.



Contact: 020 8168 8161 info@trustelevate.com trustelevate.com

Looking forward, we want to equip schools and parents with the tools they need to protect their children from exploitative data practices – such as those recently uncovered by Human Rights Watch, which found that 89% of edtech platforms put children's rights at risk, undermined or actively violated them.

TrustElevate checks against authoritative data sources to produce a simple 'Yes'/'No' answer to a query about whether the user is above or below 13, for example, that's then shared with online service providers. We hold no data ourselves; our priority is upholding the best interests of children.

#### **Discover More...**

Our ongoing #StrongerTogetherOnline campaign is aimed at uniting schools', parents' and children's voices, and amplifying them in the fight against online harms and exploitative data practices – find out more and sign up now at

trustelevate.com/stronger-together

### **GET INVOLVED**

If you would like to integrate TrustElevate's service into your school, contact us at info@trustelevate.com and we'll be able to set you up in two simple steps.

By registering your interest to get yourself or your school involved, you'll be joining a fantastic community of individuals from around the country who are showing their commitment to making the internet a safe place for children.

# OCUS ON:

Following the cultural and logistical upheavals of Brexit, and the traveldecimating impact of COVID, we find out how MFL practitioners and schools with an international outlook are currently faring...

How should schools and teaching staff look to improve students' engagement with the study of modern foreign languages?

#### THE AGENDA:

#### **58 LISTEN. SPEAK.** SUCCEED

Verbal practice is a crucial component of MFL teaching. but if your students are struggling to become capable and confident speakers, here are some strategies you can try...

#### **61 A WORLD OF OPPORTUNITY**

Sylvia Holland talks us through the ways in which schools can facilitate unforgettable, learning-rich international trips for their students

#### **HEADLINES AND HOMOPHONES**

Fiona Easton recalls how casting around for media materials outside of her school's rapidly ageing textbooks helped inject new life and urgency into her MFL lessons



# LISTEN, SPEAK, SUCCEED

Verbal practice is a crucial component of MFL teaching, but if your students are struggling to become capable and confident speakers, here are some strategies you can try...

o one can dispute that a language is meant to be spoken. There's no greater joy in my teaching than hearing pupils speak in the target language spontaneously – but how can we develop their confidence to do so?

For me, the work starts from day one in Y7, through creating a safe, supportive environment where pupils know they will never be judged when speaking in the target language.

#### Let them get a word in

Who speaks in the target language most during your lessons – you or your students? Speaking skills can only be enhanced if students are given adequate opportunities to *speak*.

From their very first lesson, it's crucial that pupils learn how to produce new sounds as accurately as possible. Developing speaking thus goes hand-inhand with listening. Try beginning each lesson with a brief, low-pressure speaking activity. As pupils become accustomed to this ritual, they'll soon start to feel more comfortable with the expectation of regularly speaking in another language, even if it's just in service of a short, low risk activity.

From my experience, it's important to create as many opportunities as possible for pupils to speak in each MFL lesson. It's therefore worth teaching pupils classroom

language and vocabulary at the beginning of Y7, so that they can tell you when they've forgotten their book or need to go to the toilet.

Start by using phrases such as 'Can I have...', as well as high frequency core language that you can use with the class when doing the register and throughout the lesson. Plan opportunities for pupils to not only speak to you but also to their peers, by using pair work activities and/or some Kagan cooperative learning strategies such as 'Quiz-Quiz-Trade', 'Talking Chips' and 'Think Pair Share', so that pupils can practise speaking the

misconceptions as they arise.

By providing as many opportunities as possible for pupils to speak at KS3, things will become considerably easier at KS4, since your pupils will already possess a degree of speaking confidence.

Teach pupils chunks of vocabulary they can reuse in different contexts. Think about situations that crop up naturally and regularly in the course of a classroom lesson, which can be exploited in the target language for linguistic purposes.

Pupils arriving late; pupil absence; other teachers

I would strongly advise reading James Stubbs' blog on his use of target language at jamesstubbs. wordpress.com.

#### Keep them engaged

Looking at the topics covered at KS3 is also key. Are you teaching topics that interest your pupils and will make them want to speak? As much as possible, present them with material they'll actually want to talk about.

We know that the principles of effective speaking practice begin with modelling through listening, before developing speed and accuracy of production through extensive practice, and then moving from structured practice to spontaneity. For pupils to speak spontaneously, we need a lot of structured practice first – through using target language as explained previously, but also via regular speaking activities suited to the different topics we teach.

The stages outlined in Greg Horton's Group Talk Progression chart provide an example of how such speaking might develop, with the aim of having pupils be able to use the language over time:

#### STAGE 1

Introductions and responses to simple opinions

#### STAGE 2

Participation in short discussions

# "For pupils to speak spontaneously, we need a lot of structured practice first via regular speaking activities"

language you're teaching them. The interaction language they'll be picking up in the process will help to develop their spontaneity over time.

## Exploit everyday moments

As teachers, we can easily monitor what pupils are saying, how the language is being used and how pupils are developing their spoken language skills collaboratively, providing appropriate support when needed and correcting

entering the room whilst the lesson is in progress; classroom discussions following group work — exploit such moments, and guide pupils to reuse vocabulary and structures from other contexts by showing how they can be extended and adapted.

Over time, this will help them say what they want to say. It's important that pupils are encouraged to ask for language they want to know, but make sure you reuse them lesson after lesson to help them stick.

#### STAGE 3

Exchanges of reasons and preferences; talking across time frames.

#### STAGE 4

Developing lines of thought; sharing points of view; balancing an argument.

#### Start talking

To illustrate what this looks like in practice, consider the following classroom activity. The teacher prepares two printouts, both showing images of a mobile phone. and gives them to pupils sitting at opposite ends of the classroom. The teacher then plays some music, while the mobile phone images are passed round the class. When the music stops, the two pupils holding the printouts speak to each other in the target language.

In Y7, this exchange can start with *Bonjour*, *comment ca va?*' Over time, you could add a list of core questions you want the class to answer, based on the vocabulary, grammar and key structures they've learnt,

and increase the length of time they're speaking for. It's all about practice! To encourage less confident speakers, you could use 'recordable speech bubbles', whereby pupils write their answers onto paper shaped like a speech bubble and record it afterwards.

For homework, pupils could be tasked with using Snapchat to record themselves answering questions, or online services such as Flipgrid, Padlet or Vocaroo to record their answers. You can then give them personalised feedback on their pronunciation, vocabulary and use of grammar.

You could even ask them to create videos that describe themselves, their town or their school and send these to partner schools abroad, thus giving the exercise a specific purpose.

Encouraging pupils to speak in another language is key to MFL teaching, but let's not forget that we also need to help pupils build their confidence – ideally

# TRY THIS FURTHER IDEAS FOR CLASSROOM SPEAKING ACTIVITIES MIGHT INCLUDE...

- Describing a photo using genuine family snaps or famous paintings
- The utilisation of role play, 'speed dating' partner work or puppetry
- Mock interviews in which pupils pretend to interview celebrities - for example, actors, footballers and other high profile figures from French-speaking countries
- Place four photos on the board and have the pupils decide which is the odd one out. They must then explain the reasons behind their decision in the target language.
- Pupils work in pairs with a stimulus and time limit to come up with as many statements and utterances as they can, using one or more pictures or verbal prompts
- The 'Catch the spy' game devised by French and Spanish teacher Vincent Everett (@Veverettmfl) pupils have to interview others in the class by asking them a range of questions to try and identify an impostor; download the instructions via bit.ly/ts115-speaking
- Invite your headteacher to come into a lesson and witness a performance

by creating environments where they feel safe, where they won't be judged, and will be rewarded for making the effort to speak.



#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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# A world of opportunity

**Sylvia Holland** talks us through the ways in which schools can facilitate unforgettable, learning-rich international trips for their students

n an increasingly globalised world, it's never been more important for students to cultivate the knowledge and life skills required to succeed beyond the classroom, and indeed their own country's borders.

As an International Baccalaureate (IB) World School, learning about different cultures is embedded in our daily learning at Impington Village College, where we encourage our students to develop international mindsets. On top of this, our international visits to countries in Europe, India and beyond help to consolidate student learning and enable them to put lessons into practice.

#### **Back on track**

Learning in a foreign country directly improves

our students' understanding of languages by giving them the opportunity to practise their language skills with native speakers. It's no surprise to me that research has shown how foreign language skills enhance students' empathy and understanding of different perspectives. Spending time abroad also plays a huge role in developing students' self-confidence by equipping them with the skillset to feel confident in new environments.

When I first joined the College nine years ago, there was a well-established foreign exchange programme in place with a partner school in Tours, France. Our international visits have, of course, been suspended for the past two years, but the appetite for travel has definitely returned – to the extent that we have planned a robust programme of international visits for our students during this academic year.

The benefits of international travel for students are clear – but how can a school provide a programme of foreign visits in the wake of not just Brexit, but also a pandemic, resource shortages and budget cuts?

1. Forge relationships

After choosing
where you'll be
going, establish
links with a
school in the
destination
country so that
you'll have

on-the-ground recommendations and support when planning the visit. This also opens up the possibility of future exchange trips.

Our teachers have worked and volunteered across Africa, India and Europe, forging strong connections with other teachers across the world. By leveraging our colleagues' networks of connections, we have been able to deliver visits to schools such as the IES Santiago Hernandez in Zaragoza, Spain, the SKSN in Jodphur, India, and Gymnasium School in Gernsheim, Germany.

#### 2. Secure funding

Since Brexit and the pandemic there has been a noticeable increase in the costs of flights, but being flexible with our travel dates has enabled us to benefit from the best prices available. Thanks to community and charity funding, government grants and school fundraising, there are multiple avenues schools can explore to alleviate the financial pressures of international travel. Previously, we've been lucky enough to receive funding from both the British Council's Connecting Classrooms scheme (connecting-classrooms. britishcouncil.org), and The Turing Scheme (turing-scheme.org.uk).

#### 3. Forge relationships

Safeguarding legislation requires us to ask all the host families assisting with our exchange programme to complete a DBS check. We have appointed a dedicated administrator to coordinate the necessary documentation, which has facilitated the planning process enormously.

While we've managed to successfully plan an international trip in just six months, I'd recommend starting the process a year in advance. This will allow time to secure your partner school, research and book activities, arrange student and staff accommodation and, most importantly, overcome students' natural anxiety about stepping outside of their comfort zone.

We have successfully managed this through our pen-pal scheme, where students exchange regular letters with a student in the destination country ahead of their visit. Students who have previously taken part in an international trip are our most powerful ambassadors – by sharing photos and stories about their experiences, they help persuade their peers to take part in future visits.

Allowing sufficient time for planning, maintaining your professional contacts around the world and exploring all funding avenues will let you harness the renewed appetite for foreign travel, and help deliver a strong programme of educational visits abroad for your students.



**ABOUT THE AUTHOR** 

Sylvia Holland is lead practitioner (KS4) at Impington Village College and Impington International College

# Headlines and HOMOPHONES

**Fiona Easton** recalls how casting around for media materials outside of her school's rapidly ageing textbooks helped to inject new life and urgency into her MFL lessons

s a newly qualified MFL teacher, I remember wanting to use foreign media materials in my lessons right from the start – but when you're training, you don't have enough time to spend hours poring over news articles in an effort to find something useful.

It was therefore something I brought in gradually. By the time I completed my second year of teaching, I'd resolved to use an authentic and topical news article in my classroom at least once a week.

This impulse initially grew out of my frustration with the textbooks we'd been using. I could tell that they would have been perfectly fine when first published, but that their contents had very quickly gone out of date. Teaching students with the help of material that they could also see had visibly dated was quite difficult, because it was hard for them to engage with.

#### Refining the process

Incorporating various media materials into lessons is something you would expect all MFL teachers to be doing to a certain extent, but in my experience, it rarely involved direct collaboration. When using a particularly good article, I might possibly share it with a departmental colleague – though at my last school, I'd typically be teaching one topic while my colleagues taught something else, or a

different language entirely, so a media clipping that was useful for my lesson might not have been as relevant for what they were doing.

That said, we did find that centrally posting the articles we planning to use in class was quite useful. It soon got me wondering why I wasn't seeing other language teachers consistently

which would be less helpful. I began conducting larger scale, but less time consuming searches, and got into the habit of saving multiple articles to a hard drive so that I could refer back to them and use them in class when needed. There were many different ways of refining the process.

## "Media materials are essentially base texts you haven't had to produce yourself"

sharing article finds of their own online and via social media, which is what eventually inspired me to start sending out a regular newsletter (see 'Inspiration to your inbox').

Ultimately, it helped having just one topic per week that I needed to focus on. As someone who generally consumes news quite often, I'd usually be up on buzzwords and have a fairly good sense of what was going on. Combining up-to-the-minute and trending keyphrases with Google's 'News' filter meant that sooner or later, I'd usually come across something appropriate that I could use.

At first, these searches could take quite a long time. Fairly soon, however, I developed a feel for which foreign news outlets and media channels were going to have useful material, and

#### **Endless options**

Back when we were still using those dated textbooks, I remember how we once covered the topic of 'everyday idols' in our Spanish lessons – these being singers, musicians, actors and fashion models, the latter of whom were now of significantly less interest to young people than perhaps they once were.

I wanted to instead find something involving YouTubers and influencers, since they feature in young people's lives far more prominently, and ended up using an article that discussed how some young content creators had become extremely rich during social media's early growth years.

This was helpful for bringing the classroom discussion round to something students could relate to more closely. It turned out to be a good conversation prompt, while also being highly relevant to the topic we were studying.

There are many ways to approach using media materials in class, since they're essentially base texts that you haven't had to produce yourself. I'd sometime use written news media by way of a starter activity, and task students with hunting for examples of certain grammatical items.

There's also the potential to create translation activities using the vocabulary drawn from certain example texts, or summary activities different A Level exam boards will often set tasks that require students to read longer texts and attempt to summarise them in, say, 90 words. If you can find a media outlet that's a reliable producer of audiovisual material, you could try creating your own listening activities - the options are pretty much endless.

#### Palpable enthusiasm

Over time, I saw how regular use of media helped to improve students' engagement levels, but also the chances of productive spontaneity occurring within lessons. By using our own selections of up-to-date media examples and written materials, we could base activities around absorbing





#### **INSPIRATION TO YOUR INBOX**

A while ago I started The MFL A Level News project - a weekly newsletter

aimed at MFL teachers containing several links to news articles that could be effectively used to support your lessons. The project is still going, but has temporarily changed to a biweekly newsletter, owing to my work and study commitments.

When putting the newsletters together, I'll cycle through a selection of different topics, pick one for a given week and share three to four links to news articles, each accompanied by a short description of the article in question, and frequently an idea or suggestion as to how it might be used

I've received really positive feedback from readers thus far. It's been nice to give something back to the MFL learning community, while hopefully also saving teachers valuable time. For more information and details of how to sign up for MFL A Level News, follow @NewsMfl

topics that were relevant to what was going on in our

students' lives, and things they'd already be talking about with their peers outside of class.

This had a noticeable impact on their willingness and ability to take part in speaking activities and wider class discussions. Unsurprisingly, they were much more likely to engage with lessons and contribute their opinions when not referring to news, fashions or developments that were last considered 'current' some five years ago...

It's also worth pointing out that many teachers assume A Level language topics have to be quite dry, but that's not the case. Don't be afraid to search for and use material that actually interests you, as well as your students. Your resulting enthusiasm for the material will be palpable, and help to motivate them.

More broadly, this can usefully feed in to the requirement for A Level MFL students to complete an element of independent research. Ideally, they'll want to choose an area they're actively interested in learning and writing about. By introducing them to more

> diverse conversation topics and examples of foreign

culture, you'll be broadening their horizons and introducing them to concepts and ideas they might otherwise have never known existed.

#### Properly engage

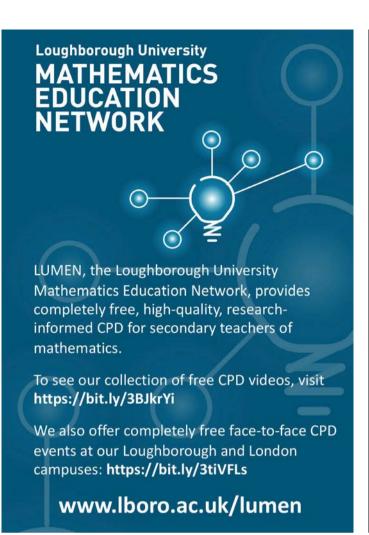
When it comes to specific sources, in my case there are the obvious mainstream media outlets operating in France and Spain that come up a lot - Le Monde and ElPaís for news, France 24 for rolling video news. But whichever sources you use, you should never find an article, quickly read the headline and think 'That'll do.'

You always need to have thoroughly read through and understood any media examples yourself, and properly engage with the material before deciding whether or not you can use it at a level that's appropriate for the students you have.

You might have a class of three kids, all of whom are native speakers aiming for A\*s, or you may have a group of 13 spanning a wide range of abilities. It's down to the teacher to make sure that any media material you use is relevant, age appropriate and pitched at the right level.

#### **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

Fiona Easton is an A Level teacher of French and Spanish, and currently head of A Level for the MFL resource provider Languagenut; for more information, visit languagenut.com



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# Say no to 'Just say no'

To equip young people with essential knowledge regarding alcohol and drugs, we need lessons that are less didactic and more carefully nuanced, says **Helena Conibear** 

hen planning for alcohol and drug education, it's all too easy for lessons to slip into approaches that centre on scare tactics, or the imparting of too much information.

There's evidence to show that neither approach will positively influence students' behaviour, nor reduce their inclination to drink or take drugs.

Drug education instead requires a highly nuanced approach. One that draws on different age appropriate materials as pupils mature and empowers students to make informed choices, but which can also build resilience and facilitate dialogue that enables young people to make positive decisions for themselves. Pupils often cite the repetitive or preachy nature of drug education as their main reasons for not engaging.

Just 1% of pupils in Y7 drink alcohol regularly. However, 13 is the average age by which teenagers will have drunk their first alcohol drink overwhelmingly in the family home

- making Y8 and Y9 the groups you most urgently need to talk to about

alcohol.

#### Reverse the discussion

That said, we ought to remember that 56% of 11 to 15-year-olds haven't even tried alcohol, making it difficult to strike a balance between safeguarding those at risk of early drinking or drunkenness, and those who might be tempted to start drinking if the topic isn't covered appropriately.

How a question is framed can make a fundamental difference. A question such as *Why do people drink alcohol?*' will tend to produce answers that in effect promote drinking: *To have fun'*; *To fit in'*; *To rebel'*.

However, you can reverse this discussion point by instead asking, 'Why do most teenagers choose not to drink?' The answers you'll get will likely include 'Because it's against the law'; 'They could get into trouble'; 'It will affect their work'; 'It's bad for their health'. This approach can also be helpful in establishing correct norms, since most students will overestimate their older peers' drinking and drug taking habits.

Given that parents and carers are the prime source of alcohol consumed by teenagers, and often those who will allow alcohol at parties. Y9 is the ideal time to host a face-to-face or virtual Talking To Kids About Alcohol talk. This event should be supportive, providing positive tips for parents on how to cope with teen pressure, while ensuring they understand the Chief Medical Officer's guidance for parents on alcohol and the effects of its early use on the teenage brain.

#### The cannabis factor

Teenagers face huge pressures to fit in, and will need to know how to stay safe around alcohol, whether they choose to drink themselves or not. Equipping older teenagers with the knowledge and skills to navigate parties and festivals, consent, independent travel abroad and transitions to college or university where they will no longer be within the structure of school or family life can be very tough.

Alcohol and cannabis (and the latter's derivatives) continue to be closely intertwined with party and



festival culture. According to the government's 10-Year Drug Strategy, 20% of 16 to 24-year-olds have used cannabis within the last year. This has fast become a very complex area, due in part to the increasing availability of cannabis derivatives, ranging from gummy bears to THC-laced vapes, as well as a persistent belief by many young people that cannabis is no more - or indeed less harmful than alcohol.

While rates of underage alcohol use and young adult binge drinking and drunkenness are declining overall, cannabis use is on the rise. To help address the co-use of alcohol and cannabis (both depressants) and the spread of legal CBD products and legalisation in some countries, the Alcohol **Education Trust has** developed workshops on cannabis for 16 to 25-yearolds, alongside training for professionals working with them.

For more information on these, visit alcoholeducatointrust. org, our online learning zone for teenagers via talkaboutalcohol.com, or our life-stuff.org site, which provides advice on various areas of wellbeing for older teenagers.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR
Helena Conibear is the CEO and
founder of the Alcohol Education
Trust - a youth charity working
nationally with schools, special
schools, PRUs and alternative
settings to keep young people
safe around alcohol

# Don't be afraid of STUDENT ACTIVISM

**A. M. Dassu** makes the case for why important lessons can be learnt by allowing students to channel their energies and enthusiasm into causes they believe in

ow would you feel if your mobile phone were to be confiscated? If you weren't allowed to wear that favourite red jumper of yours any more because one of your work colleagues 'finds it offensive'? As an adult, how would you react?

For a student, their mobile phone can be the only valuable thing they're responsible for. Using it as an example of what it's like to have your rights violated can therefore be a powerful way of helping them understand the notion of injustice in different contexts around the world.

## Effecting positive change

Young people have very little control over their own lives. They can't choose where they live or who they live with. They often can't walk away from the circumstances surrounding them, and can't change the ways in which their identity is perceived or stereotyped by others.

When an issue emerges on a global, national or even community level that ultimately impacts upon their future, they might feel that they have even less control or influence. This is why it's important to give young people the tools they need to feel empowered, and show them that even in less

than ideal circumstances, they can still use their voice to effect positive change.

Right now, they might feel that their actions can't have any direct impact upon restrictions to their rights, climate change or stronger in the face of hatred and injustice.

It shows that awful things do happen, but that with hope and courage and through working together, we can empower ourselves to turn things around.

"Encourage students to always ask questions whenever they see something unfair or unjust. Show young people they're never too young to be an ally"

even immigration laws — but we can show them that their opinions and voices can at least help to bring about change, and we can do this initially in school.

My novel *Fight Back* shows how that's possible. *Fight Back* is about finding your identity and finding the courage to fight for it, without allowing others to define you. The story shows how when we come together, our voices become louder and make us

Fight Back explores what it means to be be a good friend and ally, and that there will always be someone out there who can empathise with you, and who will be willing to work beside you to make things better.

#### Peaceful protest

It's a story based on my own experiences which I hope will inspire readers, and perhaps empower them in knowing that an individual can begin to make a difference by first speaking up. By doing that, you empower others too. And that's how change happens.

My hope is that it will inspire children to safely question some of the decisions made on their behalf both at home and in school, show how you don't always have to accept the status quo, and how it's possible to challenge hateful views.

By speaking up, you can become part of a community.
Through peaceful protest, you can start to make a difference. Sure, you might not change



things immediately, but you will start a conversation. And that's important.

Most schools have Student Councils in place, but we can perhaps go further by encouraging discussion around areas that affect marginalised communities, while also building empathy within the school community itself.

Ask your students how develop their understanding of people and events on a global level. Positive activism can also

help young people

to feel seen,

they themselves would look to deal with bullying and violent behaviour. Which clubs and activities would they like to see that are inclusive? This kind of positive activism will give them the ability to see things from others' perspectives, and further

and potentially recognise that they're not alone at school, which can in turn lead to the growth of solidarity. So how can you encourage student activism in a way that helps bring about these kinds of positive and productive outcomes?

#### Part of a bigger fight

Show your students how they can use their privilege - be it based on wealth, education, social standing or influence – to empower others. Help them understand that we all have a voice, and that some of us can use that voice to give support to others who need our help.

Encourage students to always ask questions whenever they see something unfair or unjust. Show young people they're never too young to be an ally; that they can talk to others about how to be a good ally, and about what is just. Encourage students to learn about the history of their community, the ways in which it was shaped by the actions of activists and how those activists made progress. What practical steps did they take?

Remind your students that they're very much not alone when it comes to standing up, being an ally or fighting injustice. Show them that there are many groups working together to amplify their voices.

Support students in sharing their work across the school, and perhaps online too. Explain that it's good to discuss issues with like-minded people, but that it's also good to engage with people who might disagree with you, so that

they can develop an awareness of how and why their opinions, beliefs or behaviour can affect others.

There are many ways of being an activist. It certainly doesn't have to BIG and BOLD. Instead, show students it can sometimes involve being part of a bigger fight, whether it's showing up at protests and marches, writing to politicians or supporting broader community efforts.

Show them how white people supported the civil rights movement against racial segregation, and how men were also calling for equal rights as part of the women's suffrage movement. Make them aware that they too can make a difference by becoming an ally, putting themselves in someone else's shoes and understanding that when we see injustice, we can only make a real difference by stepping in and speaking up. Just like Lisa, Sukhi, Elijah, Leon and Feifei do, simply by dint of being good friends in Fight Back.



#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

A. M. DASSU is the acclaimed author of Boy, Everywhere, previously listed for 25 awards including the Waterstones Children's Book Prize and the Carnegie Medal; she is also a director at Inclusive Minds - an organisation for people passionate about inclusion, diversity, equality



and accessibility in children's literature. Find out more by following @a\_reflective or visiting amdassu.com Fiaht Back is available now (£7.99, Scholastic)



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- Take control of your online CPD training
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- How to engage parents using digital tools
- Using video games in secondary schools – what teachers can learn

# WHY PULL THE PLUG?

**John Galloway** ponders the government's reasons for calling time on its EdTech Demonstrator programme...

ometimes I just don't get it. Why, when its own research shows the underdeveloped use of technology in schools, does the DfE pull the plug on the only programme it has in place to help develop that capacity?

Just as they publish a research report titled 'Education Technology: Exploring digital maturity in schools' (see bit.ly/ts115-jg1) — which finds only 9% of schools in England can be considered 'digitally mature' — they cancel the EdTech Demonstrator programme intended to improve schools' use of technology.

It makes you wonder if they know what they're doing. But I think they probably do.

#### **Peer learning**

Readers with long memories may remember BECTA – a DfE-funded edtech body that ended up on the 'bonfire of the quangos' that followed in the wake of the 2010 general election. For some years

afterwards, many of us across the education sector mourned the subsequent loss of edtech support and strategic leadership – only to cheer in 2019, when the DfE seemed to rediscover the importance of technology in schools and produced a new edtech strategy (see bit.ly/ts115-jg2).

One year later, they gave us the EdTech Demonstrator programme. Built around the principle of peer learning, it connected schools some way down the road of digital development with others still charting a route – and it worked. Probably. Because we've yet to see any evaluations.

Year one was lead by a consortium including LGfL and the Education Foundation, with Sheffield Hallam University assigned the task of evaluating it. In year two the consortium changed, so that United Learning (a national MAT) took the lead, with ImpactEd doing the evaluation.

To date, no evaluations have been published, yet the

programme has been cancelled. Why? Who knows. Maybe it wasn't very good — although anecdotally, many schools speak favourably of it. Even if it wasn't successful, we should still be able to learn from whatever mistakes might have been made. Nor have we heard much more about that 2019 strategy and how—or even if—it's progressing.

**Driving change** 

That's not to say that the DfE has given up on offering schools support with edtech altogether. The 'Meeting digital and technology standards in schools and colleges' guidance is still there (see bit.ly/ts115-jg3), offering advice on procurement. So they'll help you get the kit, but seem less interested in what you do with it.

That might be because the government's report on digital maturity struggled to establish a link between the use of edtech and attainment. For instance, at KS4 there was no correlation between any of the three pillars of digital maturity – technology, capability and strategy –

and student outcomes –
albeit with the caveat
that the report's
sample size of 146
secondary schools
wasn't large enough
to provide definitive

answers.

Then there's
COVID-19.

There's nothing
like a crisis for
driving change
and innovation,
and so it was that
schools took a
massive leap forward
in their use of
technology for
teaching and learning

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over the last couple of years. Initially, the lockdowns schools endured underlined marked disparities in access to devices and internet connections between learners, while also highlighting the need for rapid improvements to students' ICT skills so they could learn online.

#### The planning we need

The ending of the EdTech Demonstrator programme appears to be partly based on the premise that with the pandemic 'now behind us', schools no longer need help with online teaching and learning – yet its origins pre-date the pandemic. Or perhaps its prescription was simply anathema to a government that would prefer to see decision-making in schools driven by market forces, rather than evidence and expert guidance.

Whatever the case, we still need to help teachers and learners make the best possible use of the powerful tools at their disposal, while simultaneously preparing for the next virulent disease to come our way. It would be complacent to believe that the challenge of COVID-19 was a one-off. Yes, schools and teachers rose to the occasion brilliantly. It helped to advance the use of technology for teaching and learning exponentially. But planning for change is still far preferable to innovating in response to a national emergency.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR
John Galloway is a freelance writer,
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# The trouble with GROUP WORK

Students often enjoy working in groups, but as Colin Foster explains, a class doing things together isn't necessarily learning together...

roup work is often trumpeted as reflecting the natural order of human society. In everyday life, people are rarely required to operate in isolation. Human beings naturally form families and collaborative communities, thus making any school environment that forces students to work and be assessed individually a highly artificial one.

In the real world, we need each other. One of the most important things we might hope our students learn in school is how to collaborate and communicate effectively with others, since it's an absolute necessity for a wellfunctioning society. We also know that employers are actively looking for recruits possessing the kind of soft skills that enable them to do this - hence, lessons will often involve students learning in groups.

#### 'Learned helplessness'

But does that argument actually make sense? The are many aspects of 'real life' that aren't just less relevant in a learning context, but sometimes the exact opposite of what's needed.

For instance, in the real world we tend to 'play to people's strengths'. When young children are baking a cake together, you might hear something like, 'You're good at cracking eggs — you do that. I'm good at weighing — I'll weigh out the flour.'

This is good on many levels. It encourages a

positive, can-do attitude and gives the children a means of celebrating their skills. Having been made aware of their different strengths, they can work together as a team to get the job done more efficiently. Any employer would be pleased with that!

But from a learning point of view, how will Child 2 ever get good at cracking eggs if Child 1 always does it? How will Child 1 ever get good at weighing if they always rely on Child 2 to do it for them?

This kind of 'learned helplessness' can be insidious. There's no deliberate effort to deskill anyone, but that's what they know anything beyond what it needs them to do. Specialisation equals efficiency.

#### Thinking differently

In education, however, it's all about the *individuals*. In education, work is simply a means to an end. The motivation at play isn't that there are pages of exercises that need to be completed, or essays that need to be written – those will all end up in the bin eventually. The point is what's learned in the process.

When our priority is learning, we need to think very differently. The group work that enables tasks to be completed more efficiently often isn't all

## "The group work that enables tasks to be completed more efficiently often isn't all that helpful"

ultimately happens. Children get classed as 'good egg crackers' or 'good weighers', and become increasingly dependent on others to perform certain tasks.

In a work context, an employer may well not care about the individuals assigned to a task. As long as they're productive cogs in the machine, they're just a means to an end. If an employer is unlikely to ever redeploy its staff to different roles, it might not be bothered about whether

that helpful. For learning to occur, things need to be slowed down and everyone needs to get their chance.

Simply playing to each person's existing strengths serves to imprison learners in small pockets of capability, and prevent them from developing important skills they might lack. It misdirects practice to where it's least needed, placing the need to 'learn things' firmly at odds with the desire to 'get things done more efficiently'.

#### **Prioritising learning**

The main challenge of having students collaborate in the classroom is to avoid the left-hand column of the diagram labelled *fig. 1* and promote the one on the right. And that's hard.

To learn, we have to focus on our weaknesses. Doing this can be difficult and slow, and may well frustrate other members of the group if they have a 'doing', rather than a 'learning' focus.

During a pair work activity, I once heard a learner say, "It will be faster if you just do it and I just watch." Any teacher would be alarmed by this, but in a sense, that learner may actually have been right. If the faster child stopped to explain what they were doing, this would have slowed them down.

If the 'job' is to complete the task, and if that's what the teacher is rewarding ('Well done! Group A is finished already!'), then we shouldn't be surprised when children find ways of doing precisely that which serves to prevent learning. We should remember that in non-learning situations, this may indeed be the perfectly sensible thing to do.

#### Groups or no groups?

To some people, this is a fatal problem with group work, and one of the reasons why they believe it to be incompatible with learning, but I don't think that's necessarily the case.

Getting things done	Learning
Who's good at X? OK, you do X.	Who's good at X? OK, you do <b>Y</b> .
Who's good at Y? OK, you do Y.	Who's good at Y? OK, you do <b>X</b> .
Appropriate if we just want	Necessary if we want people
to <b>get the job done</b>	to <b>learn something</b>

fig. 1

I think that unplanned or poorly-planned group work is the problem.

Too often, students will begin lessons working individually, and gradually morph into collaboration as they start to approach 'work together'. If

to do so, then surely only the meanest teacher would say no.

The usual concern that arises here is that the students will then waste time 'off task' and fail to complete it, but the concern I have is almost the opposite – that by

working together, the students will be too successful. They may get on too well, too quickly, beyond what either of them might do unaided.

This means that even in a best-case scenario for pair work, you'll potentially end up with two partiallyskilled, complementary people who may 'work well together', but are unable to perform well individually – and that's in neither learner's best interests.

#### Mind the gaps

With groups larger than two, teachers will tend to complain even more vocally terms of freeloading and

Giving each group member a role (which might rotate over time) and making them individually accountable for the entire product of the group can be helpful. Even then, you still risk each person learning only part of what you're trying to teach.

Learning to perform effectively as a group can't help but create gaps that go overlooked, if only because someone else will be covering them. Like it or not, even outwardly 'successful' group work that sees students successfully completing their tasks will ultimately lull students into a false sense of security.



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#### A question of trust

TrustElevate is the only secure, reliable and accurate provider of child age verification and parental consent.

We believe that if companies knew the real ages of their users, they could create age-appropriate spaces in which children and young people can grow, learn and play without fear of online abuse, exposure to traumatising content and grooming.

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#### Rapid sanitisation

LapSafe ® offers an extensive range of mobile storage and charging trolleys – the safest available on today's market. Having specialised in safe power management solutions, enabling convenient charging and data transfer for laptops, Chromebooks, tablets and other mobile devices, LapSafe® has now introduced a new item in the form of the UV-C sanitiser station.

This innovative product can be added to an existing LapSafe® self-service locker configuration or used as a standalone appliance. The semi-automated UV-C sanitising unit will sanitise in around 15 to 20 seconds, deactivating 99% of bacteria and some viruses exposed to its high-intensity UV-C light. To find out more, contact sales@lapsafe.com or visit LapSafe.com



# **Teach Secondary**

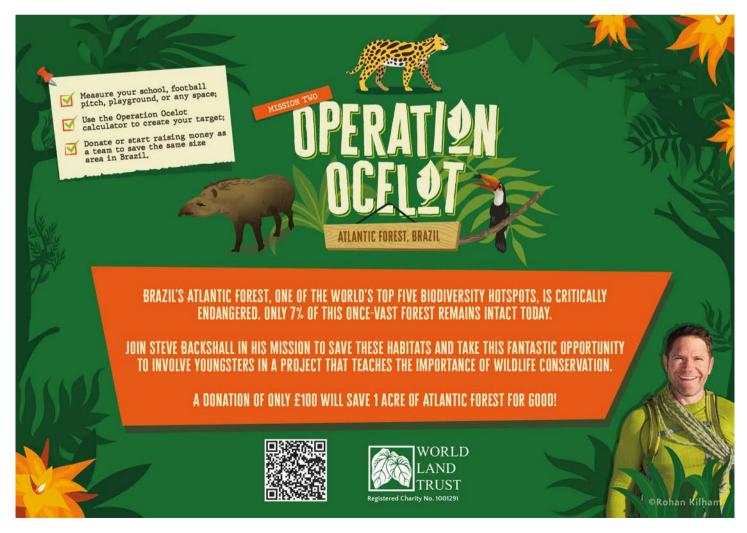
Alcohol, weed, nitrous, vapes, pills....all widely available recreational substances. Do your students know the risks?

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## **IN THIS ISSUE**

- + What teachers can gain from an 'open door policy'
- + Why your classroom priority should be 'do no harm'
- + Why are some schools 'stuck' with mediocre Ofsted ratings?
- + A short guide to correcting problematic behaviours
- + Have social mobility rates gone into reverse?
- + The Times Education Commission delivers its findings
- + Tackling geography's diversity problem
- + 5 ideas for lesson starters

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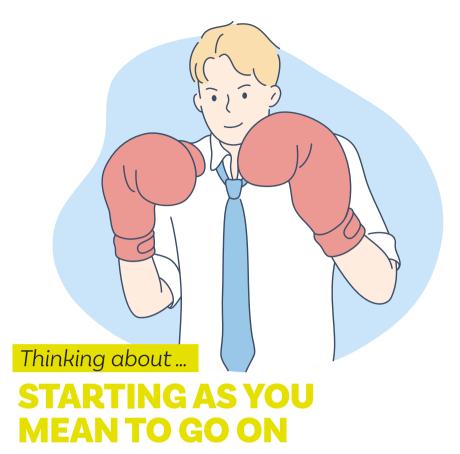
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e all know the type of headteacher who places too much value on managing operational matters – think staffing, duty rotas, financial budgets and similar. They will assign vast amounts of time to the writing of policies, setting of rigid procedures and eye-catching workflow displays.

They'll often have the 'correct' answer to hand, but rarely be able to offer any solutions that extend outside of the authority or organisation they're answerable to. From these headteachers, you can also expect to find a reluctance to speak plainly from the heart, or be seen to take any risks that might result in the forces above them being questioned.

Indeed, this type of leader will often lack imagination and creativity. Their car's most likely well-serviced. You can bet their shoes are comfortable, with heels carefully attuned for recommended posture and back positioning. Being highly efficient, organised and reliable people, they unquestionably get the job done, and to a high standard. But if one of the things we expect schools to do is *inspire us*, then these aren't the leaders we need.

Imagine you're a teacher attending a staff development morning. In one room, a group of teachers are working through an exercise that involves viewing short clips from the Rocky series of boxing

films that show the main protagonist, Rocky Balboa, training for fights where he's the underdog. There's pumping music, inspirational speeches, the overcoming of adversity...

Next door, a different group of teachers are being presented with the updated fire evacuation plan, complete with statistics drawn from the latest round of national assessments, immediately followed by an update on several recent policy changes and adjustments to administrative processes.

I know which group of teachers I want to be teaching my kids the next day – and it's not the ones who can tell me what that new icon in the updated registration software does.

I'm being perhaps a little mean. Yes, all teaching staff have important operational roles and responsibilities. Naturally, they need to be made aware of important policy updates – but is day 1 INSET really the time and the place?

The first day back at school should involve so much more than that. It's the film premier, the fireworks preceding the cup final. It's a time when teachers need to be reinvigorated and inspired, ahead of the teaching and provision of meaningful experiences that will recommence at 8.30am the following morning. Not bludgeoned with dense details of new operating procedures.



#### **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

Ed Carlin is a deputy headteacher at a Scottish secondary school, having worked in education for 15 years and held teaching roles at schools in Northern Ireland and England

#### THE VIRTUES OF AN 'OPEN DOOR POLICY'



The term 'open door policy' typically refers to the figurative 'door' of management being left open for employees to offer feedback on any aspect of the workplace. The aim is usually to build trust and open dialogue between employees and managers, which will hopefully lead to workplace improvements – so why are there often reservations about adopting open door policies within education?

In the context of schools, the concept could be better described as an 'open classroom' policy. At Castle Mead Academy where I work, this equates to all classrooms being open to receiving visitors at all times (barring exceptional circumstances).

These visits might involve senior leadership, prospective parents or any other members of staff at the school. It can feel overwhelming at first, but if implemented effectively, can be hugely valuable for teacher development.

In our school, we're made aware of potential visitors in advance where possible, and know that our role in the process is to focus explicitly on the teaching and learning of our students, carrying on as we normally would.

Visits from leadership will often be looking to gauge whole school effectiveness in relation to specific evidence-based teaching strategies, or areas of our 'invigorating instruction' framework. In that instance, we'll have already learnt about the foci in our bi-weekly professional learning sessions, and had the opportunity to put this into practice, while gaining peer feedback in our weekly expert practice sessions.

Any key findings will then be shared across the whole school – generally with no mention of individuals, though senior leaders will go out of their way to praise staff for any identified areas of especially good practice.

Working at a school that embraces an open-door policy has had several positive impacts upon my own practice. These have included enabling me to network, and build strong relationships with my colleagues that are built on trust.

It has also helped to normalise the process of having others enter the classroom, for both myself and my students. Other than a brief smile of acknowledgment, I'll carry on as planned. Visitors will see no theatrics or premeditated performance – just high-quality teaching.

In turn, I have been able to attend other lessons being taught across a range of subjects, enabling me to identify notable exampes of good practice myself, and use these to inform my own teaching.

## **TRY THIS**

#### DO NO HARM

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

The first principle of behaviour management is 'Don't make things worse.'

You might feel hurt by that boy's personal comment. irritated by those giggly girls' whispers, wound up that pair's continual chatting - but losing your rag with the class, whether you think it's justified or not (which, by the way, it's not) won't help. Instead, wait until you've calmed down before you act. You'll be more balanced, objective and reasonable, in a way that will benefit both you and the student(s). Oh, and vou'll have modelled a really useful life skill in the process - namely self-control.

Don't let the apparent simplicity of this tip give you the impression that's it's not important, because it is. Very. And be wary of labelling it as 'obvious'. The problem with describing certain things as obvious is that, well, it's not always the case that they are – at least not to everyone. The same applies to 'common sense', which can sometimes turn out to be not as commonly understood as we think it is.

To reiterate, 'do no harm' is the first principle of behaviour management. And you do no harm by carefully controlling your reactions to any and all behaviour situations you find yourself in.

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

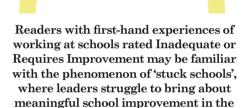


STUART CARROLL IS A FORMER ENGINEERING LECTURER AND CURRENT DESIGN TECHNOLOGY TEACHER AT A SCHOOL IN LEICESTER

# 63%

of teachers believe schools should do more to provide students with training in soft skills such as communication, listening, time management and empathy

> Source: Censuswide survey commissioned by learning provider Go1



wake of consistently less than Good Ofsted grades.

According to a new report published by The Education Policy Institute and UCL Institute of Education, 'stuck' schools are often faced with instability in terms of staffing and pupil numbers, high rates of local poverty and a large proportion of children with low-level SEND.

The researchers found that what tended to distinguish 'stuck schools' from those with similar challenges but not in the same cycle, was that the latter enjoyed geographical proximity to, or close links with Good or Outstanding neighbourhood schools.

The report further notes that while a less than Good inspection judgement is itself a relatively modest contributing factor to 'stuck' schools' lack of improvement over time, Ofsted monitoring and full inspections following such judgements were 'arguably too frequent, variable and inconsistent.'

The full report, "Stuck' schools: Can below Good Ofsted inspections prevent sustainable improvement?" is available via bit.ly/ts115-LL1

#### **YOUR GUIDE TO...**

#### CORRECTING BEHAVIOUR

It's not the best part of being a teacher, but there will be times when you're going to have to talk to students about things they're doing wrong. If you don't deal with growing issues quickly and efficiently, situations can escalate and start to disrupt learning.

Having the right tools at your disposal is of paramount importance when maintaining relationships and the fluidity of learning for all.

#### Keep it private

Private individual correction is a good way to combat low-level disruption in your classroom. By not drawing attention to the behaviour, you signal to the learner that they're not going to derail your lesson.

Often, if we overtly address behaviours publicly, students will see that as threading and escalate their actions. Some enjoy the stage – don't give it to them.

Instead, start a task and acknowledge the behaviour whilst you're circulating. Identify that you know about it while avoiding threats. Sometimes this is enough to quell silliness – by not overtly challenging a behaviour, you're signalling to the rest of the class that you value their learning more than the distraction.

#### Be precise

When intervening, don't get embroiled in a back and forth. Explicitly state why the exhibited behaviour isn't helpful and move on. Getting into an argument will only waste time and energy.

Remember to address the behaviour, not the individual. Simply changing pronouns from 'you' to 'we' can make interactions more inclusive. 'We don't talk whilst others are talking..." is less threatening and more likely to build collective efficacy than 'You don't talk whilst others are talking...'

#### Deploy praise

I'm not going to recommend a specific praise/sanction ratio you should adhere to when speaking to students about a negative behaviour, but it's important to bear in mind that you'll tend to get more from learners through praise than you will through threat.

Threatening to take something away (such as 'social time') isn't going to intrinsically motivate learners. Instead, think about how you can create positive correlations with desired expectations and outcomes. Avoid using 'if' as a condition of completing work or behaving, because you'll then be held to the ultimatum.





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

# 79%

of teachers feel that their pupils are less prepared for the world of work compared to previous cohorts, owing to the COVID-19 pandemic

Source: YouGov and Teacher Tapp polling commissioned by Teach First

# Need to know

New research from The Sutton Trust has painted a bleak picture of social mobility in the UK in the near to long-term future, suggesting that we can expect to see a "Step change downwards in the UK's relative income mobility levels", in the absence of measures aimed at curbing education inequalities.

The report, 'Social mobility – past, present and future' notes that the field of social mobility research has seen a five-fold increase in publication rates over the past 25 years, drawing on a plethora of disciplines and new approaches to data gathering. The insights to have emerged from this seems less than encouraging, however.

The authors observe that while some measures relative social class and education mobility appear to have slightly improved, the education system as a whole tends not to function as a social leveller. Instead, children's home environments and upbringing continue to exert a significant impact on future outcomes, with children of non-graduate parents less likely to grow up in family-owned homes, intergenerational income persistence on the rise and absolute rates of social mobility in decline.

Read the full report at bit.ly/ts115-LL2



#### IN THE NEWS

# TIMES EDUCATION COMMISSION DELIVERS FINAL REPORT

After a year of holding evidence sessions, overseeing roundtable meetings, meeting with youth panels and parent groups and carrying out multiple school visits, this month saw the Times Education Commission deliver its final report. And the headline finding is that Britain's education system is 'failing on every level'.

Originally set up at the suggestion of Sir Anthony Seldon, the 22-member Commission included the likes of ASCL general secretary Geoff Barton, former children's commissioner Anne Longfield, Ark chief executive Lucy Heller and Sir Michael Morpurgo.

Among the education challenges identified by the Commission were the findings that 75% of companies say they have had to provide new employees with extra training in basic skills, and that primary school teachers report 46% of children as not being 'school ready'.

When canvassing the views of parents with school-aged children, the Commission found that 60% saw Britain's education system as badly preparing children and young people for work, and that 65% felt there to be too much emphasis on tests and qualifications.

The report also notes the dramatic rise in teachers leaving the profession due to working conditions, with 46% of teachers and 40% of senior leaders

reporting having experienced anxiety, and 28% of teachers acute stress.

The report concludes with 12 key recommendations that include streamlining the number of exams taken at 16, and introducing a new British Baccalaureate that would offer students a broader choice of academic and vocational qualifications at 18, with parity in per pupil funding across both routes.

Also mooted in the report is the idea of recruiting undergraduate tutors, who would earn credit towards their degrees by assisting students at risk of falling being academically, and the issuing of laptops or tablets to all children, alongside wider adoption of AI-driven personalised learning platforms to reduce teacher workload.

One proposal seen as contentious by some is for a 'revalidation' process that teachers would be subject to every five years, similar to the regular certification processes undergone by doctors and nurses within the medical profession.

Suggestions likely to see more agreement include placing counsellors in all schools, carrying out regular wellbeing surveys to ensure student mental health support provision isn't purely reactive, and expanding Ofsted's inspection remit to include school culture, wellbeing and inclusion.

The full report can be viewed at thetimes.co.uk/tec



If the numbers are anything to go by, geography is enjoying something of a 'moment'. This year saw a 20-year record high of 247,000 GCSE entries, making it the fifth most studied GCSE subject, with a large portion of that growth coming from groups who were traditionally least likely to choose it as an option particularly Black, Asian and minority ethnic students, students from lower income families and those attending comprehensive schools.

However, the picture becomes markedly less diverse where A Levels and higher education is concerned, with a recent report from the Royal Geographical Society (see bit. ly/ts115-LL3) observing that in 2018, 88% of undergraduate geographers were white.

To help tackle this, the RGS has embarked on a new 'Geography for all' project that aims to address ongoing equality, diversity and inclusion issues within the subject via a three-pronged approach. This will include piloting and evaluating direct outreach work with young people currently underrepresented in geography, as well as building a network of

experienced geography teachers to assist trainees and ECTs. The project is also hoping to involve universities and employers in promoting potential routes into degreelevel study of the subject and careers in the sector.

Geography practitioners who take part in the RGS' educators network will receive free access to a series of online and face-to-face teacher CPD events, details of which will be announced in due course. Those interested in signing up can do so via an online form at

bit.ly/ts115-LL4

## TRENDING

Our pick of the recent resources and launches teachers might find useful...

#### PEACE OF MIND

'GT Scholars x Brit Insurance digital challenges' is an online initiative aimed at 11- to 18-year-olds which aims to spread knowledge of the insurance sector and build employability skills. As well as learning about risk, assessing claims and other aspects of the insurance business, those taking part will be in with a chance of winning a share of a £3,000 prize fund.

#### TAKING THE LEAD

The Greenshaw Learning Trust has launched a new leadership-themed podcast series called 'Above and Beyond', aimed at educators and leaders in other fields keen to learn from the education profession. Each episode will detail the experiences and practices of a successful leader, and explore how their perspectives and insights might be able to help and inspire those listening in. anchor.fm/aboveandbeyond

### TEACHER WALKTHROUGH

#### **5 TIPS FOR STARTER ACTIVITIES**

ADVICE FOR TEACHERS, BY TEACHERS, AS VISUALISED BY ZEPH BENNETT...

Source A

#### **RAPID SEQUENCING**

Provide students with key themes from the previous lesson.
Students then have to create a timeline or graphic organiser to link and categorise the facts.

2



#### RETRIEVAL PRACTICE

Ask students to recall five key facts about the last lesson.
A scaffolded task could include providing some hints on previously covered topics.





#### **VISUAL RECALL**

Provide a picture source. Students are required to explain the image's context, and/or its usefulness and overall accuracy.

4



## SPOT THE FALSEHOOD

The students are given a short list of statements. They are then tasked with identifying whether they are true or false.

5



#### **ODD ONE OUT**

Students are provided with a series of images or statements, and using their investigative skills, determine which one is the 'odd one out'.

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

#### ENGLISH LITERATURE

# Methuen Drama Student Editions: Arthur Miller

Help your class navigate the richness and complexities of four celebrated plays by Arthur Miller with these Student Editions



#### AT A GLANCE

- Four Arthur Miller plays issued in new Student Editions overseen by leading drama and performance academics
- Each edition contains a new introduction, up-to-date guides and performance notes on the relevant play, alongside commentary on Miller's literary significance
- Students get to benefit from full plot commentaries and detailed breakdowns of each play's context, themes, characters, language and critical reception
- The editions also cover certain landmark productions, featuring exclusive interviews with production personnel

#### **REVIEW BY JOHN DABELL**

Widely considered to be one of the 20th century's greatest playwrights, Arthur Miller gained worldwide recognition for his probing and socially aware dramas. His plays effortlessly combined the psychological and the social, resulting in riveting portrayals of the often fraught relationships between individuals and wider society.

Miller's body of work includes the essential plays Death of a Salesman (1949), The Crucible (1953), A View from the Bridge (1955) and Incident at Vichy (1964), all of which continue to have a profound contemporary relevance. These plays are moreover the first four to be issued by Methuen Drama as part of their Student Editions series, with a further eight plays due to be published by the end of the year, including All My Sons.

Each book contains the full text of the relevant play, alongside a considerable amount of engaging contemporary commentary. They all do a magnificent job of tapping into Miller's worldview, and giving students fascinating insights into his perspective on how human beings operate. They learn that watching a Miller play is like looking in a mirror; that the issues of morality they explore are often so universal, we can't help but engage with them.

These new editions feature contributions from experts that amount to academic deep dives – prodding and provoking students' thinking, and doing much to improve their understanding of numerous themes, from race and gender to politics and power. The commentaries take students on a series of moral journeys alongside each play's key characters, alighting on what they tell us about the plays' treatment of matters relating to alienation, denial, contradiction, social stigmas and order versus disorder

The Student Editions share a consistent format that starts with a chronology of Miller's life, before giving way to an introduction that provides an enlightening overview of the relevant play's historical, social and cultural context, genres and themes, as well as its production history.

The four books are edited by leading academics, weaving together helpful insights and debates in a way that gives students a variety of ways in which to think critically about issues and themes such as religion, capitalism, identity, psychology and love. The supporting commentaries pose a variety of questions and should provide plenty of useful material to support your exam preparations, alongside their own suggestions for additional reading that can support further study.

The Arthur Miller Methuen Drama Student Editions are must-haves for any students exploring these modern classics, or indeed anyone teaching literature or drama who's keen to explore Miller's explorations of humanity in more depth.

# teach

#### VERDICT

- ✓ Perfect for drama and performance studies
- ✓ Each edition features comprehensive, relevant and engaging material for students
- ✓ The editions make for highly accessible points of entry into Miller's recurring themes and preoccupations, such as the human condition, character flaws and socio-religious beliefs
- ✓ Designed principally for students, but equally valuable for teachers, scholars, actors, practitioners and theatre lovers

#### PICK UP IF...

You're looking for high quality student resources to accompany the study of Arthur Miller's works that you can rely on to be accurate, well-informed and able to offer indepth analysis

These four Arthur Miller plays in the Methuen Drama Student Editions series, as well as eight further plays coming in autumn 2022, are published by Methuen Drama (an imprint of Bloomsbury Publishing) and are avaialble from bloomsbury.com/Arthur Miller; prices range from £8.09 to £12.99



# MyConcern

Stay on top of your safeguarding obligations and ensure concerns are promptly addressed with this userfriendly reporting system

#### AT A GLANCE

- Bespoke safeguarding software for creating customised reports
- Automated chronologies for identifying trends
- Allows for easier inter-agency information sharing
- Up-to-date advice and guidance resources, including templates

"Its reporting

tools are

second to

none"

#### **REVIEW BY JOHN DABELL**

Child protection is a key priority for all schools but one that's become increasingly complicated to manage, as the safeguarding risks children are potentially vulnerable to have grown over time.

Children spend around 7,800 hours in the care of teachers and other staff. The scale of this responsibility is enormous, and its challenges are complex. Staff are regularly informed that if they see something, they say should say something and report it - but how? Schools need to ensure they have robust data and reporting mechanisms in place, so that effective action can be initiated in accordance with existing policies and staff can ensure

procedures are being followed, while enabling different agencies to work together.

That's why I unreservedly recommend MyConcern a Queen's Award-winning secure digital platform created by former police officers, designed to enable

staff to easily record, report and manage all safeguarding, wellbeing and pastoral concerns.

The software is brilliantly configured to provide all the expertise school staff will need in one place. As soon as a concern is raised, it's assigned its own unique reference number and a Designated Liaison Person is alerted, thus kick-starting the process of triaging.

Concerns can be grouped under different categories and case owners easily assigned. Users then have the option to view an automated chronology, complete with filtering, redaction and export functions. Separate files can be easily attached to concerns, with all documents securely stored. A main 'Concerns' dashboard will clearly display any filed, open and new concerns, while a 'Pupil Profiles' function can be made to show aggregated information across all concerns, including body maps, flags and level of need.

MyConcern can provide safeguarding leads with the confidence that they're meeting all statutory, legal and moral obligations. Its reporting tools are second to none, giving you detailed data analysis of the highest order, and the option to present all this data via easy to digest summaries, to help identify trends and deploy resources more effectively.

Crucially, MyConcern will help schools build

effective, well-informed safeguarding teams that can respond rapidly when a child appears to be at risk. Accountability processes are baked in, with the platform keeping a thorough audit trail of who, when and what has been involved in any given concern.

Information sharing with external partners is therefore made more accurate, reliable and better able to withstand later scrutiny, allowing you to minimise your own risks and ensure compliance. Even better, any concerns you have can be securely recorded and case managed on any internet-enabled device, either through a web browser or via the dedicated MyConcern mobile app.

The welfare and wellbeing of children is everyone's business. MyConcern can be a powerful ally to you in helping record and manage essential evidence as part of your whole-school safeguarding procedures.





# teach **SECONDARY**

#### VERDICT

- ✓ An ultra-secure platform for recording and addressing safeguarding concerns
- ✓ Robust and sophisticated reporting tools
- ✓ Smartly designed, with an intuitive and easy-to-use interface accessible via multiple devices
- ✓ Excellent value for money
- ✓ An innovative and outstanding piece of safeguarding infrastructure

#### UPGRADE IF...

You are looking to easily record and manage any safeguarding concerns, while saving time and facilitating early intervention. This is a powerful system that can materially improve your safeguarding provision.

For more information, visit thesafeguardingcompany.com/myconcern



#### **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

John Lawson is a former secondary teacher, now serving as a foundation governor and running a tutoring service, and author of the book The Successful (Less Stressful) Student (Outskirts Press, £11.95); for more information, visit prep4successnow. wordpress.com or follow @johninpompano



#### THE LAST WORD

# Saying no to Dr No



# We should be glad that classrooms are less brutal than they used to be, but also wary of the pendulum swinging too far the other way, writes John Lawson...

When COVID curtailed school visits, I embraced Twitter and built a network of teaching friends. Exchanging tweets with fellow teachers proved to be an enriching experience, so long as one steered clear of pugilistic spats the platform is notorious for.

I wasn't teaching in schools throughout the pandemic, and thus came across a few discussions of problems I hadn't faced personally – yet some teaching practices don't change, and it seemed to me that the disruptions of COVID made it more important than ever to identify what those might be.

Sadly, though, while sharing my thoughts regarding some treasured teaching truisms, I found myself periodically admonished by a high profile Twitter user who I shall henceforth refer to as 'Dr. No' – someone who I can only assume teaches classes exclusively populated with delightful children.

According to Dr. No, if children are regularly late for class, teachers should celebrate their arrival rather than admonish them. *Grades*, they insist, are merely *the degrading tools of elitists*. If students cheat on tests, it's because schools falsely equate grades with ability. Ergo, all tests and grade books should be abolished.

#### Irreparable harm

Homework is another no-no, since it steals too much precious leisure time. Children mustn't be *corrected*, because that might irreparably harm their self-esteem. Juvenile curses aimed at teachers? Those are simply primal cries for unconditional love. You see, the kids in our classrooms genuinely want to learn, though will occasionally — and entirely understandably — rage against its debasement by totalitarian propagandists.

Oh, and uniforms engender conformism, And asking permission to use the bathroom is humiliating and controlling.

Really?

Let's imagine what the wholesale abolition of homework, tests, grades, codes of conduct, and bathroom passes might look like. Will our students continue to give their absolute best every day? Can we expect all children to never be naughty or indolent ever again? How can children develop character if we never challenge them?

#### Okay, boomer

When I put such questions to Dr. No, they wouldn't respond

personally – though their ultra-progressive acolytes could always be relied upon to rabidly attack me for questioning Dr No's omniscience. 'Dr No has a YouTube channel! Have you?' I don't

Before encountering 'the Doc' and their 80k followers, I rarely had cause to question my own deeply held liberal-ish credentials. Yet now I'm frequently left agog at how the well-documented history of education in this country goes blithely ignored.

I remember all too well the schoolteachers who would routinely beat, shame and humiliate us baby boomers. I can still recall how Mr. Wellard once twisted my ear, while guffawing to the rest of the class about how he'd written my recommendation letter for "UAS – "The University of Advanced Stupidity!" But, please – do tell me more about how humiliating 21st century teaching practices are.

#### Apologists for excellence

The college professors who influenced me the most had a genuine love for teaching and cared about my wellbeing. Unlike Dr. No and co, however, they didn't routinely demonise the system or their colleagues, nor did they idealise their students.

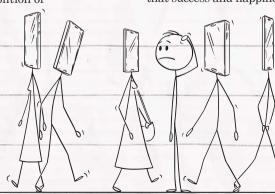
Instead, they accepted us for who we were, while challenging us to improve ourselves. I was never reduced to my IQ, postcode, or past misadventures. My teachers were apologists for excellence who unapologetically demanded my best.

As such, red ink would be liberally scrawled across my grammatical and intellectual shortcomings. I was once given an 'F' for misreading a question. Guess who made sure that wouldn't happen again in his uni finals...?

Teachers need assessments which can establish whether what we think we are teaching is what our students are indeed learning. Are their academic achievements comparable to local, national, or global standards? Good educators don't pretend that success and happiness are easily found, because they're

not. They mix hope with realism.

Students need to think for themselves, identify and nurture their unique gifts and talents, appreciate that respect is a two-way street and graft at their chosen craft. Ultimately, I want my students to accept that the teachers who prepare them for life's inevitable challenges — rather than those who would prefer to wish such challenges away — really aren't the enemy.





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