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INTERVIEW



CATHERINE LEE

*"Section 28 was
devastating"*

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can 'unlearn'
misogyny

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Behaviour tips for
schools from the Army

Take back control

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Plus

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FROM THE EDITOR

"Welcome..."



It's fair to say that relations between Ofsted and school leaders have been somewhat turbulent at times – but following the death of headteacher Ruth Perry, a profound, perhaps irrevocable change seems to have taken place.

Perry took her own life in January of this year, shortly before her school, Caversham Primary School in Berkshire, was due to receive an Inadequate rating from the regulator.

As this issue of *Teach Secondary* went to press, her family released a media statement which read, "We are in no doubt that Ruth's death was a direct result of the pressure put on her by the process and outcome of an Ofsted inspection at her school. We do not for an instant recognise Ofsted's 'inadequate' judgement as a true reflection of Ruth's exemplary leadership or of the wonderful school she led."

Within a matter of days, the news appeared to galvanise something of an uprising against the regulator. An executive headteacher announced her intention to refuse Ofsted inspectors entry to her school. Those comments were later withdrawn, but she and her staff subsequently mounted a silent protest outside their school's gates. Headteacher associations called for an immediate pause to school inspections and urgent reviews into their impact on school leaders and staff. At the time of writing, a petition calling for an inquiry into Ofsted's inspection of Caversham Primary School has attracted some 188,500 signatures and counting.

The catalysing event and most visible responses thus far have largely involved primary staff, but secondary colleagues are affected too. Are we witnessing a reckoning? Was it just a matter of time until something like this happened?

Right now, at least, emotions are understandably raw. The rapid and furious response seen across the profession seems, at least in part, an expression of anger and frustration with the schools accountability system that's been building up over a considerable amount of time.

Lest we forget, of course, this is all unfolding against the backdrop of a protracted dispute over teachers' pay. Right now, we could well be witnessing what happens when a profession is pushed to the very brink and then beyond, until something finally snaps.

It's too early to tell what the long-term ramifications of the last couple of months will be – but we shouldn't be surprised if, in terms of how Ofsted and schools perceive each other, there's no going back to the way things were.

Enjoy the issue,

Callum Fauser
callum.fauser@theteachco.com

On board this issue:



Jenny Hampton is an English teacher and literacy lead



Matt MacGuire is an assistant headteacher



Nicole Rodden is the co-founder of Life Lessons



Ed Carlin is a deputy headteacher



Professor Becky Francis CBE is CEO of the Education Endowment Foundation



Daniel Harvey is a science teacher and pastoral lead

KEEP IN TOUCH!

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

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TOXIC
MASCULINITY

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cliqq.co.uk

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Design & reprographics: Ace Pre-Press
01206 508608

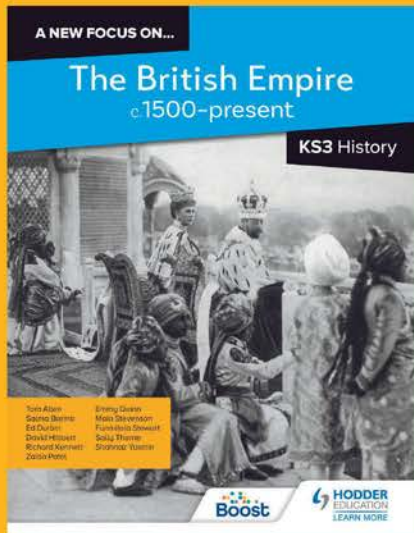
Customer services:
hello@dcthomson.co.uk, 0800 904 7000

Published by: Aceville Publications,
25 Phoenix Court, Hawkins Rd, Colchester, Essex,
CO2 8JY. Tel: 01206 505900

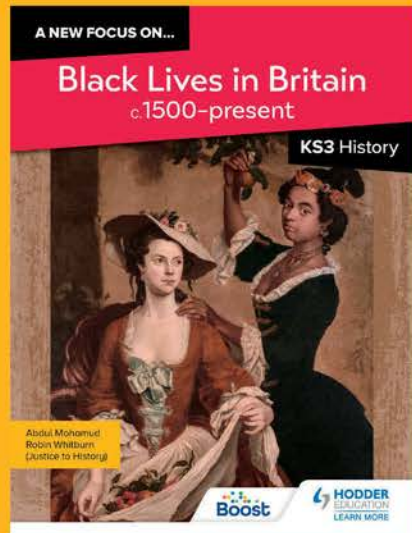
A NEW FOCUS ON...

KS3 History

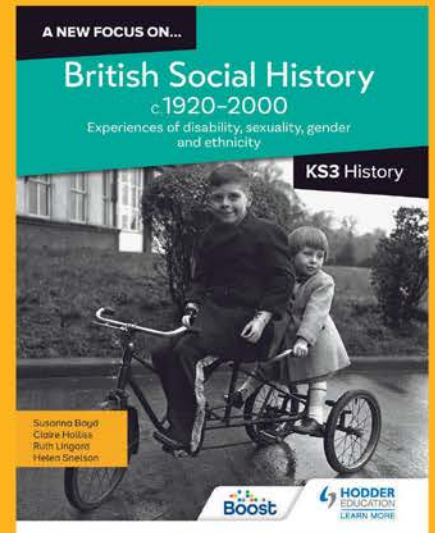
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"The choice to focus on marginalised groups – women, disabled people, Gypsy Roma Traveller people and queer people – brings to light many stories that have seldom been told."

*Dr Laura Schwartz, University of Warwick
Review of British Social History*

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View samples and access free resources for teachers at hoddereducation.co.uk/ts-april-23



The newsletter

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

The UNINFORMED teacher's guide to...

STUDENT PROTESTS

Who remembers when most teens lived in complete ignorance of politics? Things are different now.

The youth of 2023 know what civil disobedience is, how powerful it can be when marshalled effectively, and are duly doing just that against a range of issues – school policies regarding toilet breaks during lessons, uniform regulations (particularly with respect to skirt lengths) and assorted behaviour rules apparently being the main flashpoints.

To some, these actions – manifested mostly as walk-outs, erecting barricades and other forms of disruption – are just classic examples of adolescents' propensity for chaotic disorder and rebellion, shrouded in the high-minded language of grassroots protest movements.

But then this is a generation reared on dystopian fiction. A cohort that had its formative years blotted out by a global pandemic, and which can look forward to adult lives scarred by climate catastrophe. They're young citizens who have seen all too vividly how the highest authorities in the land can be bereft of probity, sincerity, and indeed morality. Perhaps we shouldn't be too surprised if howls of rage and co-ordinated defiance can seem like pretty attractive options to some of them right now...



DO SAY

"It's for a cause"



DON'T SAY

"It's a phase, of course..."

BEAT THE BUDGET



Who is it for?

KS1 to KS3

What's on offer?

Presentations, activity sheets and links to online Royal Collection media to help school classes explore the structure and history of the coronation ceremony



How might teachers use the resource?

Ahead of the Coronation of King Charles III on 6th May 2023, teachers can use the resources to help students understand the role of a king in the UK, discover what the coronation ceremony involves and celebrate the historical moment.

celebrate the historical moment.

Where is it available?

bit.ly/ts123-NL1

What are we talking about?

School resources for the Coronation 2023 by The Royal Collection Trust

Think of a number...

DON'T QUOTE ME...

"I fully understand that teacher and leader workload is too high"

Education Secretary Gillian Keegan in a letter updating schools on the government's response to teacher strikes

23%

of families struggled to provide sufficient food for their children throughout the winter of 2022/23

Source: Survey of over 1,000 British families by Barnardo's

52%

of LGBTI teachers have experienced discrimination and abuse from pupils and parents

Source: NASUWT polling

17%

of UK children have experienced cyberbullying online, with Roblox and YouTube the two sites where child harassment is most likely to occur

Source: ExpressVPN

ONE FOR THE WALL

"We know that no one ever seizes power with the intention of relinquishing it"

George Orwell



Access denied?

The Children's Commissioner has published a new report examining the availability of access to children and young people's mental health services (CYPMHS) in 2021/22.

48% of the 1.4 million children estimated to have a mental health disorder had at least one contact with CYPMHS, while 32% of those children who were referred received no treatment. The latter group varied considerably across the country, however, with around 5% of referrals being closed without treatment in NHS East Sussex, compared to a substantially higher 50% in NHS North Cumbria.

The average waiting time from an initial CYPMHS referral to starting treatment currently stands at 40 days – up from 32 days in 2020-21. Again, the average figures mask pronounced regional variations, with wait times ranging from 13 days in NHS Leicester to as much as 80 days in NHS Sunderland.

The report also highlights the extent to which spending on children's mental health services has increased each year since 2017-18, even after adjusting for inflation. Clinical commissioning groups spent a combined £927 million on CYPMHS in 2021-22, amounting to 1% of their total allocated budgets – an increase of 7% in real terms over the £869 million CCGs spent in 2020-21.

The report can be downloaded in full via bit.ly/ts123-NL2

SAVE THE DATE

SPEECHES AND CORRESPONDENCE

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



THE LETTER:

School leaders network calls for inspections inquiry and suspension of Ofsted visits

FROM? HeadteacherChat (headteachers.org)

TO? Amanda Spielman, Ofsted HMCI

WHEN? 21st March 2023

In light of the devastating news regarding Ruth Perry, the headteacher who tragically took her own life following a recent Ofsted inspection, we are writing to you on behalf of the education community, who we support through Headteacher Chat.

We are requesting an independent inquiry into Ofsted inspections overall, and a temporary suspension of all Ofsted inspections until the inquiry is complete. It is vital that the enquiry includes:

1. Whether the final grading and judgement is necessary
2. Whether there is a more supportive, collaborative and effective approach that would be less pressured for all those involved, including staff, children and their families
3. Whether there should be more of a focus on helping teachers and leaders, with added support training and resources to do so
4. How Ofsted can provide more support and resources to schools before, during and after the inspection process to help schools cope with the stress and pressure of the inspection
5. How Ofsted can provide better training for inspectors to identify and address mental health concerns among teachers and leaders during inspections
6. How Ofsted can help leaders and teachers to ask for help at any time, and how they can support teachers and leaders in a positive and collaborative way
7. How Ofsted can ensure that inspections do not have a negative impact on the school, their community and the mental health and wellbeing of those involved, but instead, have a positive impact that ensures growth and celebrates achievement



THE SPEECH:

Chancellor delivers 2023 Spring Budget

WHO? Chancellor of the Exchequer, Jeremy Hunt

WHEN? 15th March 2023

"School age children often face barriers to working because of the limited availability of wraparound care. One third of primary schools do not offer childcare at both ends of the school day, even though for many people a job requires availability throughout the working day.

To address this, we will fund schools and local authorities to increase supply of wraparound care so all school-age parents can drop their children off between 8am and 6pm. Our ambition is that all schools will start to offer a wraparound offer, either on their own or in partnership with other schools, by September 2026."

17 MAY 2023 Schools & Academies Show | 16 JUNE 2023 The National Education Show – Llandudno | 6-7 JULY 2023 Festival of Education

17 MAY 2023

Schools & Academies Show
ExCeL London
schoolsandacademiesshow.co.uk

Representatives of schools, MATs, LAs and government bodies will again be converging on ExCeL London this May, for a day-long event dedicated to discussions and exchanges of ideas regarding policy updates and practical resources for schools. Headline speakers will include Tes editor Jon Severs and ISBL chief executive Stephen Morales, alongside a keynote address by Education Secretary, Gillian Keegan.

16 JUNE 2023

The National Education Show – Llandudno
Venue Cymru, Llandudno
nationaleducationshow.com

The first of three National Education Shows scheduled for this year, the Llandudno leg will be hosting some 40+ CPD seminars and facilitating countless networking opportunities for visiting teachers. Running alongside those will be an exhibition space where visiting educators can get hands-on with the very latest products and services developed with the education sector in mind.

6-7 JULY 2023

Festival of Education
Wellington College, Crowthorne
educationfest.co.uk

Following a triumphant return in 2022 after a pandemic-prompted hiatus, the organisers of the 13th Festival of Education are expecting to welcome some 5,500 attendees and an impressive 300 speakers to the leafy environs of Wellington College for two days of inspiring oratory and robust debate concerning the past, present and future of education – along with the finest opportunities for effective networking you're likely to encounter all year.



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Get Into Film

Following on from Into Film's extensive work in celebration of International Women's Day, here are two suggested short films to illustrate some of the inspiring content we have available for schools:

INSIDE CINEMA: AVA DUVERNAY, (2020, CLASSIFIED, 14 MINS)

Film writer Corrina Antrobus examines the work of director Ava DuVernay and the barriers she's broken down for Black female filmmakers. DuVernay was the first Black woman to win Best Director at Sundance, the first Black woman to direct a film with a \$100m+ budget and the first Black woman to have a film nominated for Best Picture at the Academy Awards.

This video essay looks at how her work has been dedicated to representing and re-framing Black history on screen through the likes of *Selma*, her documentary *13th*, and the mini-series *When They See Us*, with its focus on themes of police brutality and incarceration.



LEAF BOAT (2020, UNCLASSIFIED, 8 MINS)

Heledd and Celyn explore a seaside town together, delighting in each other's company. As they grow closer, the world around them seems to become a more colourful and magical place, and they imagine sailing away on a leaf boat, just the two of them - but with the giddy excitement comes the fear of things going wrong... With rich visual metaphors and warm playfulness, this Welsh-language animation celebrates LGBTQ+ love and relationships, and frames life as a brilliant journey to be embraced.

Head online to intofilm.org to stream both films for free



Retweets

Who's been saying what on Twitter this month?

Timothy Paramour @timparamour

Terrifying watershed moment at work today. For years, kids have accidentally called teachers 'mum' or 'dad' without thinking, with hilarity ensuing. Today one of my colleagues got referred to as 'Alexa'.

Aidan Severs @AidanSevers

Middle daughter came home yesterday saying she'd been learning about a man called Stephen Lawrence who was killed in 1993 for being Black. I asked if she knew what had happened then with the police and she did. She was up in arms about it all. Love their school.

Follow us via [@teachsecondary](https://twitter.com/teachsecondary) - and let us know what you're thinking

TEACHER TALES

True stories from the education chalkface

Loud and clear

I once worked at a secondary school that had a hearing impaired unit (HIU) with around a dozen or so pupils. This group were taught in many of the same classes alongside everyone else, which meant teachers were required to wear transmitters around their necks when teaching classes containing one or more HIU pupils.

We had to be careful when wearing those transmitters, though, since HIU pupils could hear our every word. If you shouted at someone, they'd have to turn their ear receivers off. The devices could still pick up your voice even if you stepped out of the classroom.

Whole school assemblies used to be held on Friday afternoons in the main school hall, with around 700 staff and pupils in attendance. Whoever was taking the assembly naturally had to wear one of the transmitters so that the HIU pupils could what was being said, wherever they were sat.

On one especially warm Friday during the

summer term, the local mayor had been booked to give that week's assembly. He certainly looked very grand during his address, dressed in all those layers and that chain that mayors wear. Upon completing a very prim and proper speech, he received a huge round of applause from the assembled audience and left the stage.

He was then taken to a nearby classroom to disrobe. Once alone, he proceeded to unleash an angry diatribe about mayors having to wear such outfits, even when it was so hot. His rant included the blurting out of several expletives that young people should never hear.

Back in the hall, meanwhile, the assembly continued - with the HIU pupils stifling giggles as they listened to their prim and proper mayor angrily swear and curse...

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

A FEW MINUTES OF DESIGN

#27 ODD ONE OUT

Decide which of the objects below you think is the odd one out.

Say why.

There are no right or wrong answers, but you need thoughtful reasons based on what you can see in the pictures.

A Few Minutes of Design ODD ONE OUT





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TRY THIS TODAY: 'FOCUSED 5'

In every subject, students are expected to edit their writing so that their vocabulary is appropriately academic. One issue, however, can be that students put a half-hearted effort into their editing and fail to extend their language. Instead, we can encourage students to enact 'Focused 5' vocabulary edits.

If, for example, students are writing an essay or extended exam answer in RE, we can expect them to highlight five edits to show that they've used ambitious and accurate terminology. With a little targeted sharing, we can then ensure a word-rich classroom in which students are consistently enhancing the sophistication of their answers.



Cracking the academic code

Every time a student writes a history essay or geography case study, they must use sophisticated language without overloading their writing to excess. This particular challenge goes back thousands of years, with teachers of even millennia ago criticising what we would recognise as 'purple prose' – an exaggerated, overdone writing style – among the young writers of the day.

The 'purple' in question was the regal colour used by emperors and members of royalty in ancient times, denoting a surfeit of style – like an excessively bejewelled crown. For students today, being warned off purple prose means not writing as if you've swallowed a thesaurus, whilst still employing accurate and ambitious vocabulary. It's a tricky, but crucial balancing act.

DO THEY KNOW?

The most used adjective in the English language is 'good' – not great, I know...

ONE FOR: MATHS STUDENTS

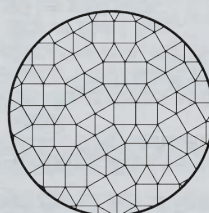
TESSELLATION

Derives from: From Latin, '*tessellatus*', meaning 'mosaic made of small square stones'

Means: An arrangement of shapes closely fitted together in a repeated pattern, without gaps

Related terms: Polygon, pattern, tiling, triangle, regular, semi-regular

Note: In the wider world, 'tessellated' is commonly used in relation to the tiling of floors in homes



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

CARDINAL

In history

A high ranking member of the Catholic church nominated by the Pope

In maths

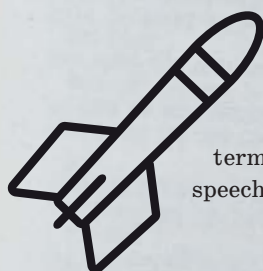
A number denoting quantity (one, two) as opposed to ordinal (first, second)



One word at a time

What's the greatest *ever* word in the English language? It might well be 'hyperbole'. Well known to English teachers, hyperbole is an ancient Greek term used to describe obvious exaggeration in writing or speeches. It's also a favourite of students, whose ability to exaggerate often comes naturally...

The Greek root 'bol' denotes a missile, with '*hyper*' meaning 'to go beyond'. In its entirety, it describes language that extravagantly conveys emphasis and intensification far beyond what's required or expected. It's one of the more accessible rhetorical terms students will learn as they develop their ability to argue with style.



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

SIMULTANEOUS EQUATIONS

When using the elimination method to solve simultaneous equations, students are often unsure whether to add or subtract.

In this lesson, students explore what happens when they add and subtract pairs of simultaneous equations.

THE DIFFICULTY

Look at the below four pairs of simultaneous equations.

Which ones could you solve by adding the equations together?

Which ones could you solve by subtracting one equation from the other?

Students may be unsure and not know how to decide.

$5x + 2y = 17$ $4x - 2y = 10$	$5x + y = 16$ $4x + y = 13$	$3x + 4y = 13$ $3x - 5y = 4$	$5x - 3y = 12$ $2x - 3y = 3$
----------------------------------	--------------------------------	---------------------------------	---------------------------------

THE SOLUTION

Don't worry about **solving** the equations just yet. All I want you to do is simply add together each pair of equations. And also subtract each pair of equations. See what you get.

Students should obtain the following:

Adding...

$9x + 0y = 27$	$9x + 2y = 29$	$6x - y = 17$	$7x - 6y = 15$
----------------	----------------	---------------	----------------

Subtracting the second equation from the first equation...

$x + 4y = 7$	$x + 0y = 3$	$0x + 9y = 9$	$3x + 0y = 9$
--------------	--------------	---------------	---------------

Students may not bother to write the $0x$ and $0y$ where there are no x and y terms, and this is fine. They may make errors, particularly when subtracting the negative terms, so, for the subtractions, they may end up with the wrong answers in red below:

$x + 0y = 7$		$0x - 9y = 9$	$3x - 6y = 9$
--------------	--	---------------	---------------

Writing out the difficult subtractions explicitly may help:

$2y - (-2y) = 4y$	$4y - (-5y) = 9y$	$-3y - (-3y) = 0y$
-------------------	-------------------	--------------------

When does adding eliminate an unknown?

This happens when two terms are equal in magnitude, but of opposite sign (e.g., $2y$ and $-2y$).

When does subtracting eliminate an unknown?

This happens when two terms are equal in magnitude, and of the same sign (e.g., $-3y$ and $-3y$).

Sometimes, it can help if students remember the following: **When the Signs are the Same you Subtract.**

Can you find a pair of equations where **either** adding **or** subtracting will lead to elimination of one of the unknowns?

An example would be $3x + 2y = 11$ and $3x - 2y = 7$.

The solution to all of these pairs of equations is $x = 3, y = 1$.

Checking for understanding

To assess students' understanding, ask them to create four pairs of simultaneous equations of their own, two of which can be solved by adding the equations, and two of which can be solved by subtracting the equations. They should label clearly which are which.

"It can help if students remember the following: When the Signs are the Same you Subtract"



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, blog.foster77.co.uk

Teaching on autopilot

The main throughline of the last five decades in education has ultimately been teachers' ever diminishing agency and autonomy, observes **Dr Shirley Lawes**

When I started teaching in the early 1970s, there was no National Curriculum, no Ofsted inspections and no league tables. The school leaving age had only just been raised to 16. Recent reforms had seen the education system largely abandon selection at the age of 11, reflecting concerns by the policymakers of the day that the inequalities emerging from said system over the previous 25 years had to be addressed.

Instead, comprehensive education would establish a more egalitarian system – though this presented a huge challenge to teachers, who suddenly found themselves having to inspire and enthuse children from diverse backgrounds with wildly divergent abilities and attitudes towards education.

Foundation disciplines

It was an exciting time to be entering teaching. I'd undertaken a three-year 'Certificate in Education' course at a polytechnic, which endeavoured to make students *think* about the meaning and purpose of education in this new era through 'foundation disciplines' – namely the philosophy, sociology, history and psychology of education.

Besides this introduction to education theory, we also studied a specialist subject (mine being French) and spent one term each year studying teaching practice under the supervision of a teacher in school and a college tutor.

Taken together, this Cert.

Ed. qualification was sometimes considered inferior to the PGCE, since the subject knowledge component wasn't directly comparable to what students might attain through studying for a university Honours Degree. For many years, I was therefore reluctant to admit that I'd 'only' completed a Cert.Ed course, and subsequently gained additional qualifications to try and achieve parity with my graduate colleagues.

Spirit of hope

Now, after more than 50 years of school/college teaching, university tutoring and leading PGCE courses, I'm convinced that teacher education has been reduced to a technical process narrowly focused on producing compliant, conformist practitioners.

The professional status of teachers is now limited to 'delivery' of a pre-set curriculum. At the same time, their roles have become increasingly concerned with social, rather than intellectual development. Teachers complain that they feel like social workers, their jobs increasingly revolving around testing and accountability, and subject to conditions of service that are ever more onerous and less secure. The teaching profession has lost its sense of agency.

The profession I entered in 1972 was quite different. One with many problems, yes – but it seemed back then that there was at least an implicit understanding of the inherent value and purpose of education, and

a spirit of hope, in marked contrast to the despair I see around me now.

I can remember being full of enthusiasm at the prospect of my burgeoning career, and being left to largely make my own way in what was a fairly difficult comprehensive school struggling to establish itself in a brave new world.

Subject teachers at the time had more freedom to teach how and what they liked, and to experiment – though of course, this wasn't always done in the best interests of providing a 'broad and balanced' education, and mistakes were made.

Confidence in the ability of

these new schools to provide a good education for all secondary-aged pupils was short-lived, however. As early as 1976, the then Labour Prime Minister, James Callaghan, expressed in his famous Ruskin College speech (during a period of ongoing economic crisis) the view that education could no longer be left to educators alone, and that government, industry and business should also be involved – thus ushering in a decline of trust in teachers to be autonomous,

responsible professionals.



Join the CONVERSATION

The Academy of Ideas Education Forum gathers monthly to discuss trends in educational policy, theory and practice. Find out more at academyofideas.org.uk/education-forum

Stoical response

When Margaret Thatcher became Prime Minister in 1979, education became a core target for government intervention. Thatcher and her advisers saw the education system as failing, and felt it was time for government to decide what should be taught in schools, while tackling what they perceived as an entrenched 'loony left' within the teaching profession.

The far-reaching

point where teachers began to decisively lose their autonomy and confidence as professionals, and they've never regained it since – though there was little action taken at the time to really oppose the move. The external pressures brought about by the unveiling of league tables and the new Ofsted inspection framework in 1992 all but confirmed that schools needed close supervision, and couldn't be trusted to

"Teachers complain that they feel like social workers"

Education Reform Act of 1988 thus introduced the National Curriculum for England and Wales, meaning that for the first time, teachers would now be told exactly what they must teach.

As I remember it, teachers responded stoically, while wading through reams of introductory guidance and detail. This marked the

strive for higher standards.

As the Thatcher years gave way to the Blair years, we saw a continuation of these right-wing policies. A key mantra of Labour's successful 1997 election campaign had been 'education, education, education', signalling its intention to treat the area as a policy priority; what followed was unprecedented involvement by central government in aspects of education hitherto left to educators to define and monitor.

Another crucial development that took place under New Labour was the increasingly heavy emphasis on schools' social mission, and growing pressure on teachers and leaders to assume ever greater responsibility for solving social inequalities. No longer was school this unique place where we learn that which we don't learn anywhere else. Instead, we entered a period where

knowledge for its own sake was considered, in the widely reported words of former Education Minister Charles Clark, 'A bit dodgy'.

Underlying instrumentalism

Subsequent iterations of the National Curriculum could be seen to confirm this view, leading us to a present day in which the underlying instrumentalism in education has never been more explicit.

The introduction and rapid expansion of the academies and free schools system could have been an ideal opportunity for doing things differently, but educational experimentation has been mostly discouraged in favour of educational success being judged more narrowly than ever in instrumental terms on the basis of examination results.

Accountability has become a Sword of Damocles hanging over the head of every practising teacher. Curriculum planning now tends to be built around 'outcomes' and the expectation to provide some form of tangible evidence for learning – often at the end of each lesson.

So it is that the role of 'teacher' has moved much closer to that of someone delivering pre-packaged knowledge while inculcating a certain set of social attitudes, rather than the trained professionals teaching specialist knowledge to students that they ought to be.

Do you believe that teachers should be concerned first and foremost with the intellectual transformation of the individual? If so, then teachers will need to reassert their confidence, do more to nurture students' long-term aspirations, come to

IN BRIEF

What's the issue?

The role that teachers perform has changed over time – and not for the better

What's being said?

Politicians in successive decades have pursued ever more oversight and accountability of what happens in schools, and enacted legislation accordingly.

What's really happening?

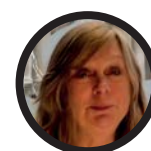
Between a prescriptive National Curriculum and demanding accountability measures, teachers have been reduced to 'deliverers' of 'packaged knowledge', with little professional agency.

The takeaway

This modern role performed by teachers is ultimately at odds with the need for students to develop intellectually, in ways that can't be measured by exam results alone.

recognise knowledge itself as a form of personal enrichment, and above all, *have their sense of agency restored*.

Of course, examination success is undoubtedly important – but schools need to provide an enriched experience of subjects that inspires young people beyond exam specifications, and enlivens their curiosity and desire to better understand the wider world. This, it seems to me, is what's been lost over the past 50 years.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr Shirley Lawes is a lecturer in modern foreign languages at UCL Institute of Education

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Leading by example

Applying educational research to the harsh realities of the modern classroom isn't easy – which is why it's worth checking in with others who can show you the way...

Teachers and school leaders are increasingly interested in ensuring their decisions are guided by robust research. This is great news for our education system, as we know that evidence can support teaching practice and in turn improve outcomes for all children – particularly those from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds.

But bridging the gap between research and real world practice can be a daunting prospect. Understandably so, since interpreting research findings, tailoring evidence-informed approaches to your

context and implementing them in the classroom is far from simple.

At the Education Endowment Foundation, we're always looking for ways of bringing education research into the classroom in timely and practical ways. A big part of our work is finding ways of helping practitioners engage with evidence in a way that feels manageable and purposeful, while making sure it's a help, rather than a hindrance.

The Research Schools Network

Schools listen to other schools, which is why in 2016 we established the Research Schools

Network – a collaborative community of schools tasked with providing on the ground support around making practical use of evidence in classrooms.

Appointed via a competitive application process, Research Schools lead the way in utilising evidence-led teaching, building affiliations with large numbers of schools in their region and supporting the use of evidence at scale.

With their contextual knowledge of the specific challenges and opportunities presented by their local area, Research Schools work to credibly exemplify evidence in action, while supporting other schools by sharing their first-hand experience and expertise.

The breadth of this network has grown significantly over the past seven years, and now includes early years, primary, secondary and post-16 settings across the country.

What's on offer?

Research Schools encourage nearby schools to make use of evidence-based programmes and practices through regular communication and events. Keeping teachers in their locality informed about new initiatives that could be helpful in their respective settings is a key priority.

Research Schools also work in partnership with schools, MATs and LAs to

WHAT WE DO

"We're increasingly a local, credible source of guidance and provider of evidence to schools to help them to access the educational evidence base in the most manageable way. As practising teachers and school leaders ourselves, we understand the potential but also the challenges of effectively using external evidence to improve student outcomes."

– Jane Elsworth, Director at Huntington Research School in York

"As the Trust has grown, we have continued to use the work of the Research School as the cornerstone of our school improvement. I truly believe the work of the Research School has been, and continues to be invaluable in benefiting the schools, and more importantly children the that we serve."

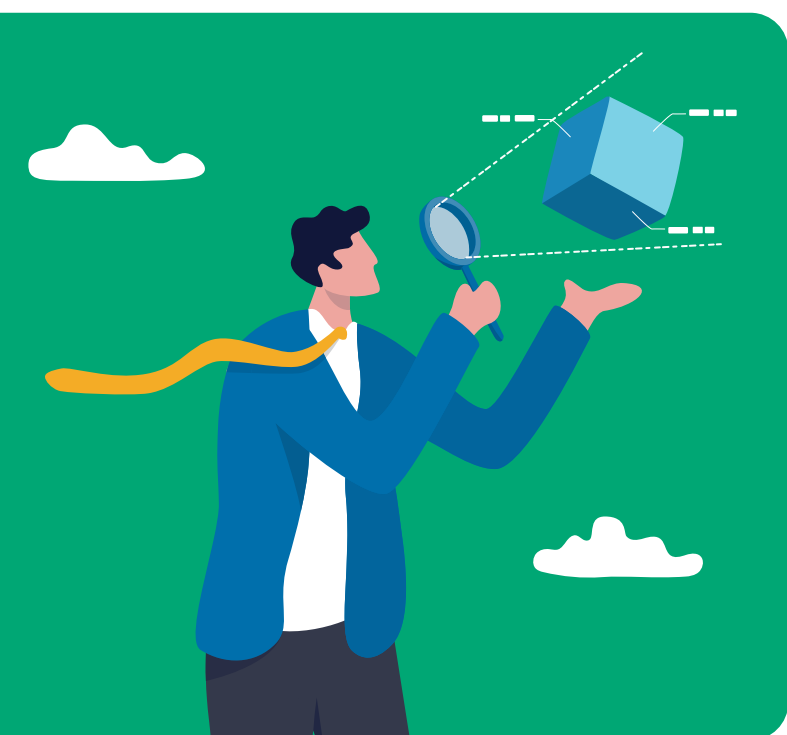
– Kevin Simpson, CEO of Aspire Education Trust, home of Aspirer Research School, Cheshire

offer high quality professional development for senior leaders and teachers on how to develop classroom practice based on the best available evidence. These training opportunities delve into the evidence base to help schools identify the 'best bets' most likely to make a difference in their setting, and provide support around how these might look in practice.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Professor Becky Francis CBE is CEO of the Education Endowment Foundation; you can locate your nearest Research School by visiting researchschool.org.uk





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[WHAT IS IT]

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WHAT'S HAPPENING?

Safeguarding is a rapidly evolving field, with new recommendations and updates being constantly released. Keeping up with these changes and ensuring the safeguarding procedures you've put in place are successful in protecting the people in your care can be challenging.

Children and young people face a growing number of problems and difficulties, so it's important to regularly review and update your current systems to ensure they are still relevant and functional, and that all staff members are following the procedures you have in place for handling any safeguarding concerns. After all, everyone has a duty to protect children and vulnerable adults.

WHAT'S THE IMPACT?

Ofsted inspection outcomes show that schools are not meeting safeguarding requirements. A recent review undertaken by Mike Glanville via The Safeguarding Company showed that 22.85% of schools were rated Requires Improvement in this area, and 9.2% Inadequate, with the failings coming predominantly from 'Record and Case Management'.

The report further found that, "Some record-keeping is incomplete because leaders are not consistently logging and analysing the actions taken to keep pupils safe. This means pupils who may be at risk of harm are not always getting the support that they need." The report also highlighted the importance of proper training, as "Leaders and staff do not always recognise safeguarding incidents for what they are."

Determining your training requirements, as our audits do, can help your organisation use its existing safeguarding



software to its fullest potential, and enhance overall organisation-wide safeguarding.



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Our audit services can help your school comply with regulatory advice, including the inspection frameworks used by Ofsted, Estyn, and the ISI, and ensure it's following industry standards for child safety appropriate to the setting. The audits provide thorough reporting and policy evaluations, and can identify any risks or holes in your safeguarding procedures that could leave you exposed, or in the worst-case scenario, put the children in your care at risk.

Contact:

thesafeguardingcompany.com/mentor

GET INVOLVED

The self-assessment tools and audits include an executive summary, bespoke recommendations and considerations supported by evidence, with enhanced options available for larger organisations – such as 'deep dives' into your use of safeguarding software, spanning reporting systems, triaging/assessment of concerns, dashboard management and more. These safeguarding audits are for everyone, everywhere and can include existing Safeguarding Company software like MyConcern and Clarity, as well as other recording and case management products.

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The root causes behind teachers' continuing disquiet and resentment are hardly a mystery – but what's less clear is why government officials seem so reluctant actually to address them...

Melissa Benn



Over the past few years, I've been following the progress of several young people I know (children of my friends, friends of my children) who decided to enter teaching soon after graduating.

At the beginning, these young adults seemed enthused, even evangelical, about their chosen profession. It was tough, yes, but they loved their pupils, they relished being able to make a difference and, being keen and clever, were often given significant responsibilities and promoted speedily.

But things changed over time. Not every young teacher I know has decided to leave the profession, but about half of them have – mirroring, as it happens, the national figure of around 50% of teachers who abandon the job after five years.

When I asked them why, I'd get either a long, involved answer or a short, sharp response, both amounting to the same thing: 'I just can't hack it anymore.'

Multiple causes

These are individual stories, yes, but it's actually not that hard to identify the root causes of the teacher retention and recruitment problem. It's just that there are so many, all of them interconnected.

Take the issue of teachers' starting pay. The government has made much of bumping up teacher starting salaries to between £28,000 and £34,000 p/a (for those starting work in inner London).

You might think that doesn't sound too bad for a starting salary. Yet what's less widely known is that this early career boost – an obvious ploy to boost recruitment in the short term – has come at the expense of a similar uplift in salaries for more experienced teachers, thus exacerbating the ongoing retention issue and sowing resentment in the process.

At the same time, overall teachers' pay has been reduced over what a recent joint statement from the education unions describes as 'a decade of unjustified, unevidenced and damaging government attacks on pay.'

Structural problems

And what of the perennial workload problem? I've sat opposite too many once enthusiastic young men and women with glassy, faintly guilty expressions as they've talked about the long hours, intense demands and lack of quality time with family and friends.

It seems you can't draw on the energy of the young and committed indefinitely, without draining it completely. The Teach First model seeks to recruit clever graduates who then go on to transform inner-city classrooms – which isn't a bad idea in itself, but is no substitute for resolving the deeper structural problems of state education.

On top of that, we can add yet more issues to the mix – including poor initiatives, such as the recruitment of insufficiently qualified teachers and performance-related pay, as well as the many cuts we've seen to school funding both during and after the austerity years.

Many have also reported an increasingly oppressive atmosphere in schools, which robs teachers of their freedoms to teach or even make key decisions. Dr James Mannion, director of the Rethinking Education consultancy, has called this 'The operation of The Top-Down Monster.'

Cumulative effect

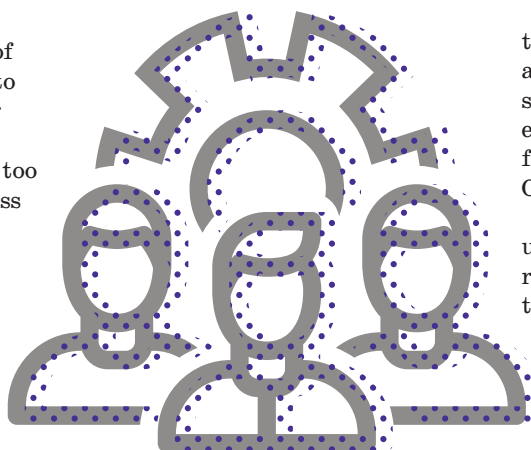
Then there's the unhealthy inequality in salaries, with some MAT leaders being paid close to half a million while qualified level 2 TAs bring home between 18k and 21k a year.

The cumulative effect of these long-term pay reductions and poorly-thought-out reforms can be seen in a worrying breakdown in trust between the profession and the government. For a demonstration, look no further than teachers' recent willingness to strike.

It seems especially sad to me that teaching is no longer considered to be the respected, well-supported or stimulating graduate profession it once was. Instead, the story is fast becoming that of a beleaguered, over-controlled and underpaid workforce, who feel unable and unwilling to meet unreasonable demands set by government and various agencies and semi-corporate arms.

In every country's political history, there comes a time when serious alternatives to crumbling existing structures must be devised. As a general election gradually approaches, I look forward to learning more about the Opposition's alternative proposals.

For now, at least, it's clear that we urgently need a long-term support and recovery plan – not just in relation to teachers' pay, but also to the notion of teacher autonomy, and the creation of a profession that can genuinely attract and retain the very best and brightest.



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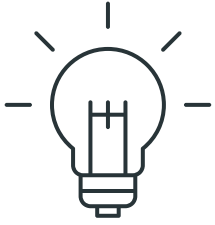
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[THE TREND]

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For many children, a classroom provides inspiration or a safe space. But we also know that children need some vital balance to this. Breaks from conventional learning are important for testing new skills, making friends and building your confidence. An outdoor education experience provides opportunities to mix up 'classroom routines' and help students to make vital breakthroughs in their development.

WHAT'S HAPPENING?

At PGL it's our mission to provide alternative learning experiences for children.

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Our exciting new UNITE! programme specifically tackles 'Relationships'. Designed exclusively for secondary schools, it's focussed around supporting peer-to-peer bonding, developing empathy & patience and other critically important relationship-building skills, all powered by epic outdoor learning experiences!

WHAT'S THE IMPACT?

The UNITE! programme has been specially designed for secondary school aged children and focuses on helping them build and develop RELATIONSHIP skills, through the power of adventure! Dive into a winning combo of thrilling adventure activities, teambuilding tasks and relationship-building challenges – plus free time for relaxing, socialising and having fun...together. From working as a team to achieve victory in Archery Tag, encouraging and supporting each other to brave the Giant Swing, or trusting their classmates on the Jacob's Ladder – each activity has been chosen for its amazing



relationship-building powers!

Students can enhance communication skills through listening, being open and sharing opinions and build bonds and camaraderie through shared experiences and excitement. They'll also be able to gain social confidence by building supportive and healthy relationships as they share this learning-outside-the-classroom opportunity with each other.

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TEXTBOOK AT



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WHAT'S NEXT?

Development doesn't happen all at once. Stages and phases are important for making sure our programmes are relevant throughout a child's education.

As part of our R.E.A.C.H. framework, we will therefore also be developing and launching a range of outcome-focused programmes for secondary students – and primary pupils too! These programmes will focus on first-time experiences, skills, developing positive character traits and providing nourishment for mind, body and soul.

What breakthroughs will your students make?

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THE TS GUIDE TO... GCSEs

As schools prepare to return to 'business as usual' for the 2023 exams season, we look at whether now is the right time to remove the extra support students have received over the past several years, and how to inject more life into those final few Y11 lessons...

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If your students are going glassy-eyed at the rote routines of their lessons in the run-up to the GCSE English language paper, it might be time to liven things up, suggests Jennifer Hampton...

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This summer, GCSEs and A Levels will be sat without any special arrangements or extra support for the first time in several years – but are schools ready? Daniel Harvey's not so sure...

30 A TALE OF TWO SILENCES

In the exam hall, students have to work effectively in silence – but there's a right and a wrong way to get them used to what that silence feels like, cautions Matt MacGuire...



IN FIGURES:

HOW DID STUDENTS FARE
IN THE 2022 GCSE EXAMS
SEASON?

163,050

The number of 16-year-old entrants in England who took a total of 9 GCSE exams, equating to 26.2% of the total; 8,500 sat one GCSE exam (1.4%) and 500 sat 12 or more (0.1%)

32.6%

The proportion of entrants in London securing at least one 7/A grade or higher, the highest in the country; the south east came second, with 29.2%

7.78

The average number of GCSEs taken by 16-year-olds in England; in 2018, the figure was 8.09

Source: Ofqual



TEACHWIRE ARTICLES
FROM THE ARCHIVES

WHY CAN'T STUDENTS TYPE THEIR GCSEs?

Today's students have grown up with keyboards and tablets, says Guy Snape – so could it be time to let them put their pens down during exams?

bit.ly/123special1

IT'S TIME FOR SCHOOLS TO ABANDON GRADES

The impact of the pandemic on exams within the last several years should prompt a clear-eyed look at grading in schools, argues David Didau – why we do it, whom it helps and the problems it can cause...

bit.ly/123special2

SILLY MISTAKES

'Read the ***** question!' is the one piece of exam advice all teachers can agree on – but Adam Boxer reckons we've got it back to front

bit.ly/123special3

“We’ve done this already...”

If your students are going glassy-eyed at the rote routines of their lessons in the run-up to the GCSE English language paper, it might be time to attach the jump leads, suggests **Jennifer Hampton**...

They know the question types. They’ve practised them with a range of extracts. They’ve written countless narratives, descriptions and articles.

They’ve done the ‘green pen work’, or DIRT, or whatever your school’s equivalent of feedback response is. They’ve ‘walked and talked’ countless past papers. They’ve completed the online quizzes and watched all the exam board videos.

With the English Language GCSE, it can be easy for students and teachers alike to feel that the course is ‘done’ and all the necessary skills have been taught. How, then, do we put the bounce back into these lessons as the exam approaches? And how can we ensure that said bounce has meaningful impact at a point when, frankly, we’re all a bit sick and tired of it?

From students to examiners

There’s a huge volume of evidence telling us that students’ comprehension of texts is much less than we think. We’re all familiar with the grim statistics about literacy levels and especially how pronounced they are among particular groups.

With that in mind, how often have you seen analysis, comparative and evaluative responses foiled by simple misunderstandings? One

way of tackling this is to explore more deeply what examiners will be looking for by giving students texts and asking them to design a series of questions to test their peers’ comprehension.

Making this a paired activity, with students focusing on clarifying meaning by helping each other, is a rich and rewarding process. For each question, students will need to know the answer so they can test their classmates orally in groups or in a whole class scenario. To do it well, however, they’ll first need to interrogate the text themselves. Consequently, they’ll get to see the text from a different perspective, and can even be empowered by the role play involved: *‘Mr Smith, will you please deliver your questions on the opening paragraphs now...?’*

Give them the text(s), and as a group or pair challenge, get them to write the paper. They’ll need a past paper to refer to, so that they can replicate the language in which the questions are written. They’ll also need to think carefully about which sections of the text will be appropriate

for each question, and have some ideal responses in mind.

Again, this process will involve them interrogating the text for themselves. Where appropriate, the task can be extended further by asking students to create section B writing tasks, or even write out indicative responses as part of a mark scheme.

Find the joy in SPAG

If, like me, you’ve ever wondered where all the commas and full stops went during those periods of remote learning (let’s not mention the ‘C’ word), then you’ll know all

too well how this cohort might need more support when it comes to gaining those all-important SPAG marks, since they can make all the difference.



I'm no fan of comma splicing, it's so annoying (sorry). If you want to nip that tendency in the bud, try the 'splice or nice' activity. This involves presenting students with a sentence containing a comma, and inviting them to discuss and decide whether that comma is doing the job it was originally intended for, or is actually usurping a full stop, conjunction or the lesser spotted semi-colon. Use mini whiteboards, cards or thumbs to lend the activity a 'Roman gladiator arena' flourish.

structure. Use a timer and have them race each other in the quest to come up with as many accurate sentences as possible.

Because let's face it: their punctuation could be more interesting and exciting. Find other fabulous sentences and replicate this process, and celebrate any subsequent sightings of bold punctuation in their written work.

In the exam they'll be on their own with the text, and yes, we need to rehearse this and practise what to do in class. A fun

“We don't need to sacrifice their learning in order to take the pressure off them”

If students aren't using the semi-colon and its similarly low profile comrades, the dash and colon, train them with a safe structure. There's a good example contained in a line from *Animal Farm*: *“Let us face it: our lives are miserable, laborious and short.”*

Ask students to write as many different versions of this sentence, from as many different perspectives as possible while still using the same opening words and

way of doing this can be to have partners read the text aloud to each other, but swap roles whenever they encounter specific forms of punctuation. This can heighten their awareness of how the writer has used these little beasts, but also how they can too.

According to the mental health support organisation MIND, 1 in 6 young people have a mental health problem. We don't need to sacrifice their learning in order to take the pressure off them; we just need to vary the nature of the tasks they're set and watch for the energy change that this can bring about for a fatigued class.

CHANNEL THAT KS3 ENERGY

You may be like me and keep a bank of resources for Y7 comprising envelopes, big sheets of coloured paper and sundry other lovely things. In contrast, your Y11 resource stockpile will more likely be limited to a heavy box containing booklets and past papers – but it doesn't have to be...

- Try harnessing that strange mix of tension and tedium in the build-up to exams by running group work challenges, such as sorting words into types. Consider whether your lessons at this time are less dynamic than they could be.
- Do your exam classes get to move around during lessons – even if it's just walking around reading other students' writing? Do they get to draw? It can be helpful to summarise a text using images alone, or sketch out a rich description that you read aloud.
- This cohort – given the well-documented mental health pressures they were already under pre-pandemic, subsequent school closures and endless gloom of the cost of living crisis – could really do with some additional creativity in their lessons. So give it to them.

Just READ

As English teachers, we know that readers – that is, regular readers for pleasure – are more successful in the English Language exam. Granted, it's generally too late at this stage to instil such habits in students who don't already have them, but we could still dedicate a whole lesson to the reading out of a brilliant short story as students read along.

We all have our favourites; those short stories that never fail to engage even the most reluctant readers and disengaged classes. One involving a taxidermist landlady immediately comes to mind.

There's something warm and comforting for everyone in a lesson dedicated purely to enjoyment and appreciation of great characters and wallowing cliff hangers. Fidgeters can draw and sketch events as they listen, for example.

Because really, at the end of the day, isn't that what

the language exam is actually all about – showing appreciation of what writers do, and trying to emulate those skills in the writing section? Sometimes, it can be necessary for us to step away from the ever present glare of assessment objectives and take in the bigger picture.

Moreover, if we're able to step away from the structure strips and past papers and tweak our planning accordingly, it's just possible that we teachers – in this tomato-less era of gloomy economic forecasts and strike action – might feel a little less fatigued ourselves.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Jenny Hampton (@brightonteacher) is an English teacher, literacy lead and former SLE (literacy)

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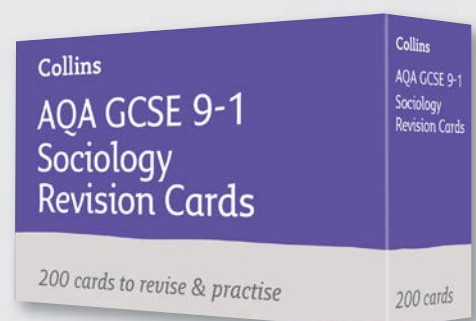
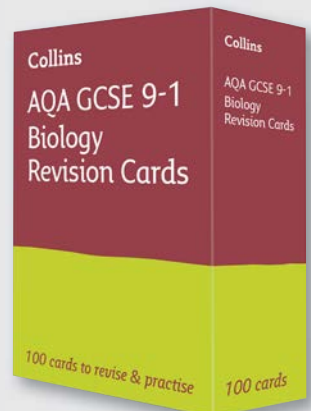
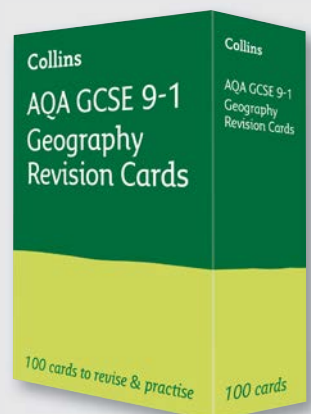
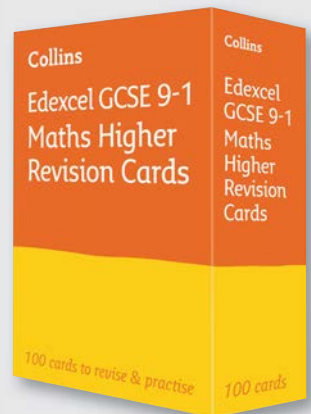
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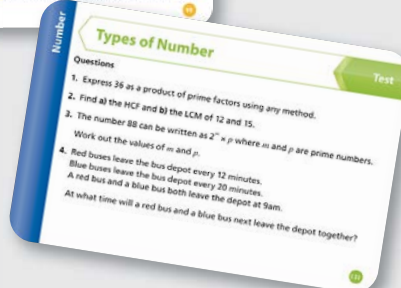
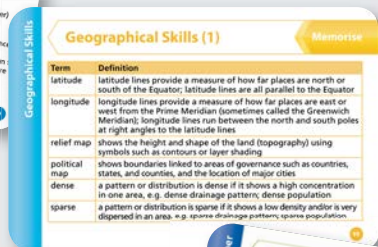
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A return to form...?

This summer, GCSEs and A Levels will be sat without any special arrangements or extra support for the first time in four years – but are schools ready? **Daniel Harvey's** not so sure...

Looking back on summer 2019's biggest news and events can feel like revisiting ancient history. A state visit was extended to President Trump (baby Trump blimp!). The Notre Dame caught fire. Theresa May resigned. Boris Johnson won the Conservative Party leadership election, thus becoming PM. Liverpool beat Spurs 2-0 in the Champions League Final. And it was the last point at which students sat their GCSE and A Levels 'normally'.

As I write this, that summer was almost four years ago. A mooted return to 'business as usual' for exams season in 2021 was torpedoed by continuing COVID-19 disruption. Only in early 2022 were legal requirements around self-isolation finally ended. I myself underwent a period of self-isolation in January *this* year, which meant my exam classes went without their specialist subject teacher for a week.

Some of those classes are now taking public exams this summer for the very first time. There's no doubt that these are cohorts whose education has been *profoundly* disrupted by COVID-19. The foundation of work they should have completed in KS3 simply isn't as secure

as the taught curriculum. We also need to factor in that it was often this summer's Y11s and Y13s who would have been the first year groups sent home when teacher numbers ran low, due to positive COVID-19 tests.

Last year's Y11s and Y13s sat exams too, of course – but they were given support in the form of advance information (or 'disinformation', as some teachers called it), equation sheets for science and maths papers, and softer grading that resulted in overall grades that were down from 2021, (but still higher than in 2019).

Harsh reality

The 'centre-assessed grading' debacle of summer 2020 marked a real low point in the national education leadership of Sir Gavin. What that and its slightly better received 'teacher-assessed grading'

sequel the following year highlighted were the readily apparent flaws of teacher assessment.

These arrangements were introduced within a short timeframe which meant that known issues relating to bias and flawed judgment couldn't be mitigated. Lo and behold, exam grades in 2021 broke all known records and produced significant grade inflation. Worse, it's since emerged through various research papers that schools and teachers have been subject to significant lobbying from parents in an effort to secure the highest possible grades for their children (see bbc.in/41kemPG).

Some educationalists remain staunch proponents of school-based assessment, and have continued to argue loudly for school-based assessment to become permanently entrenched. Yet the harsh reality of CAGs and TAGs is clear to see – perhaps most notably in the way that the gap between disadvantaged students and their peers has increased since 2019 (see bit.ly/ts123-gr1).

There's also clear evidence from the Sutton Trust and elsewhere of a sustained decline in school attendance compared to 2019 levels. Nor do you have to look far for evidence of child mental health services being overwhelmed by hugely increased demand, and the significant

challenges that schools face in sourcing adequate support for their students.

Complete clarity

'Re-normalising' public exams will at least give schools, teachers and students complete clarity as to what will be happening this summer, enabling everyone to plan and work accordingly. There will (hopefully) be no more surprises. Grades won't be subject to biased teacher judgments or the vagaries of exam board fudging, but just the quality of teaching and solid student preparation.

Even so, while I want to see a return to normal exams, I'm also fearful that the usual league table school comparisons, emphasis on progress data and reluctance to appreciate COVID-19's lasting impact on school communities will make school scrutiny even more intense than it is now.

As a secondary school senior leader, it's this level of intensity – which ironically ramped up just as schools were switching to remote provision early on in the pandemic – which is now causing so many dedicated teachers and school leaders to leave the profession altogether.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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

A tale of two silences

In the exam hall, students have to work effectively in silence – but there's a right and a wrong way to get them used to what that silence feels like, cautions Matt MacGuire...

Children need silence. They need silence to think. They need to be able to subvocalise before they put words on the page or share them in a discussion. They need their peers to be silent so they can hear and focus on the voice of the teacher – the voice of the expert in the room.

Children need silent classrooms because they replicate the conditions of the exam hall they'll ultimately have to face. I would argue, however, there are in fact two kinds of silence typically deployed in educational settings – and they're not created equal.

Oppressive silence

Oppressive silence is created through fear. It's the silence of a tyrannical teacher. This teacher can certainly create silence in the classroom, but it's a begrudging, enforced silence. The right conditions have been achieved for focused work, but in the wrong way.

When the silence you have is there purely as a result of a strongly enforced behaviour policy, you have a physical environment that's advantageous for learning, but with something important missing – because forcing children to be silent doesn't force them to think.

In any case, you don't want to be 'forcing' students to do anything. If they don't want to think hard about your subject during that silent time, then they won't. If they're agreeable and able, they'll churn out work that's good enough. If not, they'll refuse to work.

Resentment and frustration

Worst of all, there'll be some who simply cannot access the work. In a forcibly silent classroom, these students will be left to just sit there and confront their own inadequacy before ultimately deciding it's better not to try, because that will hurt less.

Oppressive silence is the kind of silence that's suddenly imposed without warning or explanation. It's the silence that ensues when students don't understand why it's in their best interests to be silent.

It's also the kind of silence that students won't have

Productive silence

Conversely, productive silence is magical, and among the very best things that can happen in a classroom. Productive silence is essentially the endpoint of a good learning cycle, when students are able to independently and confidently put their learning into practice.

In this scenario, the students will have been taught properly and supported as necessary, and their judicious teacher will have recognised that they're now ready to apply their newly acquired knowledge and skills under exam-style conditions.

“Productive silence is golden and wonderful, but that doesn't mean you can put your feet up”

been properly prepared for, thus preventing them from making the best of the opportunities it might afford them. Oppressive silence is wasteful, while promoting resentment and frustration.

Of course, there will also be a few bright and independent minds who revel in silence, but your job is to ensure that *everyone* is learning, not just some. Up to a point, the academic top end can get along without your intervention (despite the rhetoric from some quarters around high ability being a different kind of 'learning need'). The rest of the room, however, won't be able to make the best use of silent time unless they've been shown how to.

This period of 'golden silence' might last just 10 minutes, or it may extend to the duration of an entire lesson. Either way, it's a time during which the teacher won't be talking because the students are drawing on their internal intellectual resources.

The students will need to listen to their own internal voices to test what they know – but crucially, they're doing so willingly because they know their teacher has given them the mental resources they require.

They've previously watched the teacher apply the knowledge in question through live modelling, and have been supported through this application process

through joint modelling. The next logical step is to attempt applying that knowledge independently, which is why the students don't feel resentful or abandoned when the teacher says, 'Over to you.'

At my school, this process of teacher modelling, co-modelling and student application is called '*I do; we do; you do*'. It's simple and it's brilliant.

'Tough love'

And thus, the magic happens. Every student in the class, expertly prepared, picks up his or her pen and begins to answer their practice exam questions calmly and confidently. Pens dance effortlessly across the page, the fruits of your tireless efforts manifesting before them in beautiful prose. The fledgling birds take flight.

Except that's not really what happens.

In reality, whilst most students move confidently into independent practice, one student just sits there, staring at the page. Pen remains on the desk. Posture says 'defeated'. What do you do?

This is silent time. Golden time. You're testing these students, so surely you need to let this process run its course, no? Even if this one student can't write a thing, he or she needs to know that they're falling behind. They'll ultimately learn from it, and

duly try harder in class thereafter. It's tough love.

It's also utter nonsense.

Active and attentive

There's no wisdom to be had in leaving a student to fail. Even if the rest of the class have got it, even if this student contributed to their own failure through some combination of inattention and poor behaviour.

Five minutes is enough time for the student to realise they can't do it and need help, so don't force them to remain in this negative mental space while they watch their peers succeed. You must intervene.

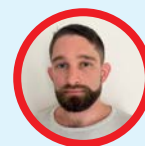
Quietly, discreetly, you should move to support this student. You could perhaps write a sentence starter, provide them with a list of key words, remind them of a specific equation or the

steps of a process that will help them.

Make a mental note that this student isn't in line with the rest of the class, but then provide support that will allow them to work productively during the silent period. If you don't do this, you're allowing your student to practise failure, and that's a deadly mistake.

Productive silence is golden and wonderful then, but that doesn't mean you can put your feet up whilst the class works away. It's a time for you to be active and attentive. Circulate the room. If everything's going well, smile and show that you value the students' hard work, and that you're pleased with their success.

If a student needs help, allow them to struggle for a moment (since they may need this productive struggle) but intervene before they become demoralised. Get them back on track with a bespoke and responsive intervention – because if you don't, that productive silence may soon turn into an oppressive silence for at least one of your students...



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Matthew Everett is the principal of Cardinal Wiseman Catholic School in Coventry

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Gone but not forgotten?

The government's ill-fated Schools Bill would have made problematic school attendance even harder to tackle, says **Ellie Costello** – so let's not make the same mistake again

In March 2022, we saw the publication of both the Schools White Paper and SEND Green Paper.

The latter was keenly anticipated, the former largely unexpected.

The Schools Bill swiftly followed in May, surprising Parliamentarians and many in the education sector with its scope across five distinct areas. It sought to address school funding, the structure and regulation of academy trusts and the regulation of independent educational institutions, as well as teacher misconduct and school attendance.

Diminishing outcomes

In less than two decades, there's been considerable change and work done to improve outcomes, homogenise offers, make efficiencies and corporatise the sector. And yet, the combination of a global banking crisis, austerity and political churn in ministerial leadership has left schools and families – in escalating numbers – with diminishing outcomes.

Why, then, with so many areas needing attention, did the Schools Bill land so badly? One reason may be the parts pertaining to attendance and children unable to access education, which amounted to a further tightening of systemic practice that's previously given rise to coercive parental accountability measures, and seen the criminal justice system used to manage attendance behaviours.

When carrying out a survey of families, we found that almost a quarter had



been accused of fabricating and inducing illness, and that a significant number had been referred to MASH for safeguarding checks.

Government figures published last autumn showed that such referrals were up 8% from pre-pandemic levels, with 1 child in 30 assessed as being a Child in Need. What appears to be happening is that children are being designated as 'CiN', when they actually ought to be referred for Children with Disabilities assessments. And among this disproportionate amount of child protection referrals, non-attendance is widely considered a sign of abuse or neglect.

Questions raised

In research we conducted with the families-run campaign group Not Fine In School, we identified a high number of families with children with SEN, disabilities, emerging/undiagnosed needs or unsupported additional

needs previously jettisoned into punitive non-attendance pathways.

But the issue isn't just limited to SEND families. Families whose children are young carers, who live in poverty, have EAL, are recently bereaved or managing chronic illness have also found themselves falling under safeguarding and/or non-attendance sanctions.

The solutions proposed in the Bill to shorten timeframes around punitive actions (via fines) and the Criminal Court's forcing of schools' and LAs' hands posed a significant threat to an already complex and fractious landscape. Questions were also raised around the proposed collection and sharing of personally identifiable pupil attendance data, and the live monitoring and retention of attendance information of all pupils for 66 years after they've left school, prompting concerns around possible GDPR breaches.

Joined-up services

There is an urgent need for a functioning, readily available, fully integrated and joined-up system. One in which CAMHS access, specialist teaching, early help, social care, family support, youth work and wraparound pastoral leadership is embedded via team-around-the-child (TAC) modalities, with parents and carers playing a key role.

Multifaceted challenges require multidisciplinary approaches. Work with the child and family in front of you. Meet them where they're at and take things one day at a time.

Whatever ends up replacing the Bill, we've already seen the negative impact of the DfE's guidance for schools and LAs on attendance published in September 2022. In the meantime, we welcome the scrutiny that the Commons Education Committee's inquiry into persistent absence and support for disadvantaged pupils will bring to bear on the issue – and hope to one day see new partnerships led by those with specific lived experience.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Ellie Costello is director of the social enterprise Square Peg (teamsquarepeg.org / @teamsquarepeg); her new book, co-authored with Square Peg founder Fran Morgan, is titled *Square Pegs: Inclusivity, compassion and fitting in – a guide for schools* (£24.99, Independent Thinking Press)

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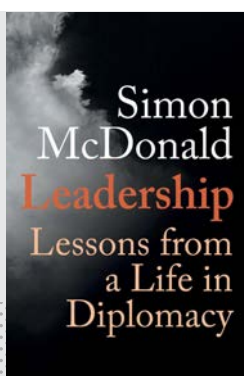
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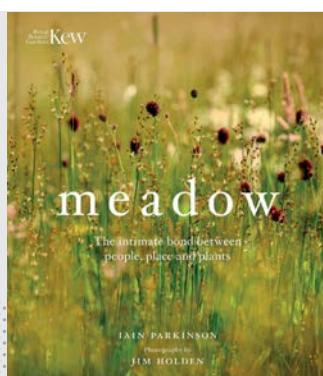


Leadership: Lessons from a life in diplomacy

(Simon McDonald, Haus Publishing, £20)

My reason for reviewing this book was to see if it might contain any useful lessons for SLTs, but unfortunately much of its advice could be deduced from common sense – albeit alongside some useful nuggets, such as ‘Kindness rather than ferocity is likely to get the best out of your team’, and ‘Imagination and curiosity are as important as experience and knowledge’. Tellingly, McDonald writes of learning more from observing good and bad leadership practices than from formal training. Of greater interest are the book’s insights into politics with a small ‘p’, which cover the mechanics of how jobs are secured, and the behind-the-scenes events of some world-shaping events, including the war in Afghanistan and Brexit. Those studying politics and modern history courses then, will at least find this book fascinating for the perspectives on living history it presents.

Reviewed by Terry Freedman

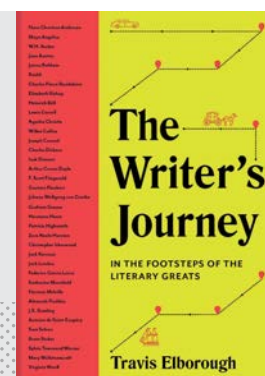


Meadow: The intimate bond between people, place and plants

(Iain Parkinson & Jim Holden, Kew Publishing, £25)

Meadows are becoming increasingly rare. This book captures their beauty with wonderful photography on every page, and if that were all it had to offer, *Meadow* would make for a perfectly good coffee table book. Instead, it goes further by presenting essays from a range of experts on the different and essential roles that meadows play in the natural world – from the wildlife they support, to the many complex, unseen ways in which they shape the environment. *Meadow* ably ticks several boxes on the science programme of study and PSHE curriculum, and vividly demonstrates how much more there is to how meadows ‘work’ than meets the eye. A useful resource to have on hand for any school trying to encourage their students’ engagement in biodiversity and related topics.

Reviewed by Terry Freedman



The Writer's Journey: In the footsteps of the literary greats

(Travis Elborough, White Lion Publishing, £20)

Where do authors’ ideas come from? Even Stephen King finds that a difficult question to answer. One possible answer might be ‘Everything they see on their travels’, because as Roland Barthes once suggested, writers are never truly on holiday – not when everything they see is grist to the mill, so to speak. Serving up biographical information on an astonishing range of writers, *Journey...* examines their various travels in detail, alongside maps and illustrations. Thus, we discover that many of Bashō’s haiku were directly influenced by his extensive peregrinations; learn how the inspiration for *Harry Potter* first came to J. K. Rowling during an interminable train journey; and are shown how Jane Austen’s experiences of seaside towns found their way into her fiction. *The Writer’s Journey* contains a wealth of interesting background information for English Literature students, let down only by the too-often pointless inclusion of the aforementioned maps.

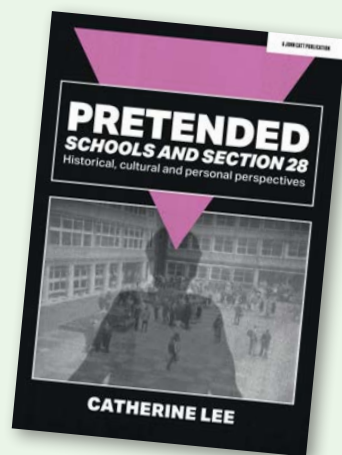
Reviewed by Terry Freedman

ON THE RADAR

A bracing reminder of a dark time for LGBTQ+ inclusion within the teaching profession

Pretended

(Catherine Lee, John Catt, £16)



The now infamous Section 28 of the Local Government Act 1988 set out that LAs, "shall not intentionally promote homosexuality or publish material with the intention of promoting homosexuality," or "promote the teaching in any maintained school of the acceptability of homosexuality as a pretended family relationship." And with these words, LGBTQ+ education and representation became outlawed in UK schools.

Pretended presents both an informative social history that charts the legislation's origins and impact on lesbian and gay teachers, and a compelling, at times devastating personal account of Lee's own experiences as a lesbian teacher during the years spanning 1988 to 2003 that Section 28 was in force across England and Wales. The latter draws on diary entries Lee made at the time (which went on to inspire the producers of a 2022 drama film, *Blue Jean*, on which Lee served as an advisor) that show in vivid, often uncomfortable detail the emotional turmoil and professional challenges she had to contend with.

Through its determination to shine a light on how much damage was wrought by Section 28, while ensuring that appropriate lessons are learned by today's policymakers, *Pretended* is a vital contribution to the profession's collective memory.

Meet the author

CATHERINE LEE



What made you want to write *Pretended*?

I was aware that many people had never heard of Section 28, yet it had such a devastating effect on a generation of lesbian and gay teachers and students. In 2017, I carried out some research about the legacy of Section 28 for teachers who experienced it, and it was then that I decided to write the book.

What do you think are the key details and lessons of Section 28 most in danger of being forgotten?

Section 28 resulted from a political fight between Thatcher's right-wing government and the left of the Labour Party, with lesbian and gay teachers and students becoming the collateral. I worry that the identities of trans and nonbinary people are similarly becoming a political football. We must not let history repeat itself.

What was it like to revisit those diary entries you made between 1988 and 2003?

I was surprised at how little regard I had for myself, and the extent to which I had internalised the homophobia of the era. I tried to avoid simply picking the diary entries describing the most extreme examples of homophobia, and instead also include mundane and at times humorous incidents to get a sense of what life was like day to day.

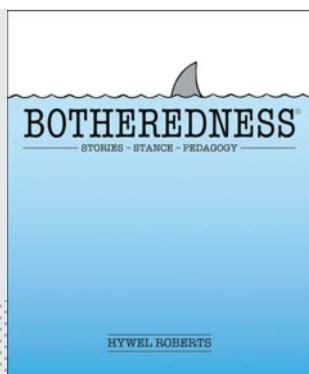
Visiting schools now, what gives you hope or encouragement regarding the experiences of LGBTQ+ teachers and students?

I'm always so excited when I see schools celebrate Pride or LGBTQ+ History Month. I especially love meeting brilliant LGBTQ+ teachers who are able to be the positive role models I could never be under Section 28.

For all the progress made, are there any ways in which you see LGBTQ+ inclusion within schools as falling short?

I think schools are still on somewhat of a journey with trans and non-binary inclusion. I'd like to see high quality CPD in schools that equips staff to provide appropriate support for young people exploring, questioning or struggling with their gender identity.

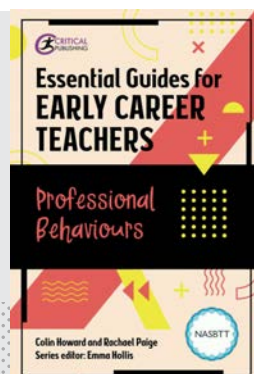
Catherine Lee is professor of inclusive education and leadership at Anglia Ruskin University, specialising in LGBTQ+ research, and a recent recipient of an MBE for services to equality in education; for more information, follow @DrCatherineLee



Botheredness: Stories, stance and pedagogy

(Hywel Roberts, Independent Thinking Press, £16.99)

How can we get children interested and invested in what we're trying to teach them? It's a question that cuts to the very core of what teachers do, and one that Roberts endeavours to tackle at length here. In his telling, the 'botheredness' of the title refers to 'classroom/institution-level monkey-giving' that teachers should want to see students reciprocate. What follows is a cornucopia of rich ideas for attaching metaphorical jump leads to your lessons via strategies, ideas and techniques informed by Roberts' own secondary teaching career, but also from the primary phase and special education. The tone throughout is that of a kindly, lively and often mischievous, yet supportive voice in the staff room, barrelling through the meaning and utility of phronesis one moment, before dropping a neat pop culture reference or wry anecdote in one of the book's many entertaining footnotes the next. Highly recommended.



Essential Guides for Early Careers Teachers: Professional Behaviours

(Colin Howard and Rachael Paige, edited by Emma Hollis, Critical Publishing, £15.99)

Following the introduction of the revised Early Career Framework, schools were given the chance to rethink and reassess the scope of their career development provision for ECTs. This entry in Critical Publishing's ECT-oriented *Essential Guides...* series (currently running to 10 volumes) prompts readers to think carefully about how they develop their 'professional self', before exploring the different avenues they can turn to for help and support, and detailing a series of strategies for self-help and maintaining a healthy work-life balance. Considered, clear and well-structured practical advice is very much the order of the day, with chapters getting their own reflective tasks, case studies and recommended activities for 'tomorrow', 'next week' and 'the long term'.

Easy when you know how

Colleagues who seem to take all aspects of teaching in their stride might not necessarily be the best people to learn from, warns **Colin Foster...**

Let's say there's a teacher who's struggling with their behaviour management and decides to seek help from a more experienced colleague. They'll likely be told something along the lines of, *"Oh, you should go and see Mr Smith – his behaviour management is fantastic!"* Is this good advice?

In the event, our teacher makes arrangements with Mr Smith to watch him teach his most difficult class – which coincidentally, happens to be the very same class our teacher has been struggling with. Perfect! So she sits at the back of the classroom, ready to watch this 'master teacher' do his thing, pen poised to note down all those novel strategies, clever comebacks and aspects of body language she can later imitate back in her own classroom.

And... nothing happens. The students all behave impeccably. Our observing teacher is impressed with Mr Smith's skill, certainly – but what has she actually learnt? Not much. *"He didn't seem to do anything – they just behaved!"* she says on her return to the staffroom.

Don't learn from the best

It may sound counterintuitive, but it's actually hard to learn from the very best. If you want to be amazed and impressed by a magic trick, go watch the best magician you can afford tickets for. If you want to

learn how to be a magician yourself, get inside those tricks and understand how they're done, observing the best magician on the circuit will teach you little that will help you imitate them.

In fact, you'll learn far more from seeing a *less* expert performance, even one in which mistakes are made. Catching sight of a playing card disappearing into the magician's pocket, or the tip of a handkerchief poking out from behind

"You need to see things working and things going wrong, and what the colleague does in response"

their hand will instantly clue you in on how you might go about imitating – and ultimately even improving on – the performance you're seeing. If you want to learn the art of magic, it's the second-rate magician who'll be much more useful to you.

I would venture that something similar applies to observations of colleagues within school. To learn good behaviour management you have to see *good behaviour management* – not just good behaviour.

A crack in everything

You need to see things working and things going wrong, and what the colleague does in response.

You need to see problems bubbling up and being cleverly averted, as well as overt instances of bad behaviour being addressed appropriately. You need to see the cracks. As Leonard Cohen once wrote, *"There is a crack in everything. That's how the light gets in."*

You may well want to see someone who's advanced further along the teaching path than yourself, but it's perhaps best to not seek

out someone who feels they've reached the end of the path and has sat down for a nice drink.

Watching a colleague who's still struggling a bit – though hopefully succeeding to some degree – with a difficult class will give you lots more to think about, compared to watching colleagues whose attention isn't on behaviour because (at least for the moment) it doesn't need to be.

Timing is everything

Of course, those 'superhuman superteachers' who never put a foot wrong are mythical. All teachers struggle from time to time. When someone appears to be light years ahead of us,

it might just be that we're out of sync with their timing.

There's a good chance that Mr Smith experienced struggles of his own with that class during the first few weeks of term, in the process of establishing routines and gaining respect. That would have been interesting to watch, for sure.

But now, with that behind him, perhaps all he has to do is maintain what he's set up via small actions that won't be immediately apparent to an outside observer. The risk of visiting his lessons now is that the observing teacher may end up honing in on tiny, relatively insignificant aspects of Mr Smith's behaviour and try duplicating these in her own practice, when in all likelihood they'll have little effect.

Those behavioural elements aren't what make his lessons successful, but they're the only things she can see in his lessons that she can take away with her. And even then, she may well come away feeling demoralised about how far below the perceived standard she feels she is.

Works in progress

It takes confidence to open up your classroom to colleagues when you know you're far from 'perfecting' your craft – but it's precisely the messy, 'work in progress' phase of classroom

teaching that's most helpful for others to see.

By contrast, watching the 'finished product' can be quite uninformative. An observer benefits from seeing something working, but also from seeing it go wrong, and then trying to tell why things went differently each time.

We need to let colleagues see us with all our imperfections, warts and all. In a way, this can take the pressure off those being observed. Rather than desperately hoping that

everything will go 100% smoothly, and that you'll give an 'impressive' performance, you can instead just aspire towards something useful emerging from the lesson. This will allow your focus to be placed firmly on the students you're

teaching – where it should be – and not worry about how you're coming across to observers.

Teachers will sometimes say to a colleague, self-deprecatingly, '*You can come and watch if you want, but it won't be amazing.*' That, though, is the point – an observer shouldn't be looking for 'amazing'. There's little value to be had in being 'dazzled' by a star performance.

Learn, don't imitate

Instead, as mutually supportive colleagues, we should want to learn from

both our successes and difficulties. The important thing is for observers to witness something that will allow them to reflect on their own practice, and prompt them to consider aspects of their own methods they might approach differently.

Merely 'copying and pasting' another colleague's techniques, however tried and tested they might be, is unlikely to work. All teachers are different, and we all need to find different ways to succeed in our different contexts.

That doesn't mean we have nothing to share, however – far from it. Seeing what our colleagues down the corridor are doing will give us opportunities to consider different options. While observing, we have the time and space to watch the students and gain a different perspective on the classroom through their eyes. Above all, we have the chance to learn from any mistakes made – whether they be ours or our colleagues'.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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



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Power STRUGGLES

As a new multipolar world forms before our eyes, **Tim Marshall** considers how physical geography continues to shape what countries do – and what that means for the stories we'll be learning about decades hence...

In the Middle East, the vast fortress of Iran and its nemesis, Saudi Arabia, face off across the Persian Gulf. South of the Pacific, Australia finds itself caught between the two most powerful nations of our time: the USA and China. In the Mediterranean, Greece and Turkey are in a contest that has roots going back to antiquity, but could flare into violence tomorrow.

Welcome to the 2020s. The Cold War era, in which the USA and the Soviet Union dominated the entire world, is becoming a distant memory. We are entering a new age of great-power rivalry in which numerous actors, even minor players, are jostling to take centre stage. The geopolitical drama is even spilling out of our earthly realm, as countries stake their claims above our atmosphere, to the Moon and beyond.

Multiple power rivalries

When what was the established order for several generations turns out to be temporary, it is easy to become anxious. But it has happened before, it is happening now and it will happen again.

For some time we have been moving towards a 'multipolar' world. Following the Second World War, we saw a new order – a bipolar era with an American-led capitalist system on one side, and on the other the

communist system operated by what was, in effect, the Russian Empire and China.

This lasted anything from about 50 to 80 years, depending on where you draw your lines. In the 1990s we saw what some analysts call the 'unipolar' decade,

balance of power will shift during the coming years.

There are undoubtedly economic and geopolitical giants that continue to have huge sway in global affairs – the USA and China, of course, as well as Russia, the collective nations of

“The choices people make, now and in the future, are never separate from their physical context”

when American power went almost completely unchallenged. But it is clear that we are now moving back to what was the norm for most of human history.

Projecting power

Empires rise and fall. Alliances are forged and then crumble. The post-Napoleonic Wars settlement in Europe lasted about 60 years; the 'Thousand-Year Reich' lasted for just over a decade. It's impossible to know precisely how the

Europe in the EU and the fast-growing economic power of India. But smaller nations matter too.

Geopolitics involves alliances, and with the world order currently in a state of flux, this is a time when the big powers need smaller powers on their side, and vice versa. It gives countries such as Turkey, Saudi Arabia and the UK an opportunity to strategically position themselves for future power.

In 2015, I wrote a book called *Prisoners of Geography*, in which I aimed to show how geography affects global politics and shapes the decisions that nations and their leaders are able to make. I wrote about the geopolitics of Russia; China; the USA; Europe; the Middle East; Africa; India and Pakistan; Japan and Korea; Latin America; and



the Arctic. I wanted to focus on the biggest players, the great geopolitical blocs or regions, and give a global overview, but there is more to say.

Although the USA remains the only country capable of projecting serious naval power into two oceans simultaneously, the Himalayas still separate India and China, and Russia is still vulnerable in the flatlands to its west. New geopolitical realities are emerging all the time, and there are other players worthy of our attention, with the power to shape our future.

Geopolitical realities

My latest book, *The Power of Geography*, looks at mountains, rivers, seas and concrete to understand geopolitical realities. Geography is a key factor shaping what humanity can and cannot do. Yes, politicians are important – but geography is more so. The choices people make, now and in the future, are never separate from their physical context.

The starting point of any country's story is its location in relation to neighbours, sea

routes and natural resources. Live on a windswept island on the periphery of the Atlantic Ocean? You're well placed to harness wind and waves. Live in a country where the sun shines 365 days a year? Solar panels are the way ahead. Live in a region where cobalt is mined? That could be a blessing and a curse.

There's been talk of a 'flat world', in which financial transactions and communications conducted through cyberspace have collapsed distance, rendering landscape meaningless. However, this is a world inhabited only by a tiny fraction of people who may well speak via video conference, before flying over mountains and seas to speak in person, but it's not the experience of most of the other 8 billion people on earth.

Egyptian farmers still rely on Ethiopia for water. The mountains to the north of Athens still hinder its trade with Europe. Geography isn't fate – humans get a vote in what happens – but it matters.

A divided decade

Many factors have contributed to what will be an uncertain and divided decade as we progress to a new era. Globalization, anti-globalization, COVID-19, technology and climate change have all had an impact, and all feature in *The Power of Geography* as 21st century events and conflicts with the potential for far-reaching consequences in a multipolar world.

Iran, for example, is currently shaping the future of the Middle East. A pariah state with a nuclear agenda, it must keep its Shia 'corridor' to the Mediterranean open via Baghdad, Damascus and Beirut to maintain influence. Its regional rival, Saudi Arabia, is a country built on oil and sand that has always counted the USA as an ally. But as demand for oil declines and the USA becomes more energy-independent, its interest in the Middle East will slowly wane.

Elsewhere, it's not oil but water that's causing turmoil. As the 'water tower of Africa', Ethiopia holds a crucial advantage over its neighbours, particularly Egypt. This is one of the

key sites for the potential 'water wars' this century,

but also shows the power of technology as Ethiopia uses hydroelectricity to change its fortunes.

That is not an option in many parts of Africa, such as the Sahel – the vast scrubland at the southern edge of the Sahara and a war-torn region straddling ancient geographical and cultural divisions, where in parts Al-Qaeda and ISIS now hold sway. Many people will flee, some heading north towards Europe. What is already a major humanitarian crisis may worsen.

Earthly restraints

However, perhaps the most fascinating development of current times is that our geopolitical power struggles are now breaking free of our earthly restraints and being projected into space. Who owns space? How do you decide?

There's never really a 'final frontier', but this is as close as it gets. Frontiers tend to be wild, lawless places. Above a certain height there's no sovereign territory. If I want to place my laser-armed satellite directly over your country, by what law do you say I can't?

With multiple countries racing to become the pre-eminent power in space, and private companies entering the fray, the stage is set for a dangerous cutting-edge arms race, unless we can learn from past mistakes and accept the many benefits of international co-operation.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Tim Marshall is a journalist and author specialising in foreign affairs, having previously served as diplomatic editor for Sky News and contributed to a number of national newspapers. This article is based on an abridged extract from his book, *The Power of Geography – Ten Maps That Reveal The Future of our World* (£9.99, Elliott and Thompson Limited). For more information, visit eandtbooks.com/schools

Leadership in choppy waters

Neil Jurd OBE offers his thoughts on how secondary school leaders can remain calm, supportive and empathetic to their junior colleagues when under intense pressure

Leadership is a critical aspect of any successful team. The ability to lead and guide a group towards a common goal is invaluable.

Yet leading a team can be especially challenging in high-pressure situations, where uncertainty and stress can cause individuals to falter. In such situations, effective leadership can make all the difference in maintaining a sense of direction, purpose, and focus.

The way leaders present themselves and interact with their teams can have a profound impact on a department's overall culture. Positivity is contagious; those leaders who exude kindness, optimism and empathy will in turn create a positive, productive, and supportive environment for their employees.

Too often, people in leadership positions forget that the role of a leader is to serve both their team and the mission. Serving as an officer in the British Army, and subsequently helping to train future leaders helped me understand this.

The Royal Military Academy Sandhurst has a motto, 'Serve to Lead'. The message it seeks to convey is that by caring for the wellbeing of their team, leaders not only demonstrate empathy, but also ensure that their team is physically and mentally

capable of focusing on their goals.

Empathetic relationships

To build and maintain relationships with junior colleagues, it's necessary to first create a sense of safety. By encouraging open and honest communication, you'll be better placed to fully understand the challenges they're facing.

This can be done via a series of small actions. Make sure informal check-ins take place on neutral ground so that they feel less formal. Ensure your colleagues are going home on time. Set aside times for regular sit downs with a coffee so that you can catch up with them. All this will help build trust and paint a clearer picture of those daily issues you can support them with.

Leaders who succeed in building strong relationships with their team will tend to be those who can effectively motivate and inspire others. That's why it's so important for leaders to create opportunities to connect with their team members and understand their perspectives.

How do you fare under pressure?

Before you can effectively lead others, however, you must understand and control yourself. Effective leaders are self-aware and will work

hard at boosting their strengths while addressing or compensating for their weaknesses. A leader possessing self-awareness and self-control will understand their own emotions and feelings, pay attention to them and be able to discuss them with others.

We recently collaborated with the headteacher of a

Positive leadership

If positive behaviour leads to positive results, then at the basic level, being kind, decent, patient and caring will help you develop the kind of strong and supportive relationships that any leadership role will require. I've previously seen several superb examples of positive leadership from Nigel William – a calm, humorous and gentle man, and one of Scotland's most experienced mountain leaders.

He and I have spent weeks together on

thriving sixth form college as part of a leadership development programme. He was a kind and thoughtful man, and well-liked by the college's staff – but when under pressure, he would become irritable and tended to blame others for any mistakes.

By getting to understand his reactions in such instances, he soon learned to control the fear of failure that drove his negative responses to pressure, and through that ultimately change his behaviour. By understanding and better appreciating how you typically respond to pressure, you can better control how you react to it.



skis in Norway. Early one year we were with three inexperienced skiers in a mountainous area. Injury had slowed us down, and we were still out after night had fallen. Temperatures were below zero and dropping fast. We could not find the hut where we were to spend the night, and there was no other accommodation for 20 miles.

The mood in the group became uncomfortable. The inexperienced skiers were tired, frustrated and scared at the idea of spending a night outdoors in the Norwegian wilds. The hut was close, but hidden in woodland on the other side of a deep, snow-filled river valley crossed by a single-track bridge.

Without knowing our exact position there was a strong chance we would miss the hut. Our

“Before you can effectively lead others, you must understand and control yourself”

immediate situation, which required precise navigation, could have easily become dangerous – yet amid these hugely demanding circumstances Nigel remained perfectly calm, assiduously looking after and reassuring the group.

Nigel’s attitude and calm positivity, combined with his brilliance as a navigator and experience traversing dangerous ground, is a classic example of positive leadership, and a model demonstration of how to create a sense of safety when it’s needed.

Be aware of negative leadership

Negative leadership can take many forms, but will often be characterised by behaviour that has a detrimental effect on other people within the team. Arrogance, rudeness and dismissiveness of others diminishes people, reducing their self-worth and willingness to engage. It undermines

trust and mutual understanding in the team and makes people more status conscious.

In the Army I worked for a time under a major who would shout at me and other junior officers to make his point. On one occasion, he shouted because a tin of paint had gone missing. Another time it was because of a problem with a radio battery. We junior officers often had no real idea as to what we’d done wrong. I can still remember the time we stood to attention under a barrage of words, trying to grasp why he was so angry before he became even more annoyed.

He in turn worked for a Lieutenant Colonel who was known for being arrogant and personally ambitious, but everything changed with the arrival of a new commander – a talented and emotionally aware leader whose presence and style transformed the Battalion’s culture. My immediate boss became more relaxed, and the effect was felt across the organisation.

Contagious leadership

Open, honest communication and a readiness to show empathy and kindness, are key elements of positive leadership. This type of leadership style not only inspires and motivates teams, but also gives rise to greater innovation, creativity and problem-solving capabilities.

The impact of a leader’s behaviour is often contagious. If you practise kindness and empathy this will radiate throughout your team, as humans naturally mimic the moods and behaviours of their peers. Understanding this impact and incorporating positive leadership practices is critical to creating a successful and productive team.

By serving their team well, and fostering relationships through open and honest communication, leaders will inspire and motivate their employees to perform at their best and ultimately achieve their collective goals.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Neil Jurd OBE (@JurdNeil) is the author of *The Leadership Book* and founder of the residential training and video learning platform Leader-Connect; for more information, visit leader-connect.co.uk

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be introduced to a range of techniques for dealing with exam pressures more effectively.

4 RAISE ATTAINMENT, BOOST GRADES

Schools love how a revision residential at Conway Centres can boost students' immersion in a subject, which is later reflected in their grades. This might involve students attending a GCSE drama course where they'll hone their practical, creative and performance skills, or utilise both contemporary and traditional artistry in the creation of artefacts to support their work

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in GCSE art – students will understand their subject in greater depth.

5 GROW THOSE CONNECTIONS

With a variety of schools attending the exam support courses, the jam-packed weekends will encourage students to forge new connections with others sharing similar interests, and exchange thoughts and ideas on how to approach their upcoming exams. Teachers and young people alike will have the chance to network and build relationships that could open a whole new world of opportunities.

WHAT SCHOOLS SAY

"The Art GCSE weekend was brilliant. Students thoroughly enjoyed the sessions. We were very impressed with the workshops and staff at the centre."
– Rainford High

"Students excelled under direction of talented artists. All pupils felt a sense of pride and accomplishment that will continue long after their trip"
– Argoed High School

"Students were highly engaged by the inspiring and stimulating workshops."
– Wirral Grammar School for Girls

"We had the best weekend. It is simply the best CPD my colleagues and I have all year. The pupils have obviously come on leaps and bounds."
– St Gregory's High School

Breaking the SEND barrier

Shelly Woods describes how staffing a new shop with local SEND students proved to be a powerful way of providing valuable employment skills while also educating the local populace...

Those of us who have worked alongside learners with SEND know how much they have to offer to the workplace, and just how ambitious and exciting their dreams can be.

Throughout my career working at a special school, I got to know many young SEND learners who opened my mind to the wonderful ideas and goals they possessed. These learners barely differed at all from their peers at mainstream schools when it came to their hopes and plans, yet were frequently perceived as ‘*too different*’ to those who didn’t know them.

People with SEND are disproportionately passed over for employment opportunities – often due to a lack of work experience that would enable them to gain relevant skills, and sometimes because of recruiters’ internal biases. According to the Department for Work and Pensions, the employment gap for disabled persons reached 28.4% in 2021, indicating that neurodivergent minds are sadly offered fewer opportunities than their neurotypical peers.

Now, this could be chalked up to simple unfamiliarity, with some employers perhaps worrying they don’t have the provisions in place that they need to support an

individual with SEND – but if so, what’s stopping them from being put in place?

Opening doors

Imagine instead a world in which these young learners have multiple opportunities outside of school for building their confidence and developing their skills. Well, it exists.

My personal journey in special education led me to realise that there were doors and minds needing to be opened for individuals with SEND. To that end, I embarked on opening a high street shop, The Plane Tree, in Beeston, Nottingham,

with the aim of providing internship opportunities to local pupils with SEND.

As a community interest company, we’re able to support young people with SEND and adults alike with workplace training on a bespoke basis. Participating pupils work within the shop to develop their interpersonal skillsets, gain practical work experience and develop their confidence in social situations. A further goal of the shop is to inspire others within the wider business

community to follow suit, by offering employment opportunities of their own to neurodivergent young people.

Opening the shop

The decision to open the shop was a big one, but I was confident that the outcomes would benefit the young people I’d already had the pleasure of working with across my career.



It was important to me that we build a business that was genuinely valued in the community, and not simply seen as that ‘good deed’ shop. It was also vital that the shop gain increasing exposure over time, by being situated in a fully accessible, commercially advantageous area that could deliver high footfall. Doing so has enabled the shop to occupy a highly visible, central place within in the local community, and with it, the chance for our interns to see a real, positive impact on their levels of social engagement.

We wanted the shop to actively benefit the community in some way, so we chose to stock it with artwork from 25 local artists, with hopes to continue to grow this number. The aim was to boost their exposure and shine a spotlight on the talents of our local arts community, while at same time selling some lovely

pieces for people’s homes.

Next, we recruited four pupils from Nethergate Academy – a local SEND school, and my former workplace – before the shop opened to help us get set up. This gave the young people valuable space and time to adjust to the new environment and practise some of their skills before we opened up to the public.

During this preparation phase, our talented interns worked tirelessly to move furniture, assist with setting up displays, learn how to work the till and complete their health and safety training. In the event, our opening day was wonderfully busy, and the pupils acquitted themselves in their new roles spectacularly.

“The employment gap for disabled persons reached 28.4% in 2021”

Impacts and benefits

Since opening, our interns’ duties have expanded to include serving customers, counting stock, monitoring the shop’s pavement signage and cleaning up. We’ve also expanded the team to include another volunteer with SEND who has already finished school.

Logistically, the shop is open five days a week, with the four interns working in pairs to cover shifts – two coming in on Tuesdays and Wednesdays and the others on Thursdays and Fridays, while our volunteer covers Saturdays. On days when the pupils aren’t working at the shop they’ll be attending school or else completing their studies at home.

The shop is still only a few months old, but our interns have already been able to benefit from the experience in some clear and significant

ways. When we first opened, most were shy and anxious in social situations. We’ve since seen them blossom through their regular interactions with customers. Giving them a chance to engage with the

wider community outside of school has done a huge amount to build up their social confidence.

The shop has also given our interns a glimpse as to what the expectations and demands of working life might look like – in the process, teaching them important skills around work readiness, professional behaviour and responsibility. They’re all held to a high standard and expected to clock in and out, arriving on time each day ready to begin.

The impact this has had on them is incredible. I’ve seen all of them work hard and dedicate considerable effort to up building their skills. They’re taking their roles in the shop very seriously.

High hopes

In turn, I now have high hopes that by seeing how the skillsets of our interns are developing, other employers in the local community will be encouraged and empowered to offer more

opportunities of their own to individuals with SEND.

Indeed, this is starting already. We’re currently in the process of partnering with other local businesses to organise ‘mini secondments’ for the pupils, amounting to around half an hour each week. This will allow our young people to gain useful work experience in other professional environments and get a sense of how businesses operate in different ways, as well as helping to guide those businesses on how they can support workers with SEND.

What’s more, it’s not just our interns who have benefited from our journey thus far – our shoppers have too. The shop has given individuals who haven’t previously spent much time around people with SEND an approachable way of bridging their gaps in understanding by taking part in meaningful interactions. Above all, their experiences in the shop have served to showcase how pupils with SEND can very much thrive within, and add value to, any community.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Shelly Woods is the founder of The Plane Tree shop in Beeston, Nottingham

KEY REFLECTIONS

- The process of Opening The Plane Tree has given me the privilege of watching bright young minds flourish within their local community
- It’s also presented a wonderful opportunity to boost the visibility and success of local artists, and hopefully pave the way for serious social change
- Stigmas only serve to hold us back from achieving the kind of social harmony that can encourage all young people – neurotypical or neurodivergent – to dream big
- We must do whatever we can to break down the barriers preventing SEND learners from realising their goals and participating in their communities – because we’ve seen for ourselves the immense impact this can have

What's New?

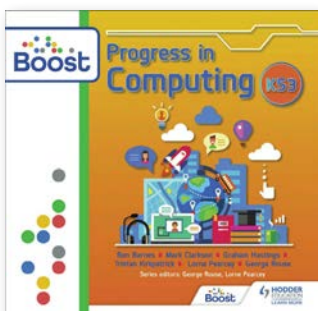
Our pick of the latest solutions and innovations for secondary education

1

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2

Computer science, flipped

Craig 'n' Dave is a comprehensive package of GCSE and A Level computer science resources designed to be delivered via a flipped-classroom learning model. The contents include schemes of learning, student workbooks, supporting videos, model answers, end-of-topic tests, programming activities and more besides, thus helping to reduce teachers' planning and preparation time.

The package's resources aim to facilitate self-starting lessons and get students engaging immediately. The included homework activities meanwhile encourage students to demonstrate independent learning, helping them to grow in confidence and take ownership of their unique learning journeys. To find out more, visit craigndave.org or contact admin@craigndave.co.uk



3

Quick-fire questions

BBC Bitesize has launched a series of new GCSE revision quizzes for 2023. The free resources include exam-style questions and quick-fire quizzes covering GCSE maths, biology, chemistry, physics, combined science, geography and computer science, all written by professional educators and examiners.

Specifically designed to help students improve their exam skills, the quizzes can be used in the classroom, at home or via mobile devices to build confidence and knowledge ahead of examinations. The exam questions address common errors and misconceptions before providing students with detailed feedback. The quick-fire questions test existing knowledge, serving up new questions each time a quiz is taken, so that students can return and retake them over the course of their revision. Find out more at bbc.co.uk/bitesize



5

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FOCUS ON: STEM

This issue, we look at how misplaced assumptions regarding STEM subjects – that they're exclusionary, or somehow lacking in creative potential – aren't just wide of the mark, but actively holding some students back...

How can the teaching of STEM be made more inclusive, innovative and relevant to the expectations of the modern workplace?

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The missing 115,000

Is it an image problem? Pressure from parents? Whatever the reason, we're still seeing too many capable girls turning away from promising STEM careers, warns **Christina Astin...**

If I asked you to close your eyes and picture an engineer, what would you see? A hard hat and hi-vis jacket? Heavy machinery? An older white male?

Hopefully not, but attempt a Google Images search for 'engineer' and you'll quickly see how strong the stereotypes out there still are. It's a similar story for the terms 'scientist', 'technician' or 'mathematician'.

A recent report from EngineeringUK (see bit.ly/ts123-ws1) reveals that 115,000 more girls need to take maths or physics A Level to balance out the male students studying for engineering and technology degrees.

We know that the proportion of girls choosing A Level STEM subjects has remained stubbornly low for decades – so low that it would take 250 years at current rates to attain gender parity in physics alone – so why hasn't this changed? Does it even matter? And what, in any case, can teachers do about it?

Assertive boys / caring girls

Unfortunately, society still peddles the view that 'science isn't for girls'. From toy shops to boardrooms, 'assertive boy / caring girl' attitudes are continually reinforced by parents and the media, making it tough for teachers to tackle the stereotypes.

The idea that girls simply don't like physics or 'hard

maths' perpetuates widespread unconscious bias. The result? Girls feel less free when choosing their A levels. I spoke recently to one GCSE student about participating in science lessons, to which she responded with astonishment, "I'd never put up my hand – it's unfeminine". Is it any wonder that teenage girls are so reluctant to pursue subjects with such a stubborn image problem?

Teenage girls are being put off pursuing promising STEM careers that might have made them happy and fulfilled – yet at the same time, diversity is increasingly good for business. Companies are keen to employ more women because they know that a diverse workforce makes them more successful. Women and other underrepresented groups can bring different perspectives to bear on how a company operates, and strengthen decision-making at all levels of an organisation.

For evidence of this, witness the flawed designs of numerous products and functions, from airbags to voice recognition software, and how their shortcomings for non-male users have been belatedly recognised and addressed within recent years.

Moreover, given the enormous challenges we face as a society, we can't afford to discourage any one group from contributing

possible solutions. We urgently need more wind turbine engineers, epidemiologists, meteorologists and others who 'get' science.

Causes for hope

There is some recent research that should give us hope for the future. We understand far better now what will help to fix the leaky STEM pipeline – and teachers have an important role to play.

Historically, careers advice has tended to focus on becoming 'a scientist', and highlighting what it is that scientists 'do' – an approach that's proved off-putting for many who instinctively equate the term 'scientist' with the well-worn societal stereotype of a 'stale, pale

and male' boffin wearing a white lab coat.

Happily, however, prompted by research carried out by ASPIRES and others (see bit.ly/ts122-c1), we're now seeing a greater focus on showing school students that there



are many people working in STEM who are actually like them; who look like them, possess similar traits and enjoy similar interests.

There's also the fact that teachers tend to be the biggest influence on young people's subject choices after parents and friends, and can do more throughout KS3/4 to encourage girls' interest in STEM subjects, beyond the occasional encouraging remark.

Gender-neutral contexts

All students deserve excellent teachers, of course, but research shows that girls depend even more than boys on teaching quality, with their A Level choices often reflective of the confidence they have in their subject teachers. Attracting and retaining STEM teachers who can have a positive impact in this area is therefore crucial (but, needless to say, harder than ever).

Ofsted's recent science subject report (see bit.ly/ts123-ws3) highlights the ways in which students learn best, and you can download a useful tips sheet for more inclusive science teaching from Institute of Physics (bit.ly/ts123-ws4).

Schools should also ensure that schemes of work refer to female scientists and engineers, and draw on examples from a wide variety of gender-neutral contexts. Be careful, though – tokenistic 'girl-friendly' references (e.g., *'The science of lipstick!'*) will be seen as patronising.

Having your science, maths, technology and computer science departments work together

as a unified 'STEM' team can certainly help in this area, and potentially save time if teaching orders and methodologies are triangulated.

Unhelpful messages

Many schools set higher entry criteria for post-16 STEM subjects compared to others. This perpetuates the myth that you have to be especially clever to study them, once again invoking those nerdy stereotypes and potentially putting off girls who don't identify with them.

“Teenage girls are being put off pursuing promising STEM careers that might have made them happy and fulfilled”

But simply getting rid of dated stereotypes isn't enough; we need to replace them with something better. People Like Us (peoplelikeus.io) is an online teaching resource that uses film and interactive activities to highlight role models who overcame challenges at home or school before ultimately finding fulfilling jobs in STEM industries. Another online option is The Infinity Game (infinitygame.futurefirst.org.uk) – a quiz-based resource that can raise awareness among students of physics-related careers they might not have previously considered.

Having opportunities to meet inspiring STEM role models, in person or virtually, can be invaluable. Cast your net as widely as possible by seeing whether you can invite any parents, governors, local university staff or alumni working in a STEM role to address or mentor your students.

I was told countless times at parents' evenings, *'You don't look like a physics teacher'* or *'Of course, I was never any good at science – ha ha!'* Neither are helpful messages for daughters to hear, though it may well be that parents themselves need further information about the possible pathways into STEM – from technical apprenticeships to graduate careers – as well as some friendly guidance on what they can do to help counteract negative stereotypes.

Change the emphasis

Schools that are serious about addressing diversity will make gender equality a priority for the whole school. This might involve making it a standing item on every SLT agenda, or appointing a school gender champion to challenge mindsets and monitor school policies. Each department could in turn critically examine its curriculum, outcomes and language – something that's just as important for boys wanting to choose drama as it is for girls wanting to choose physics.

There are some fabulous resources available to support schools in this area, such as the advice on best practice available to members of the WISE Campaign (wisecampaign.org.uk). The Institute of Physics has taken a real lead in this space, having partnered with UCL, Kings College London and the University Council of

WHY THERE'S WORK TO DO

What needs to be addressed to create equity?

40%

Proportion of 2020/21 female UK engineering undergraduates who studied A Level maths

Source: EngineeringUK

24%

Proportion of same group who studied A Level physics

11%

Proportion of girls aged 10 who aspire to careers in engineering, compared with 44% of boys the same age

Modern Languages to create the Gender Action award programme and resource library (genderaction.co.uk).

Don't be daunted by the scale of the problem. Even small changes of emphasis can have a noticeable impact in schools and help girls make freer, more informed choices regarding their futures. Who knows – maybe we can help find those missing 115,000 after all.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Christina Astin (@ChristinaAstin) is a former physics teacher, now education consultant supporting partnerships, science and outreach; she also chairs Planet Possibility – a consortium working to improve diversity in physics. Find out more at astinconsulting.com

WHY I LOVE...

How one trust makes novel use of the iPads supplied to it by Sync

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SCHOOL:

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“ The child going to university has the same equipment as one going for an



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Solid foundations

GCSE computing has seen many changes for the better in recent years, but there's still scope for improvement, observes **Mark Martin MBE**...

Before the introduction of the computing curriculum in 2014, 'ICT classes' were heavily focused around desktop applications. Students would be mainly taught how to touch type and use desktop applications – modern versions of which continue to play a vital role in the daily activities of virtually all businesses and public organisations.

Now, when students study computer science at school, they won't necessarily all go on to become programmers – but they do stand to gain an understanding of how sophisticated algorithms affect their everyday lives, from using self-service checkouts to scrolling through social media posts. We should be aspiring to teach a holistic view of computer science, to help young people better navigate the challenges of the modern world.

This entails showing young people how to think in a computational way, but also how to think critically, and interrogate various sources of information. This kind of activity can cross over into different school subjects in interesting ways. English, for example – how can we verify the accuracy of claims we see online or in the news, and then check them against other sources to ensure we're not being misled?

The awareness gap

In the best case scenario, computer science can give young people the freedom to express themselves creatively. Because what do young people want when they're at school? Often, it's a willingness on the part of the school to let students express their voice, be themselves, forge an identity of their own and have that be acknowledged. Enabling that to happen could go a long way towards encouraging greater take-up of the subject by students

from more diverse backgrounds.

We also need to ensure that our computing curriculums are appropriately geared towards enabling young people to potentially enter the tech industry, but there continues to be an awareness gap in this area.

Young people don't necessarily know that there's a viable path towards starting up their own digital business. They might not even be aware of big technology companies with a presence in their local area. I myself work in South London, where there's an office for one of the biggest tech companies in the world, namely IBM – and yet I've spoken to many young people here who don't even know that it exists. We could be doing more to signpost young people to the STEM career opportunities available on their own doorstep.

Moreover, a lot of young people engage with technology in their personal lives in ways that could actually form the basis of a potential career, without them being aware of it. The process of ensuring that you and your computer are protected from malware

when you're online, for example, might seem mundane, but it could serve as an initial springboard into a

rewarding career in cyber security.

Real world problems

Personally, I feel that GCSE computing should be assessed in a similar way to art, with 60% of the overall grade based on project work and 40% on a written exam. At the moment it's entirely based on exams, which can discourage students wary of having to memorise and recite material to hit a certain pass mark.

Let's instead see computing become a more creative subject, where students learn essential computer science skills and then apply those to set tasks that model real world problems. Some schools are already attempting this, sometimes via a multidisciplinary approach that sees students using data science in the context of, say, geography to track the number and types of trees in their local area.

What students do in computing should revolve around them discovering the true functionality and purpose of technology they use already. If some of those students want to one day become programmers, that's great – but ultimately, the focus for the subject as a whole ought to be on *how* things work, and *why* they work.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Mark Martin MBE (@urban_teacher) is an assistant professor in computer science and education practice

Perfect partners

Far from being diametric opposites, the study of science and the practice of art can intertwine in fascinating and rewarding ways, writes **Hannah Day**...

The school timetable, while practical and efficient, sends out a very clear, yet unhelpful message – that each subject is separate and stands alone.

Recent research by The British Science Association, however, shows that this isn't what young people want, nor feel they need in order to prepare themselves for the future. In their view, they're pigeonholed – forced to select between distinct scientific or creative pathways, and missing out on opportunities to develop multidisciplinary approaches to problem solving in process.

The shift of focus towards STEM and away from

science and art subject areas make regular use of perishable items – chemicals, paints and so forth – which can only be used once, which doesn't help. Nor does the lack of teachers, particularly in science subjects.

Shockingly, one science teacher I spoke to informed me that he'd previously been forced to teach groups of 90 in a school hall when no teachers, not even a supply, could be found. When pressures like that take hold, practical offerings will often be the first to go.

However, budgetary pressures aren't the only thing both subject areas share. There are some genuinely exciting ways of

Combining observational drawing of animals with a science lesson in anatomy can open up two approaches to exploring the same artifact. This is great if you have a collection of beetles in the back office, or work at a school that still dissects mice – but if you don't, then the work of Victorian botanist and artist Marianne North could provide you with a much easier route.

Her painting depicts exotic flowers from her wide travels, and was considered by Charles Darwin to be excellent documentary material for illustrating the theory of natural selection. Her rich, in situ compositions can be used in art as an artist starting point, and in science to illuminate the differences between the plants she captured and explore general plant anatomy. With over 800 paintings to choose from, her work provides both subject areas with a rich source to draw from.

Art and chemistry

Many of what are now our most commonly used colours were originally stumbled upon by scientists attempting to create something rather different than a novel shade to welcome in a new fashion season. My favourite account relates to William Perkin – a celebrated British scientist who sought to create a synthetic quinine which, during the mid 1800s, was the only known cure for malaria.

While experimenting with coal tar, he kept producing a light purple liquid. Alongside his passion for chemistry he had once also

dreamed of being an artist, and with his curiosity piqued, he placed some fabric in the liquid. He soon realised he'd created a light- and wash-proof dye in a colour we now know as mauve, which went on to become one of the most sought-after dyes of the Victorian era and made Perkins a rich man.

His tale reminds me of the sessions I completed as part of my textiles degree, where we had to mix and dye a rainbow of colour swatches. These sessions bore all the

“It's well worth finding out what you and another department might have in common”

STEAM (science, technology, engineering, art and maths) over the last decade plus has only exacerbated this trend, and seen creative subjects become increasingly relegated in importance.

It's therefore no surprise that one of the key concerns raised by the BSA's Future Forms research was a lack of access to practical teaching – something highlighted by students in science and art pathways alike.

Budgetary pressures

Tight budgets and increasing costs for schools have forced many to reduce their practical offering. Both

addressing these issues, while also giving students more of the connected approach between the two that they so desperately want. Let's look at some examples of art history and science working in union, and see what we can take from them.

Art and biology

This is perhaps the most obvious place to start. We've all seen Da Vinci's illustrations of human anatomy, and can instinctively recognise that visual understanding is a key skill for any student wanting to progress in medicine or veterinary science.



hallmarks of science lessons, complete with the careful measurement and combining of different elements, experimentation and subsequent recording, annotation and storage.

Approaching colour theory and paint mixing from the perspectives of both disciplines can provide an interesting lesson in how to record observations, while improving students' understanding of how colours, hues and shades can be created and altered – foundational skills for scientists and artists alike.

Art and physics

Some years ago, I was

teaching a group of students who became interested in long exposure light photography. This resulted in them producing images of stars at night which shows some stars having light trails that were curved and others that were straight. Off to the physics department we went, knowing that what we saw in the photos had something to do with the rotation of the Earth, but little more than that.

We soon learned that those differently shaped light trails were to do with a combination of both the Earth's rotation and the direction the camera

happened to be facing.

When tracked

north to south or vice-versa, the stars' trails appeared straight; when tracked east to west, the trails would appear to 'curve' into circular lines.

We didn't stop there. After we were kindly lent some lasers to photograph, we were able to give a follow-up lesson where students learnt all about light rays, diffraction, refraction, reflection and absorption. The images that came out of this were abstract and ethereal, captured as they were using a range of different camera settings, aperture sizings and ISO values. We used Photoshop in postproduction to further refine the images and produce striking contrasts between light and dark areas, and expanded our explorations to include light sources from torches, glowsticks and even sparklers.

These are just three examples of ways in which you can potentially draw on vast areas of research and practice – you'll have your own particular interests and topics that you want to explore.

But whether you're reading this as an art teacher or a science teacher (or indeed a specialist in any other subject), it's well worth finding out what you and another department might have in common. You may be surprised where these connections might take you.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR
Hannah Day is head of art, media and film at Ludlow College

TAKE IT FURTHER

Why stop there? Those 'TEM' subjects can make for similarly perfect art partners...

Technology

Classes can use an online tool called sketchpad.cc, which lets users 'programme' graphics using lines of varying thickness and colour. Once a set of instructions have been issued, sketchpad.cc will execute them in a continuous loop, resulting in continuously developing compositions. Similar alternatives can be found at randomart.com and scratch.mit.edu.

Engineering

The Angel of the North is as much an engineering triumph as it is an artistic one. Its foundations extend down 20 metres and are anchored to solid rock, while the work itself employs 700 tonnes of concrete and 32 tonnes of reinforcing steel. Classes could explore the practicalities of top-heavy sculptures and how they can be secured, touching on the mechanics of weight distribution and properties of different materials.

Maths

Curves of pursuit were originally studied to devise more effective manoeuvring strategies in naval battles. As one ship pursues another, the point the former is advancing to will move, creating spiralling lines and patterns. Exploring this in lessons will enable students to practice their skills at making precise measurements, and discover the work of artist Megan Geckler, who uses curves of pursuit and wool to create remarkable installations.



There's no such thing as 'lazy'

Dr Devon Price tells **Gordon Cairns** why calling students 'lazy' isn't just inaccurate, but likely to make what are complex problems even worse...

When my physics teacher nicknamed me 'Inertia', he wasn't making a teaching point about bodies at rest and in motion.

His colleagues were less subtle. From starting primary to leaving secondary, I was frequently told I was a 'lazy boy', both verbally and in report cards, and naturally believed this to be true. It was only decades later, when I was working three jobs, that I realised that despite still carrying the label with me, I wasn't actually a lazy person.

Achieving the reverse

Teaching approaches may have become more nuanced in the intervening years – you won't find the descriptor 'lazy' on modern report cards – but the 'L' word can still characterise the way some teachers think about their students, and affect how focused they'll be in their support for certain individuals.

Unsurprisingly, calling a student 'lazy' doesn't tend to kickstart them into action. It can, however, achieve the reverse; reinforcing a student's negative mindset and providing them with an excuse to not engage.

Laziness is a judgement, not a diagnosis. There's no legitimate psychological construct known as laziness. It's rather a catch-all term

used to describe a range of barriers to learning, typically stemming from myriad causes – from lack of motivation or fear of failure at one end of the scale, to problematic eating habits or sleep deprivation at the other.

Judging and shaming

Social psychologist Dr Devon Price has attempted to firmly put the laziness myth to bed by arguing, "No person would knowingly choose to lack the motivation to carry through a task that they actually care about."

Instead, he offers an alternative explanation: "What gets called laziness is either a person determining for themselves that a goal is not feasible or worthwhile for them in that moment, or it's a person repeatedly failing to meet a goal that they do care deeply about because they are dealing with too much, and receiving far too little support."

Dr Price went so far as to write a 2021 book on the subject, *Laziness does not Exist: A Defence of the Exhausted, Exploited, and Overworked*. In his view, "We can disagree with other people's choices and priorities, and as teachers we can try to persuade them to be motivated in the directions that we believe matter. But if a person is carrying too heavy a load, and no one is there to offer

them a hand, judging or shaming them into doing more will always be impossible."

Unwitting influence

What teachers think about their students really matters. As Dr Price points out, "Even when students are very young, their teachers begin to pigeonhole them into various roles – the teacher's pet, the smart one who doesn't need any help, the lazy slacker, the daydreamer – and this has been shown to influence how often the teacher checks in with a student, what strategies they use to prompt them when they're stuck, even the emotions they express toward a student and tone of voice they use."

As teachers, we have a demonstrably important role in our students' lives and can unwittingly influence them – yet our role should encompass more than simply trying to be non-judgemental. Instead, we can use our own experiences as successful learners to support them. According to Dr Price, "For decades, psychological research has been able to explain procrastination as a functioning problem, not a consequence of laziness." From this perspective, failure

to begin a given task is recast as problem that teachers should be able to help with.

"The barrier is that procrastinators have executive functioning challenges," Dr Price continues. "They struggle to



divide a large responsibility into a series of discrete, specific and ordered tasks. When faced with a major, massive project, most people will want advice on how to divide it into smaller tasks, and a timeline for completion. To track progress, most people will require organisational tools, such as a to-do list, calendar, datebook or syllabus.”

Unidentified barriers

In his experience as a professor at Loyola University, Chicago, the

issues that most commonly cause students to be mislabelled as lazy relate to external barriers or personal struggles that prevent them from prioritising their classes.

He further notes that mental health issues can be mislabelled, rather than helped by a teacher’s personal belief in the power of motivation. “People with ADHD and depression very commonly get misperceived as lazy, because the

additional supports they need to initiate a task and stick with it are simply not present in most educational environments. As educators, we’re often conditioned to

deserve to pursue an education, or ask for help.

“In both the long and the short term, we see that judgements of laziness lead to students checking out,

“Our classes are not the centre of our students’ universes”

believe that motivation and drive can do everything.”

Moreover, when an educator expresses their opinion as to why a student isn’t engaging, this lack of engagement can be exacerbated. As Price explains, “Calling a person ‘lazy’ is a curiosity-terminating action. In nearly all cases, what we commonly regard as signs of ‘laziness’ are really just evidence that a person is facing a barrier we are either unaware of, or don’t recognise as legitimate.

“Instead of giving up on someone because we don’t understand their challenges, we need to get curious, and humble -- because we never know the full extent of what another person is carrying.”

Horror stories

From talking to Price, I’ve come to realise that my own experience as an adult carrying the ‘laziness stigma’, isn’t unique: “In the numerous interviews I’ve conducted for my book, I’ve been staggered by the horror stories people have shared with me of the cruel, dismissive things teachers have said to them about their supposed ‘laziness’, and the years of self-doubt and disengagement that can often result.”

He recalls encounters with adult learners who have experienced a form of ‘foundational educational trauma’, often caused by an insensitive teacher. “Shame blocks motivation and help-seeking,” Price says. “It can even convince a person that they don’t

feeling less capable, reporting lower self-esteem, and feeling passive and helpless, because experience has taught them they can’t trust others to offer assistance, or care what they’re going through.”

He also makes a point of offering teachers some much-needed perspective. “We need to remember that our classes are not the centre of our students’ universes. If they aren’t prioritizing our courses, it may be because they’re facing far more pressing difficulties, and the student has made the logical calculation that the class isn’t the foremost place to be investing their limited energy and time.

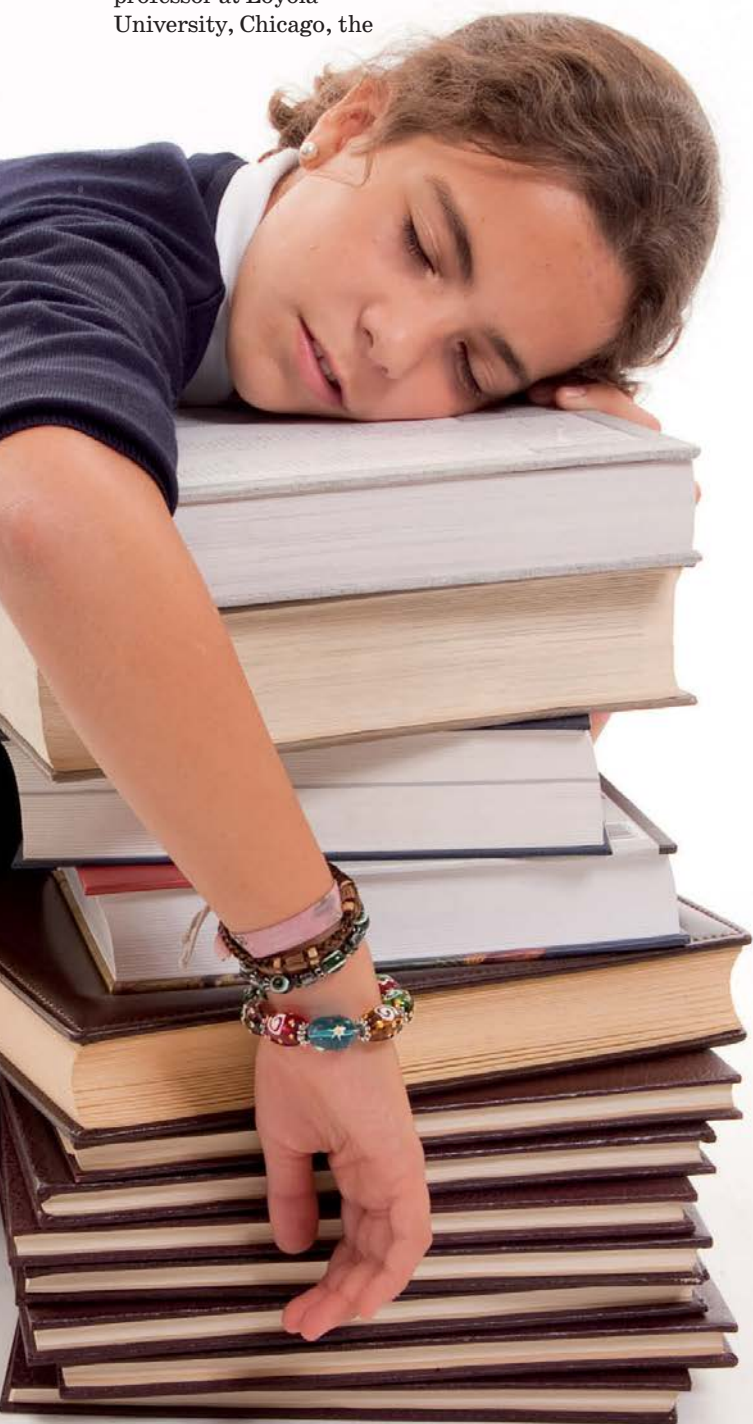
“When that’s the case, we really need to get honest with ourselves as instructors, and ask what we can do to make our courses more valuable to people who already have much bigger problems than trying to earn a high grade.”

Indeed, if laziness exists anywhere, it’s perhaps when the term is applied by teachers to students, putting the onus on them to change – instead of digging deeper and helping them overcome this barrier to their learning.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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



Conduct your classroom

If we want to see genuinely engaging, relevant and inspiring learning taking place in the classroom, let's start by reshaping the space itself, says **Ed Carlin**...

I remember how, shortly after I was promoted into middle leadership, the head of the school came to visit my classroom. He talked of how well he thought my interview went, and told me he'd been impressed by my education views and values.

What stood out to me the most in that conversation, however, was when he said, "Ed, it's rather simple. Good education is like music."

When my facial expression duly betrayed the curiosity he'd planned for, he went on to explain that it was all about timing and contribution. Every student in a class had a part to play, but they all needed a great conductor.

His observation has remained with me to this day. Indeed, highly effective teachers instinctively know to lead a classroom like a well-tuned orchestra, bringing out the best in each 'musician' while at the same time pulling their individual contributions together in perfect harmony.

Yet we can go further. If we can align our learning and teaching plans with our school's broader climate, purpose and values, great learning will almost inevitably be the outcome.

Playing their part

Teachers must never forget that learning should be at the core of everything they

do, regardless of topic. However, with the acquisition of skill and mastery of pedagogy comes the knowledge that individual pupils need to work with different resources, tools and learning styles.

Every member of an orchestra will play their instrument to the best of their respective abilities, but do so knowing that their contribution is vital for the collective piece to come together. In the

contributions taking shape and being added to the overall masterpiece.

Readers may find the notion a little eccentric, or even controversial, but I truly believe that having pupils sat in rows of desks for prolonged periods of time should be utterly frowned upon. Categorically.

Much as we wouldn't stand for pupils being asked to remain completely silent while working on textbooks for 50 to 60

have. Shouldn't we be looking to do the same in our schools?

Group performance

Consider the 'Circle Time' strategy often used in primary classrooms. This highly practical way of gathering children together to listen to stories exerts a magnetic effect that could be

"Having pupils sat in rows of desks for prolonged periods of time should be frowned upon"

same way, we all recognise how important it is that we differentiate the resources we deploy the classroom. Yet I worry that for many, this process begins and ends with simply handing out worksheets, or setting tasks specifically designed for different levels of ability.

It's not that this is inherently *wrong*; more that it only represents one part of what should be a larger process of inclusion. Groupings and work areas should be adapted to meet the needs of all learners. Different types of activities should be aligned with visual, audio and kinaesthetic learning styles. The room should be abuzz with different

minutes, the way in which they're seated (or heaven forbid, standing) should be flexible and of their own choosing.

Let's think outside the box when it comes to classroom layout. Are individual desks even needed at all? Soft, comfortable seating and work areas will likely resemble something much more akin to the modern workplace. In recent years, many employers and CEOs have enthusiastically embraced the need to diversify and innovate when it comes to improving working environments, and recognised the positive impact on staff productivity this can

utilised in many secondary learning scenarios.

Simply put, children enjoy the fact that circle time lets them out of their class seats and build trust with their teacher and fellow classmates, before benefiting from the literacy outcomes produced by the simple act of reading a text and discussing it afterwards.

Could we not continue something practical like this well into the secondary experience?



Pupils could perhaps be gathered into groups to watch, read, share and learn. The teacher could then circle the different groups, helping to stretch their ideas and thinking, but with the

pupils ultimately working together and building on each other's knowledge and understanding.

Now, many teachers reading this may well respond with *'That's just groupwork – we do that all the time.'* However, what I'm suggesting is perhaps a little more radical – *let's make this the default arrangement.*

Simple psychology

When it comes down to it, what purpose does having rows of desks and seats in a typically 100m square classroom actually serve anymore?

Continuing to have pupils sit in designated seats for long periods of time seems ludicrous. Instead, embracing the simple psychology of handing the space over to our learners, for them to arrange in whatever way they feel appropriate, means they get to feel that they're part of a team, with a certain

level of responsibility for leading and managing themselves.

You may, of course, ask *'What about those pupils who will undermine and disrupt learning as a result of their inability to manage such flexibility and autonomy?'* Well, this is where all the usual clarity in terms of expectations and boundaries comes into play. Pupils tend to know what's acceptable in a social context. The usual suite of reminders and, when necessary, consequences should be enough to keep their behaviour in line.

If behaviour still breaks down with that in place, it would be unwise to immediately ascribe this to any increased freedom or flexibility in terms of your classroom arrangement.

Young people can always be relied upon to find themselves distracted, and sometimes even disruptive when surrounded by

their peers – something which can just as easily be said in relation to many other classroom settings and specific layouts.

I've always supported the idea of decoupling the management of negative behaviour from courageous and innovative classroom practice, since one should never prevent the other from happening.

Be the change

To any teachers or school leaders who may be reading this, I would urge you to be the change that you wish to see in the success of your pupils. Dare to think differently, and design your classrooms as forward-thinking, inspiring and work-ready environments.

The classroom should be a place where your pupils can all take ownership of what they're studying, and learn the essential skills needed to eventually learn and manage themselves. If educators are the architects of learning, then now is the time for us to act on our initiative and open out our learning spaces, so that they can provide young people with the environment necessary for them to thrive and succeed.



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

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Teach the past, change the future

The Holocaust might be a statutory history topic, observes **Mark Rusling**, but we shouldn't just be concerned *if* it's taught – we should also pay attention to *how* it's taught....

Since 1991, the National Curriculum has required KS3 pupils to learn about the Holocaust in history. As that subject's only compulsory topic, we should expect pupils to have a strong grasp of the horrors emerging from a continent-spanning genocide that eradicated two thirds of European Jews. The reality, however, is much more concerning.

Research conducted among school pupils in England (see bit.ly/ts123-he) found that 15% couldn't remember studying the Holocaust, and some worrying gaps in knowledge. Over half believed that Hitler was solely responsible for the genocide of six million people, and that the killings took place in Germany alone. Worst of all, most were unable to explain why Jews were targeted.

Without this understanding, Holocaust education won't prevent the kind of intolerance and persecution that might lead to the next genocide – so what would an appropriate Holocaust education look like in practice?

Three principles

At the National Holocaust Centre and Museum, we deliver Holocaust education to pupils from Y5 upwards, focusing on three principles, beginning with how and why the genocide developed.

We look at the ways in which key groups were



responsible – the Nazi leadership; other countries' leaderships; ordinary people who pulled triggers, guarded ghettos and manned death camps; and the bystanders in 22 countries who looked away. We prioritise the testimony of survivors whom students can meet and talk to, virtually or in person.

The second principle is that Holocaust knowledge should be linked to modern-day challenges. This doesn't mean searching for a 'Holocaust angle' across all examples of humankind's inhumanity since 1945 – but rather when secure knowledge is used to analyse the 'othering' of social, religious or ethnic groups by powerful actors, Holocaust education has the potential to prevent subsequent genocides.

Finally, we seek to develop critical thinking. Independent thought can prevent the mob mentality that fuels genocide, but

only if this is based on secure, accurate and properly researched knowledge.

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Cross-curricular learning

The lessons of the Holocaust can be embedded throughout the KS3/4 curriculum. In English language, pupils could compare ghetto diaries with perpetrator narratives. In RE, a class could discuss whether God can exist after the Holocaust. In science, the anti-Jewish pseudo-science claiming evidence for 'innate racial differences' later adopted by Nazis can be the

springboard for discussions of how scientific enquiry can be manipulated.

In PSHE, classes could explore how critical thinking can be used to debunk the antisemitic conspiracy theories that have gained considerable traction online in recent years.

A tough ask

Above all, however, prioritise Jewish voices and agency in the sources you choose for your teaching. If they tend to depict strong perpetrators and weak victims, that's what the Nazis wanted you to think.

At the same time, ensure that pupils are sufficiently mature to engage with the subject matter – especially at Y8, which is increasingly the age at which students first encounter the Holocaust in history.

Teaching the Holocaust is a tough ask, but the rewards are enormous. Giving pupils secure Holocaust knowledge will enable them to better understand this uniquely destructive genocide, and help them make sense of the difficult world in which they live, and in time, will run themselves. It's vital that we get this right.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Mark Rusling is the Director of Learning at the National Holocaust Centre and Museum. He can be contacted at education@holocaust.org.uk

A symptom, not the cause

Nicole Rodden examines why young boys are drawn like moths to Andrew Tate's flame, and what educators can do to help develop a more open and empathetic interpretation of masculinity

If a 14-year-old boy tells his class that women are partly responsible for their own assault, what do you say?

Nothing at first, because it's hard to speak in the rush of emotions that follow – horror, anger, frustration, fear and deep sadness. Through no fault of their own, teachers across the UK are struggling to suppress such emotional responses, while wrestling with a monster that's as amorphous as it is powerful.

It's easy to point the finger at Andrew Tate for this. It's harder to admit that the root of his hold over young boys lies closer to home. There's nothing new about misogyny, but the internet, and social media in particular, has given it a life of its own. Some children now spend more time online than they do in class. The average age of children seeing pornography for the first time is 11.

Healthy relationships are the foundation of a happy and healthy life. But while working as a teacher, I was surprised by how many of my pupils simply didn't know what a healthy relationship was. Their idea of what's 'normal' and 'healthy' is increasingly learned from the internet – a limitless source of ideas that can shape beliefs and guide behaviours.

One belief that an increasing number of boys and young men are

internalising is that feeling insecure or vulnerable is shameful, rather than simply being a normal and healthy part of life. This goes beyond simple teenage awkwardness; a number of boys now will do *anything* to avoid feeling vulnerable.

Entitlement culture

Society has arguably failed to give them an alternative to this narrative. There's a lack of positive male role models in popular culture who are defined by empathy instead of aggression, but what media and popular culture does often teach them is *entitlement*.

Seeing men receive attention, respect and love, boys begin believing these things are owed to them. Related to this is that many can also struggle to find a sense of purpose, but are unable to show this sadness and frustration because society isn't a safe place in which they can reveal such insecurities.

Enter Andrew Tate. He first came to popular attention as a social media influencer who said shocking and offensive things, but his appeal is far more complex.

A core part of Tate's influencer personality is his 'self-help' offering,

which sees him teach millions of male followers how to become an 'alpha' by pursuing a luxurious lifestyle, prioritising physical fitness and dominating others – especially women. This can be an attractive proposition for boys, especially those not offered a viable alternative vision of masculinity.

Male identity

Tate promises to help his audience extinguish their insecurity and build a new sense of identity based on confidence, aggression and dominance. The exploitation and harming of women isn't a side-effect of Tate's ideology; it's the very method by which his followers lay claim their male identity.



CAUTION

TOXIC MASCULINITY

Unfortunately, schools aren't well supported in addressing this issue and are terrified of getting it wrong. Half of all RSHE teachers don't feel confident navigating such difficult conversations with pupils, and we can't blame them when there's little guidance to follow.

I know of one school where staff felt powerless to confront Tate's beliefs, and simply banned all discussion of him within its halls – a likely common response. However, discussion is the surest means by which schools can help young people 'unlearn Tate', form a healthier understanding of relationships and ultimately make better choices for themselves and others.

Unlearning misogyny

Educators must remember that pupils learn about sex and relationships through unfiltered, frequently decontextualised content on platforms such as TikTok and YouTube and from online pornography – content that will be much more adult than the traditional RSHE offered in schools.

It may be difficult, but young people *want to be spoken to like adults*. As much as possible, RSHE discussions should be similarly unfiltered, use plain language and avoid dancing around the issue with metaphors of teacups and consent.

Such discussions form a crucial part of unlearning misogyny and other harmful beliefs. Pupils' lives are increasingly lived online, with apps and direct messages their primary channels of communication.

This, combined with

COVID's broader impact on social development, has created a generation of young people who often lack the skills to communicate their needs, whether it's talking about their feelings, dealing with rejection or showing someone affection. In-person discussion helps them develop the oracy skills needed to express themselves, feel vulnerable and navigate the social complexities of life.

Consent education

The wider cultural conversations around these kinds of complexities are in constant flux. The 'Everyone's Invited' campaign, for example, was a game-changer. More than 50,000 people shared their experiences of surviving sexual assault, uncovering the very real and dangerous scope of sexual assault experienced by young people across the country, and the urgency with which it needs to be addressed.

Schools have an important role to play in this change. Relationship violence prevention programmes, which can form part of a school's RSHE provision,

“Chastising boys will only make them more vulnerable to the influence of people like Andrew Tate”

have been shown to reduce sexual harassment and assault among young people. To create a more open and empathetic environment, we need to foster open conversations between all genders.

Consent education has been an incredibly important and positive development in

ANTI-TATE TACTICS

- Adopt a whole school, holistic approach to relationships and wellbeing
- Develop a spiral RSHE curriculum that builds students' understanding over time
- Embed consent into how the school approaches pastoral support, wellbeing and safeguarding
- Create safe spaces for discussion in both single sex and mixed groups; it's crucial that students come together and share their experiences with peers
- Don't limit conversations to Andrew Tate; discuss wider issues and incorporate positive and alternative narratives
- Equip students with the skills to build healthy relationships; this includes being able to communicate their needs, talk about their feelings and deal with rejection
- Give teachers the skills and confidence to handle difficult conversations and provide ongoing support – they shouldn't be expected to handle everything on their own
- Pool resources with other schools to share insights, experiences and best practice

this area, but there are other issues on the ground that must be addressed too. Teachers have found that focusing on consent has made boys nervous of accusations of non-consensual sex, and have told us that this approach reinforces other damaging beliefs about sex.

people like Andrew Tate. Instead, schools can support them by discussing the complexities of relationships with compassion and respect. It's the broader negative influence of online content, coupled with scarce healthy examples of masculinity that we need to address.

Our culture's definition of masculinity remains narrow and damaging. The current generation of young people has a chance to change this for the better. If we can teach boys to embrace their vulnerability, and find their identity in compassion and kindness, they will build a very different world. One we all deserve to grow up in.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Nicole Rodden is a former RSHE teacher and Co-Founder of Life Lessons; for more information, visit lifelessons.co.uk or follow @lifelessonsrshe

Compassion and respect

Ultimately, chastising boys will only make them more vulnerable to the influence of

When feedback takes flight

Some student feedback demands to be heard and highlighted, notes **Martin Matthews** – so why not try capturing it in verse?

When we use the term ‘student voice’, we’re describing the process of gathering students’ views, perceptions and understandings within various educational contexts. Student voice can uncover observations schools would do well to learn from, but also provide a ready means of celebrating students’ experiences and achievements across the school in various forms of online and print promotional material.

I remember visiting one school a few years ago to attend a course, and seeing many images of students looking happy on the walls. Alongside these pictures were lengthy passages of prose laid out to appear as if the lines were dancing, as part of a carefully constructed tapestry. The text drew on quotes from the school’s student voice that spoke highly of the school and the educational experiences on offer, in a way that almost resembled poetry.

Seeing this prompted me to reflect on whether there might be a different way for us to see and understand student voice. Specifically, *what if poetry could be used to express the voices of students?*

Found poetry

Poetry tends to be the form of writing most liable to make English literature students groan like wounded animals. Thereafter, for many adults it will only reappear when a friend or family member

suddenly thinks it’s a good idea to have a Shakespearean sonnet read at a wedding.

Whether people care to admit or not, however, poetry can contain a lot of information, ideas and feeling in a small amount of space. As the poet Milosz noted in his book-length poem *A Treatise on Poetry*:

One clear stanza can take more weight

Than a whole wagon of elaborate prose

“Poetry can contain a lot of information, ideas and feeling in a small amount of space”

Now, I’m not suggesting it would be practical – or even advisable, in some cases – to ask students to submit all of their feedback in poetic form. But if you’ve previously received student voice that you’re keen to celebrate, say, on the walls of your school, on your Twitter feed or indeed anywhere else, could it assume new life and provoke new insights in the form of poetry?

Around the late 20th century, the form of ‘found poetry’ grew in popularity. Creating it involves searching for ideas, themes and poetic source material in apparently unlikely places, such as novels, newspapers and text messages, before piecing these together and structuring them in the form of a poem.

It’s therefore entirely

possible to ‘find’ poems within the feedback provided by students, and have their voices take on a new vitality and power in poetic form – thus providing you with a compelling new way of highlighting the life within your school.

Readers might be thinking at this point, ‘*Hang on – won’t I have to make these poems rhyme?*’ No, since free verse can be your starting point when constructing found poems.

Free verse isn’t precisely

than by adaptation or substitution.

The use of enjambment is significant when crafting free verse, as it allows a poem to flow from one line into the next without stopping (a reader should read to the punctuation mark, not to the end of the line). Or, to put it another way:

measurable by the rules that apply to traditional verse, as it doesn’t follow regular or set beats. A great number of modern poets are fond of imitating the seemingly unremarkable, yet often profound delivery of everyday speech – an approach that can give us a freeing and flexible way of constructing and expressing ideas in a poetic form.

Accept no substitutes

When creating your found poetry, the students’ words ideally shouldn’t be changed or altered in search of specific rhyming patterns. There will sometimes be a need to create rhythms, pauses and emphasis, but this can usually be achieved through the structuring of a poem, rather



The use of enjambment is significant when crafting free verse, as it allows a poem

to flow from one line into the next without stopping (a reader should read to the

punctuation mark, not to the end of the line).

Collection and craft

WThe collection of student voice can be carried out by various means, whether gathered by teachers in group meetings with students, during lesson visits or in student-led meetings.

In reality, of course, not all student voice will be positive. For our purposes here, I'm

working

on the assumption that we're seeking student voice that celebrates a school and students' experiences. That's not to say that found poetry can't reveal insights into negative feedback, but you probably won't want to share it on your social media feeds.

It's important to note, however, that found poetry should still be concerned with poetic craft. It isn't as simple as simply sticking the words on the page, but if you've barely written poetry before, found poetry can be a great entry point.

Consider the following example of student voice expressed in prose:

Pupil A said "I really enjoy studying science. The experiments are great. I really like it when we work together to explore ideas. It's the highlight of the week."

TRY IT YOURSELF

- Don't attempt to change students' words in search of poetic form; it's important to work with what you've been given in order to respect their views
- Discuss the poems with students when you've completed them and check to see that you've capture their voice – could the students themselves play a role in creating the poems?
- The resulting poetry could be used to explore questions around whether artistic expression can help better engage people in conversation and debate
- By making the familiar strange, you can potentially locate new insights in the observations and feedback your students have provided

This could become:

*I really enjoy studying science.
The experiments are great.
I really like it when we*

work together to explore ideas.

It's the highlight of the week.

This passage could have been structured many different ways, but the line breaks that split the poem into three stanzas allows for selected emphasis in what student has said.

The poem as it stands celebrates the best of science. The second stanza emphasises the points about being able to work with others and share ideas, while the single line stanza at the end leaves things on an emphatically positive note.

Change the emphasis

Let's try another example.

Pupil B said "I've really enjoyed studying at this school. I've learnt so much over the last five years and I have been able to make lots of friends as well. It's given me the chance to move to the next steps."

Turned into free verse, it might look like this:

I've really enjoyed studying at this school.

I've learnt so much over the last five years and

I have been able to make lots of friends as well.

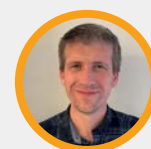
*It's given me the chance next steps.
to the
to move*

As with the first poem, we're again playing with structure for emphasis. The first, longer stanza talks positively about the school and the learning experience. The second stanza focusses on friendship, and then the poem ends with a simple, but perhaps effective emphasis on the 'next steps'.

The above structuring is deliberate, because otherwise it could seem to suggest that said steps are downhill, which might not be a good look...

*to move.
to the
next steps.*

Sometimes, we need to make the familiar strange in order to see those things that are perhaps right in front of us.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Martin Matthews teaches English in a secondary school in the North West of England

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Guidance on grief

Ian Gilbert sets out 15 points of advice for schools on what to do when the unthinkable happens to one of their students – the loss of a parent or guardian

In 2008 the mother to my three children died. Her illness had been long, stressful and chaotic but our story was not supposed to end this way. At the time, my youngest daughter was in primary school, my eldest daughter was at secondary school and my son was at an FE college. The last time he saw his mother was on his 18th birthday.

As we rebuilt our lives, we reflected on how these three different educational institutions responded to what happened – what had helped, and what they could have done better.

We drew up a 15-point list which, over time, became *The Little Book of Bereavement*, now updated to *Independent Thinking on Loss*. So few people know what to do when faced with death, but we know our own personal experiences and suggestions have helped many schools facing this most difficult of circumstances. The original list was as follows.

In the short term

1 As soon as the death is known to the school, have a senior member of staff talk to the immediate classmates about what has happened. Stamp out any gossip and offer support for those who may be affected.

2 Send a condolence card and encourage classmates to do the same. Saying ‘I didn’t know what to do’ and doing nothing is a form of moral cowardice – and why should you be let off the hook? No one else knows what to do either.

3 When the child comes back to school, talk to them

(but don’t patronise them).

Ask them how they would like their teachers to act.

4 Teach other children to know what to say and how to handle things.

5 School can be the place to escape from what is going on at home. Respect that wish as much as possible.

6 Grieving is mentally and physically exhausting.

7 Be tolerant of homework and other work commitments. Evenings should and will be spent grieving and talking, not working. Agree work commitments with the child, though, and be firm but caring as you try to ensure they don’t get too far behind (thus adding feelings of failure to their grief).

8 Talk to the remaining parent if and when they visit school. Show them you know and care and are there to help. Don’t just ignore them because you don’t know what to say.

In the long term

9 Keep talking to the child and letting them know you still remember, even just in small ways.

10 Remember the anniversaries. Put them in your diary and keep them there.

11 Be aware of curriculum areas that may bring back memories of Mother’s Day, Father’s Day, birthdays and the like. Also be conscious of afterlife discussions in RE, and other topics that may touch on illnesses such as cancer, depression and so forth.

12 When another parent dies in the school, be mindful of other children who have similarly lost parents themselves, or indeed any loved ones, as it will bring many memories back.

13 Learn how to help children cope with bereavement from external agencies. We recommend Winston’s Wish as a good place to start –

royalties sales of Independent Thinking on Loss go to support their work.

14 Time heals in bereavement much as it does following an amputation. It’s just the period you go through to come to terms with how things now are.

15 Thank you for taking the time to read this. You can make a terrible situation a bit less stressful for a grieving family.

In the 15 years since the worst happened, my children have defied the statistics by not dropping out of education, not being homeless or in prison, not abusing drugs or alcohol, and not suffering from acute mental health problems. It’s been a gruelling road, but as young adults they are all doing OK.

A parent’s death doesn’t mark the end of a young person’s life, but they will need care, support, understanding, a balance of firmness and tolerance and for their educational institutions to support the remaining parent.

Make sure yours is capable of this. Many grieving families will thank you, now and in the future.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Ian Gilbert is the founder of Independent Thinking Ltd, an international education speaker and trainer and an award-winning author and publisher; his book, *Independent Thinking on Loss: A little book about bereavement for schools*, is available now (£10.99, Independent Thinking Press)

Drilling the basics

George Andrews reflects on his experiences of applying lessons and methods first learned on the parade ground to the playground...

We've all seen it on social media – reports of poor behaviour by groups of local youths, prompting outraged calls to 'bring back National Service' because 'that'll soon sort them out' and 'teach them some discipline'.

Whether you're inclined to agree or not, this suggestion rears its head time and again as a somewhat naïve solution to an age-old problem. But what if – bear with me here – there were actually an element of practicality in this?

What if recognising the similarities between military service and the classroom could help teachers up and down the country solve the current post-COVID behavioural crisis that appears to be sweeping through schools?

As a former Army reservist now teaching across KS3 and 4, areas of my practice that are often remarked upon are my high expectations, along with the subsequent delivery of high classroom behaviour standards.

After a request from SLT to deliver a short CPD session at my school, I took time to reflect on how I've achieved this so consistently. I'll now endeavour to set out here the lessons I believed I learnt from my own experience of working for the Army, and how I've subsequently applied these in the classroom.

Stark similarities

Now, admittedly, this approach is based solely on

my own lived experience and observations of the similarities between both settings, but given the levels of concern regarding recent behavioural trends, why not think outside the box?

Because when you look more closely, the similarities between the two are stark. Within schools and army barracks, the vast majority of individuals you'll encounter will be naïve young people lacking the basic skills their respective environments demand of them.

As such, strong direction and capable leadership will

For trainee soldiers, routine is a fundamental part of Army life and for good reason. Regular repetition of basic procedures – drilling – develops a form of muscle memory that allows rudimentary functions to be completed without thought. That way, individuals are able to approach complex tasks more attentively – something that's vital in high pressure situations involving contact with the enemy and genuinely life or death decision-making.

One would hope not to encounter such extreme situations in a school

Keep your language simple and tell the students what part of your expectations they're not meeting. On the parade ground, commands invariably involve rigorously consistent language, regardless of whoever's issuing them, to ensure consistency of outcomes. There's no reason why a school setting should be any different.

Mark of respect

That said, let's be clear:

I'm not advocating a 'Don't smile until Christmas' approach. It's more of a 'Don't relent until Christmas' approach that incorporates the obvious, yet vital addition of clear praise when students get it right.

Within a few weeks, I find that this combination of extremely high expectations, consistent routines and praise fosters a culture of compliance within a new cohort that goes on to form the basis of good relationships, which in turn makes my job of teaching them much easier!

The students know the boundaries in my classroom. They know what's expected of them, and they know how to deliver. This

“Students know the boundaries in my classroom – they know what's expected of them and how to deliver”

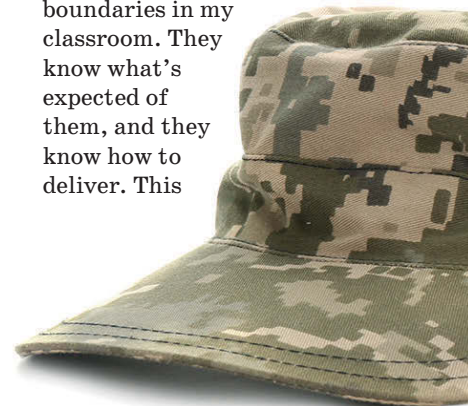
be necessary if they're to be assisted in navigating the new events and momentous occasions they'll encounter. In both settings, there will many young people trying each day to successfully learn new skills surrounded by others, often when away from home or at least outside of their favoured 'safe space'.

Consistent language

According to the NSPCC, “Setting routines and boundaries helps children feel safe, cared for and important.” Some of the routines in my former professional life may have differed in the specifics, but they served a very similar purpose.

context, of course, but the setting of regular routines can deliver similar benefits when it comes to areas such as classroom entry and settling, transitioning between different tasks and whole class questioning.

For this to work, however, you need to maintain very high expectations of your students and remain consistent at all times. Having established what your routines and expectations are, if you then ask for silence, you wait for silence. You're allowed to expect them to comply. If they don't, that's where consistency in applying your setting's behaviour policy comes in.



barely differs at all from service life, where raw recruits very quickly learn what they should do, but more importantly, what they must not do.

Again, it's important to stress that I'm not advocating here for the militarising of our schools. I am, however, suggesting a place for the kind of communication I observed in the Army, which is fundamentally about respect.

In my experience, when young people feel they're being treated consistently, and that they can develop a relationship with you, they'll see it as a mark of respect and will respond in kind. By being consistent, you're also being fair.

I've found that a perceived lack of fairness is one of the most common gripes among students in school settings. What I do is make it plain from their first lesson in September that mine is a classroom in which they will be respected – provided they show respect in turn by following the instructions, rules and expectations I establish.

Fresh start

Crucially, this approach goes beyond the classroom. You must maintain this consistency during break time duties and indeed all around the school, since the students will expect you to. If circumstances demand that you must rebuke a student, ensure that they know what it's for.

Be clear as to what their infringement was and how they can put it right – and no, that doesn't have to mean doing 20 press-ups and sprinting to the far rugby posts. Explanations that are delivered in straightforward language will make it clear to them how they've disappointed you, and how not to do it again.

Most importantly, after you hold a restorative conversation with a student, remind them of the fresh start they'll receive the next time they set foot in your classroom and then stick to it. Demonstrate it. I'll even be extra nice to those students who have

given me the most trouble by asking them about their weekends and stopping to talk when I pass them in the corridor.

These are all basics, I know – but it's surprising how much can be forgotten as 'professional amnesia' settles in over time. Ultimately, this approach centres on building a foundation from which strong, positive relationships can be established. Students well-drilled in routines will commence work quicker and stay focused for longer. The praising of good behaviour produces a positive environment in which those relationships can be effectively nurtured, delivering significant and substantial benefits across the wider school setting.

It should almost go without saying that the importance of maintaining those good relationships can't be overstated.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

George Andrews is a teacher of humanities

RULES OF ENGAGEMENT

1 Verbal instruction at the start

Keep this concise, consistent and clear. Tell students how they'll enter and get settled. Use the same language each time so that there can be no mistakes – it's better to lose three to four minutes here than have to re-establish routines after a two-week holiday.

2 Prioritise routine

Be present and visible on entry and settling. If you tell them to enter silently, ensure you get silence. If they don't deliver, go back out and try again. Take the time to prioritise your expectations.

3 Patience

Just like 'thinking time', give students a chance to get their behavioural responses right.

4 Behaviour policy language

It's there to be used and everyone should be using it. There's no better way of reminding students of the expectations in school and the importance of meeting them. Again, consistency is key.

5 Praise those who get it right

If a student impresses you, tell them. By letting them know they've done a fantastic job, you can be the strict teacher that everyone likes.



A question of character

Creating original, memorable characters is something even published authors can struggle with – so how likely is it that your KS3 students can pull it off? More than you might think, says **Martin Ferguson**...

Studying characters can be a hugely rewarding experience, in that it helps us better understand the human experience. In order to study character and ultimately create their own, however, students need to first read a range of characters and relatable pieces of literature.

When they reach Y8, students at Ashfield Girls' High School will spend time reading assorted prose, poetry and drama all based on the theme of childhood. When we arrive at characterisation and the creation of original characters, the process can often begin with a conversation that goes like this:

Student: *Mr Ferguson, can your character be a single cat lady?*

Me: *Would this make the character interesting? Is she a cat lady for any particular reason?*

Student: *Well, she would be lookin' for someone to love her, or maybe just a friend, because cats aren't good as friends. They're very selfish, you know...*

Me: *I didn't know that about cats. Okay, so your cat lady isn't selfish then? What does selfish mean? Is she the opposite of the cats living with her? Grab the thesaurus and look up other words for selfish*

– you might get some ideas from that. I'll come back to you in a little bit...

They always manage to dig out clichéd characters – perhaps a variation of an existing character from *The Simpsons*, or one copied from a popular (often Marvel-based) movie. Sometimes they'll try and shock us with outré ideas, or see how ridiculous they can be. This is always fun at the start, but can be shaped into an opportunity or springboard for more thoughtful character writing once they're steered in the right direction.

My favourite Seamus Heaney quote (and our departmental motto) is *'If you have the words, there's always a chance you'll find the way'*. In the spirit of these wise and timeless words, we'll always try and begin with words and meanings when introducing new concepts. We'll then help students find their way with a good example and the essential clear success criterion – plus the odd scaffold and model for good measure.

I try to use examples that students can relate to, such as characters from popular books, TV shows and movies. Having established what they know about the word 'character', we'll then gather some ideas on the board.

One way of helping students understand what

characterisation is, and why it matters, is to draw comparisons with getting to know someone in real life. Just as we all form opinions about people based on their actions, appearance and personality, we'll similarly form opinions about fictional characters based on the same criteria.

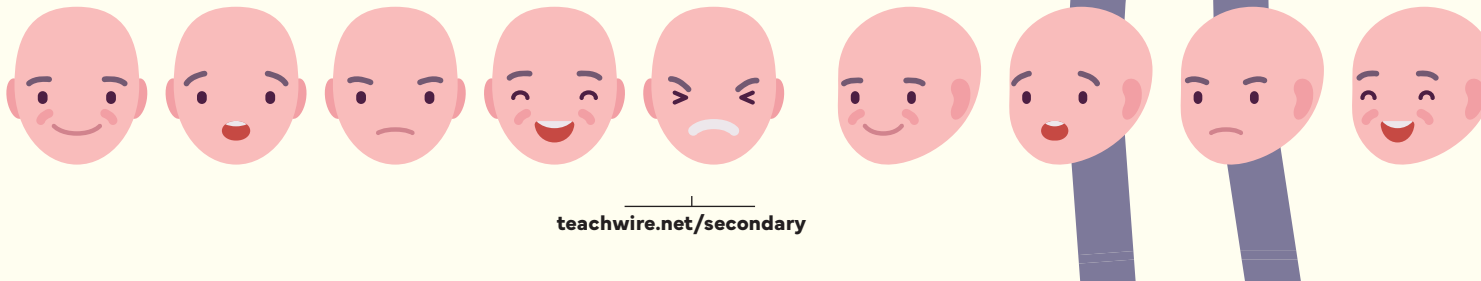
Traits and attractions

An effective character creation strategy can be to have your students create their own characters after they've written about others using a stimulus. This can be a fun and engaging way of getting them to think about what makes a character unique and interesting.

I'll usually present the class with a brief sample of writing relating to a familiar character from popular fiction (though I may sometimes throw in a Dickensian character, such as Mr. Creakle, depending on the cohort). Roald Dahl is where we'll usually go when starting out.

I'll then ask my students to think about what makes the character in question so compelling. Take, for example,

Hermione Granger from the *Harry Potter* series. Is it her intelligence? Her bravery? Or her loyalty to her friends? Once your students have



identified these traits, ask them to find specific examples from the relevant text that demonstrate them.

To illustrate the point further, have your students brainstorm a list of adjectives that can usefully describe a famous fictional character, such as Harry Potter himself or Katniss Everdeen, from a provided extract. Then ask them to justify their choice of adjectives using evidence from the text. If a student describes Harry Potter as being 'brave', they could point to his willingness to confront Voldemort despite overwhelming odds.

This can then lead to a comparatively untapped resource for studying and writing about characters – namely the use of comparatives...

Sharing and comparing

Comparatives are very powerful accessibility aids for students, but can also generate engaging discussions around vocabulary, prompting look-ups of synonyms, antonyms and more obscure terms requiring some dictionary or thesauri work.

Again, the aim here is to create an awareness of how important vocabulary is, and how it can help us create a class-agreed word bank – or even better, encourage 'rich talk' in the class beyond 'happy', 'sad', 'good' and 'bad.' We actually have a poster on the wall that specifically bans the use of these words and suggests alternatives – mainly for my own sanity!

Using a Venn diagram or other visual comparison tool, select two original

characters created by members of the class, or two from popular children's fiction that the class will be familiar with. If you have

some artists in the class, their talents can potentially enrich this exercise even further, while giving them a chance to express themselves. Most of my juniors are into comic novels and drawing styles, which can make for excellent visualiser resources.

I'll then assemble a loose display of various characters at the front of the class, which we can then match up and sort into a range of different groups and

CHARACTER STUDIES

- To illustrate the dangers of relying on stereotypes, have your students analyse a character who is a stereotype, such as the 'jock' or the 'nerdy scientist'. Then challenge them to come up with ways of subverting the stereotypes in question, and creating more complex, interesting characters.

- Provide students with a set of prompts, such as 'What is your character's greatest fear?' or 'What is their worst/best trait?' and then task them with creating a short story or sketch featuring said character

- Create a 'character autopsy', whereby students label a blank outline of a person by adding their own choice of features

categories – 'villains', 'heroes', 'romances', 'break-ups', 'origin stories' and so forth.

One thing to avoid, however, are examples that are too simplistic or clichéd. If you start talking about the 'damsel in distress' or 'evil stepmother', you'll likely be met with some eyerolls and groans from your students. Instead, try to find examples that are more nuanced and complex, such as characters who have both positive and negative traits.

more involved by inviting them to submit their own character suggestions and drawing them out of a hat. Any thespians in the class will love this...

In conclusion, teaching characterisation to KS3 students can be a lot of fun – especially if you're willing to use some humour and creativity, be it a mixture of illustrations or writing.

By avoiding the dry academic jargon, using relatable examples and

"Draw comparisons with getting to know someone in real life"

Make mistakes

Lastly, don't be afraid to inject a bit of humour into your lessons – perhaps through the use of silly voices, or impersonations of popular film/TV characters.

You could even turn the process of characterisation itself into a game, such as 'Guess the Character', by providing your students with a set of clues from which they have to guess a mystery character you've chosen. Try getting them

encouraging your students to create their own characters, you can inspire a love of literature and storytelling.

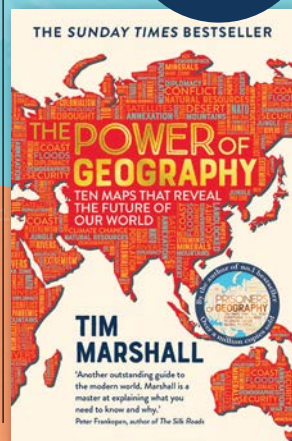
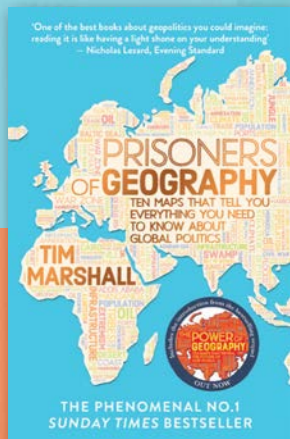
And remember – the class before you will be full of characters too. Enjoy working with them and write along with them, because those GCSE and A level exams come along quickly. For now, let their writing breathe. Let them make mistakes, and let them craft, draft, edit and work. Linger for longer, and watch their ideas grow.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Martin Ferguson is head of English at Ashfield Girls' High School in Belfast; his book, *See One Do One Teach One: 12 Lessons for GCSE English*, is available now (£16, John Catt)

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LEARNING LAB

IN THIS ISSUE

- + When should ECTs start seeking out CPD opportunities?
- + The benefits of bracketing misbehaviour
- + Advice on recruiting a SENCo
- + How Impington Village College organises its globe-spanning educational visits
- + What students can gain from studying naval history
- + A visual guide to the The Leitner Revision System

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Thinking about ...

SCAREMONGERING

Controversies surrounding the new RSE curriculum have dominated the news cycle in recent months. Falsehoods regarding the modernised curriculum have helped to fuel calls for it to be reviewed – a step which would amount to a rolling back of equalities in this country. Here's how.

Many of these falsehoods can be found littered throughout a report into the RSE taught by schools commissioned by Miriam Cates MP and produced by her organisation, New Social Covenant (see bit.ly/ts123-LL1). The document makes a number of generalised and inaccurate assertions – including that age-inappropriate and extreme issues are being taught to young learners everywhere, causing harm to their wellbeing. In reality, the opposite is true.

Cates cites blogs that include what she deems as 'inappropriate content' to back up her claims. However, these largely come from organisations that provide sexual wellbeing information for adults, and don't work with school students. Organisations geared towards working with schools – such as Sex Ed Matters, which I serve as director, and abides by guidance set by the PSHE Association – barely warrant any mention in the report.

Rather than listen to an MP, I suggest that we listen to students. A 2021 Ofsted review (see bit.ly/ts122-sc1) unearthed details of sexual

harassment and abuse being effectively 'normalised' on school grounds, based on extensive interviews with young people. A survey subsequently conducted by the Sex Education Forum (see bit.ly/ts123-LL2) found that many students in fact wanted *more* RSE support, as they believed this would keep them safe, better informed and provide a space for them in which they could raise concerns and develop their understanding.

Indeed, countless studies (see bit.ly/ts123-LL3) have shown how improving RSE provision has reduced rates of sexual violence, empowered students and made young people safer.

Yet despite this, the falsehoods persist, sparking calls for important topics like sexuality and body autonomy to be taken out of the curriculum altogether, for fear that such teaching 'promotes a left wing agenda' – rhetoric with echoes of headlines published shortly before the imposition of Section 28, which went on to devastate many lives.

We can already see history repeating itself across the pond. Florida and Texas have introduced variants of a 'Don't Say Gay' law, prohibiting the teaching of gender and sexuality in all schools across both states. We deserve better. We must act now, lest such damaging laws resurface and cause similar forms of harm here.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Laura Coryton is the director of Sex Ed Matters; for more information, visit sexedmatters.co.uk or follow @sexedmattersuk

WHEN SHOULD AN ECT START THINKING ABOUT CPD?



It's an individual decision that depends on how the ECT sees themselves within the profession, whether they've been supported adequately during their first year, and whether they have already developed their own professional interests – such as the teaching of literacy, or supporting students with EAL.

As they progress through the ECT framework, ECTs may encounter opportunities to pursue different CPD avenues, and if they feel ready and confident to act on such opportunities, they absolutely should.

One particular CPD route that's readily accessible to teachers at any stage of their career – including a number of ECTs I've previously worked with – are the National Professional Qualifications. Over time, the level of commitment

they involve has become much more manageable, and they've become far easier for teachers to compartmentalise within their daily and weekly schedules. Most now entail end-of-course assessments, allowing teachers to manage their time and pace their studies over the span of a year to 18 months.

Beyond NPQs, ECTs can also participate in online webinars, or attend one of the many #ResearchEd and Teachmeet events held across the country. The ECT phase and years immediately following it are actually the perfect time to access such events, ideally as often as possible. Most are organised as one-offs from which you can take away a vast amount of professional learning and knowledge, simply from interacting with fellow educators and getting outside the

'bubble' of your own school or provision.

I believe that ECTs can benefit in a number of ways from thinking about the areas they'd like to upskill in early on. Where do you see yourself in the next couple of years? What do you want your career progression to look like?

If you can see that progression relating to the curriculum in some way, seek out education training providers and courses that will deliver that. If your interests lean more towards the pastoral, there's a similarly extensive set of routes you can follow, but be selective.

With so much choice out there, you can easily become overwhelmed, which is why it's important to decide on what your goals are, and break down any CPD activity you end up doing into small, more easily manageable chunks.

DO THIS

BRACKET MISBEHAVIOUR

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

If a student is misbehaving, praise nearby students for demonstrating the kind of behaviour you want to see. When doing this, be specific:

'Billy, you're really focusing on what you're doing. And you, Janet. Your pen hasn't stopped writing.'

The misbehaving student will almost certainly want to receive some of that praise too, and thus change his or her behaviour in order to get that praise.

When that positive change happens, however, make sure that you're not too quick to acknowledge it. Wait a while.

Scan the class. Attend to another student. Then – and only then – go back to the original student and acknowledge that their behaviour has now improved. A slight nod or a mouthed 'good' is normally sufficient.

Why not lavish praise as soon as you see that change take place? Because you want the student to be working hard to get that praise. Give too much praise too quickly, and you'll only cheapen it.

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

GENEVIEVE BENT IS ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL AT HARRIS INVICTUS ACADEMY AND AN ECT MENTOR

116

of England's 160 state grammar schools now operate quotas, or prioritise admissions for disadvantaged children

Source: BBC News

A new report produced by The Sutton Trust has sought to chart the increasing popularity of private and in-school tutoring.

The proportion of 11- to 16-year-olds who report having received private tutoring now stands at 30%, marking a slight rise on the 27% who said the same before the pandemic. Black and Asian pupils were far more likely to have previously received private tutoring (50% and 55% respectively) compared to White pupils (24%), and it seems especially popular in the nation's capital, with 46% of secondary pupils in London receiving private tutoring compared to 30% across England as a whole.

24% meanwhile report receiving tutoring from their school within the 2021/22 academic year, up from 18% the year before. According to The Sutton Trust's researchers, this has largely been in the form of small group tutoring (amounting to around 20%), with one-to-one tutoring accounting for just 7%, though some pupils were found to have received both.

Another notable finding was that experiences of tutoring seemed to be more common among grammar school students (23%) than independent schools (19%) or comprehensive schools (18%). Among the latter, tutoring rates at the least deprived schools in the country stood at 31%, compared to 12% at the most deprived schools.

The Sutton Trust's 'Tutoring – The New Landscape' report can be downloaded via bit.ly/ts123-LL4

YOUR GUIDE TO...

RECRUITING A SENCO



SENCO recruitment is hard. I spent the latter half of my teaching career working in AP as deputy head of a PRU, I loved my role there. Working in SEN and AP was a rollercoaster of emotions, spanning ecstatic highs, a few challenges(!) and the freedom to innovate within the curriculum.

Specialist staff have always played a crucial role, but at a time when school recruitment in general has become especially difficult, sourcing SEND specialists is now harder than ever.

It might seem obvious, but when recruiting permanent staff, provide a clear job description that outlines all responsibilities, skills, and qualifications required for the role so the right people apply. Then invite candidates to 'work a day in the life' of your organisation. We routinely did this at the school I worked at to ensure everyone was on the same page.

We also included a student panel as part of the interview process, to gain better insights into how candidates interacted with students and if/how the students warmed to them.

Find out afterwards if good, but unsuccessful candidates would be happy for you to keep their details on file for any future roles. This can encourage them to apply again, and potentially grow your pool of temporary staff.

Where possible, offer flexible working hours and arrangements. This isn't easy, given the importance of consistency for students with additional needs, but being able to retain amazing staff as part of a job share makes it worth dealing with the possible headaches.

Schools still using a traditional agency model to recruit temporary staff can save money by creating their own pool of staff and hiring directly. You could look into forming a Talent Pool with neighbouring schools by sharing contacts and making staff feel valued. By hiring and paying temporary staff directly, you'll be saving on agency fees whilst being able to pay said staff fairly.

By fostering a strong and cohesive workforce, both permanent and temporary staff will be committed, loyal and work as one to ensure every learner can achieve.



JAMES LIPSCOMBE IS THE PROJECTS AND PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT LEAD AT TEACHER BOOKER; FIND OUT MORE AT TEACHERBOOKER.COM OR FOLLOW @TEACHERBOOKER

2%

of GCSE English pupils studied a novel or play by a female author in 2022

Source: Report by the grassroots campaigning organisation End Sexism in Schools

Need to know

The latest 'Teacher Labour Market in England' annual report from The National Foundation for Educational Research has shown that the number of teacher vacancies posted by schools in the academic year up to February was 93% higher than the equivalent figure recorded in 2019. Using data provided by the national school vacancies service TeachVac, the report further highlights that vacancies are up 37% compared to 2021/22.

Making matters worse are the report's warnings that ITT recruitment figures in 2023/24 are projected to fall below government targets, with nine out of 17 secondary subjects – namely physics, computing, D&T, business studies, MFL, RE, music, drama and art and design – expected to miss targets by 20 per cent or more.

Other subjects likely to face under-recruiting this year, if not by as much, include English, chemistry and geography. Faring somewhat better are biology, history, classics and PE, which seem set to either reach or slightly exceed targets.

Readers can examine the NFER's 'Teacher Labour Market in England Annual Report 2023' in full via bit.ly/ts123-LL5



WHAT WE DO OVERSEAS LEARNING

At Impington Village College, we're committed to international education. We're an International Baccalaureate school, and providing students with opportunities to go on overseas trips is a big part of that.

We received Turing Scheme funding for the 2021/22 academic year, soon after the scheme was up and running. For us, submitting a bid to the Turing Scheme was about seizing the opportunity, post-COVID, to start thinking about taking students abroad again, following a hiatus during the pandemic. It was a very ambitious bid, for around a million pounds, which we never expected receive all of.

The scheme requires applicants to put together specific bids for different countries, and outline everything they intend to offer. Our aim was to maximise participation, with a particular focus on students who would otherwise be unable to go on trips abroad – those eligible or Pupil Premium, for example, looked after students or those who are care experienced. In the summer of '21 we found out that we had indeed been given all the money, and so began the challenging process of organising the trips.

We'd initially intended to visit Japan but couldn't, due its borders being closed at the time (though we do have a trip out there scheduled for May this year). Being an established IB school, we're fortunate to have many social connections across the world, and members of staff with connections to other schools.

A key stipulation of Turing funding is that parties have to spend three days in a

school environment, meaning we had to have a partner school in every one of the countries we wanted to visit. For some students, the resulting trips proved to be life-changing. We had students who had never left the UK going to places like Peru, Botswana and India, where they got to see what life is like for children growing up in those parts of the world. There's a school in Jodhpur, India for example, where children have been abandoned by their families because of their disabilities. Experiences like these profoundly change our students' outlook on life.

In the end, we were able to take over 800 Y7 to Y12 students on fully funded trips. We're somewhat unusual in that we currently have 99 students with EHCPs, many with fairly complex needs. Those among them wanting to go on trips were able to do so with support from TAs, giving them a chance to travel without their parents that they otherwise might never have had.

We haven't received the same funding this year. We were (unsurprisingly) unsuccessful with our bid, but plan to submit a smaller bid again next year. In the meantime, we're running a number of similar trips again to India and Botswana – albeit with more extensive self-funding this time.

We ultimately see our job as preparing students to be global citizens and better understand the world around them. And what better way of enabling that than to give them the opportunity to experience the wider world first-hand?

Victoria Hearn is the principal at Impington Village College



On the radar *Naval history*

It's easy to think of the Royal Navy as an institution mired in tradition and rigid hierarchies, but it has been – and still is – at the forefront of scientific, technological and social innovation.

As an island, Britain has for centuries looked out across the seas and set its sights on the global stage, with the Royal Navy literally and metaphorically at the helm. Britain's place on that world stage was secured by the Navy – initially via colonialism, Empire and the protection of trade, in the service of Britain's

geopolitical interests. Understanding life in modern Britain requires an understanding of how we got here – and how the Navy has played a vital role in that.

The Navy has historically invested in and developed a whole range of sciences and technologies that have gone on to transform society and the wider world. Without *HMS Beagle*, we wouldn't have the theory of evolution. Without the equally important but less well-known *HMS Challenger*, we wouldn't have oceanography, plate tectonics and climate science – all fields that

remain crucially important as we confront the looming climate crisis, and priorities for the Navy, as seen in the current work of *HMS Protector* in the Antarctic.

A unique quality of naval history is that it stretches back centuries, while also being a very modern story, making it a fantastic lens through which to examine continuity and change.

Dr Trudie Cole is head of programming and visitor engagement at the National Museum of the Royal Navy; for more information, visit nmrn.org.uk

TRENDING

Our pick of the recent resources and launches teachers might find useful...

DESIGNED FOR LIFE

Secondary schools are being invited to enter teams for a unique engineering challenge that will see students attempt to design a net zero neonatal unit. Organised as part of Class Of Your Own's 'Design Engineer Construct' Learning Programme, schools have until 31st May to enter. bit.ly/ts123-LL6

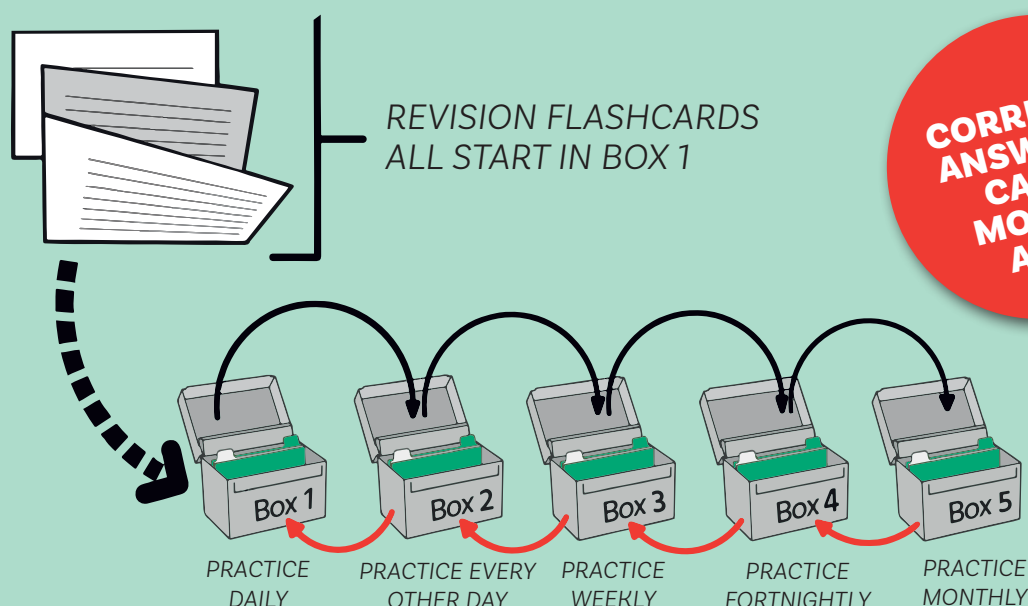
THINK IT, BE IT

EngineeringUK has produced a free, 32-page booklet intended to showcase the careers on offer in the engineering and technology sectors. Aimed at 14- to 19-year-olds, the 'From idea to career' booklet highlights 12 popular engineering disciplines, with straightforward information on what careers within those areas will involve and how young people can enter them. bit.ly/ts123-LL7

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ENGLISH LITERATURE

A Streetcar Named Desire – Methuen Drama Student Edition

A bruising, yet essential text of American theatre, now accompanied by suitably heavyweight commentary

AT A GLANCE

- **Commentary and notes by a respected theatre theorist, historian, and practitioner**
- **Discussion of the social, political, cultural and economic context in which the play was originally conceived**
- **Helpful overview of its subsequent performance history**
- **Examination and observations of the play's major themes and issues**
- **Bibliography comprising recommended primary and secondary materials for further study**

REVIEW BY JOHN DABELL

If there's one play that's sure to leave your head and heart in shreds, it's *A Streetcar Named Desire* by Tennessee Williams. Premiered in New York in 1947, its themes still remain hugely resonant today.

It's a Pulitzer Prize-winning work, packed with explosive, conflict-driven dialogue and iconic lines. Dark, gritty and sometimes disturbing in its portrayals of domestic abuse and mental illness, the play is full of characters and garrulous grotesques – each with their own complexities, contradictions and doubts.

The commentary and explanatory notes in this Methuen Drama Student Edition present a sensitive and considered appraisal of the play's treatment of rape, vulnerable people, mental institutions, sexuality and sexual desire.

Readers are also given a clear, chronological timeline of Tennessee Williams' life, with brief insights into his own trials and tribulations, and how he sought to push against and stretch the very limits of the dramatic form.

An introduction by Bess Rowen – assistant professor of theatre at Villanova University – meanwhile examines the cultural context that Williams was embedded in, drawing attention to how his work exhibited an abiding concern with time and place, and their effects upon men and women. We're invited to see Williams as a rebel who boldly broke with the then rigid conventions of drama in his efforts to explore new territory.

Sitting alongside this is a fascinating analysis of Williams' writing process, and his unique

approaches to portraying realism, naturalism and expressionism, as well as a consideration of Method Acting, the play's production history and subsequent screen adaptations.

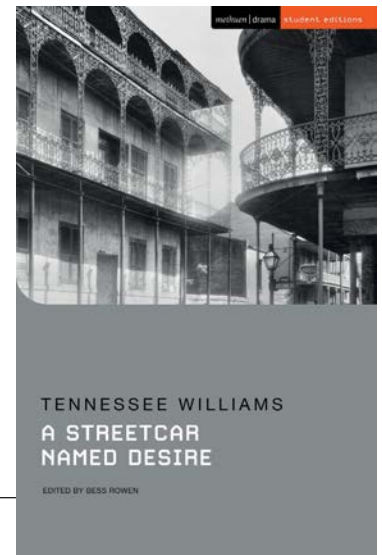
Taken together, the notes help students consider the play at a deeper level, especially its treatment of loneliness, suicide, death, the American South, power and conflict, alcoholism, violence and the exploitation of women.

The complete text of the play then follows in all its vital glory, as it would have appeared to audiences at its initial London production in 1949 – once memorably described as 'Not a play for the squeamish.'

A Streetcar Named Desire depicts a catastrophic confrontation between fantasy and reality. The copious notes that accompany the text of this edition ably expand, elaborate on and explain the play's finer details, fleshing out individual elements and giving students a welcome helping hand.

It's ideal for addressing the range of questions and perspectives the play throws up, will encourage close reading for class discussion and further analysis, and help build confidence in students' understanding of the play ahead of exams.

As a resource, it could also serve as a solid foundation for students' further explorations of the play's wider context, their own research into Williams' biography, and the social, historical, cultural and literary milieu of the 1950s.



teach SECONDARY

VERDICT

- ✓ **A classic play revisited with great insight and professional commentary**
- ✓ **Its intense, heavyweight themes are expertly and sensitively analysed**
- ✓ **Helps students develop a more nuanced understanding of the characters' motivations**
- ✓ **Presents insights into Williams' craft and lasting impact on American theatre and beyond**
- ✓ **Provides a fascinating window into a complex literary legend**

PICK UP IF...

You're looking for a comprehensive student edition of Williams' landmark tragedy, so that it can be studied as a realist masterpiece and exceptional example of expressionistic drama.

For more information visit bit.ly/ts122-streetcar

CAREERS

Employable Me

An interactive online resource to help young people prepare to enter the world of work

AT A GLANCE

- Created and delivered by the charity Young Enterprise
- A comprehensive online course divided into discrete units
- Covers all the essentials of job-hunting, such as CV writing and interview technique
- Includes further useful units on knowing your USP and cleaning up your social media presence
- Presented in a lively and accessible way

REVIEW BY MIKE DAVIES



Do you remember your first job interviews? Perhaps you'd rather forget them – the squirming self-doubt, the panic of being under-prepared, the cringeworthy replies born from ignorance and/or naive arrogance...

The careers advice provided at secondary school should go some way towards preventing these kinds of issues. And yet, while the overall quality of careers advice has dramatically improved over the years (particularly when compared to my own school days), the limited time and resourcing that schools can dedicate to their careers offering mean that advisors and teachers often face an uphill struggle.

Step forward, Young Enterprise. As a national charity committed to helping young people succeed in the ever-changing world of work, Young Enterprise is dedicated to empowering those leaving full-time education to make the most of their potential. That includes providing invaluable practical guidance to those taking their first tentative steps into the jobs market through its YE Learning Zone platform and comprehensive Employable Me online course.

Employable Me covers all the key aspects of job-hunting in an enjoyable and accessible way. As you'd expect, students are given essential advice on how to craft a good CV, prepare for interviews and generally give the best possible account of themselves – all of which is presented via separate units that students can work through at their own pace.

What really impresses me about

Employable Me are the inclusion of additional thought-provoking activities that are designed to make users think beyond the obvious employment essentials. For one thing, there's a whole unit dedicated to helping learners consider their own unique selling points – because after all, why would any employer invest in someone who doesn't even know themselves what makes them special?

There's also a unit dedicated to encouraging young people to clean up their social media presence. I'll bet that there are plenty of people who now wish, back in the day, that they'd had someone other than their parents or teachers telling them to delete this comment, or think again about posting that content. Because which young people are ever going to listen to what they have to say about social media?

The information is conveyed throughout

in a range of interesting and interactive ways that are a million miles away from the dry, airless careers sessions of my youth. Also included are brief questionnaires to help learners crystallise their self-knowledge, short video clips that serve to illustrate sound interview techniques and mini-quizzes to check for understanding.

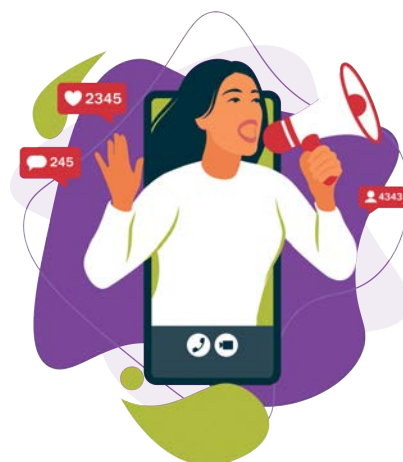
Once students have completed the course, they receive a personalised certificate. Most importantly, however, they'll have gained valuable insights into how they can best showcase their skills and talents to potential employers. Good job!

“There's a unit dedicated to social media”

**teach
SECONDARY**

VERDICT

- ✓ Fronted by relatable presenters
- ✓ Imparts practical and valuable advice
- ✓ Thoughtfully laid out and designed
- ✓ Extends far beyond basic employability skills



UPGRADE IF...

You want to give your students a lively, yet informative introduction to entering the jobs market.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

John Lawson is a former secondary teacher, now serving as a foundation governor while running a tutoring service, and author of the book *The Successful (Less Stressful) Student* (Outskirts Press, £11.95); find out more at prep4successnow.wordpress.com or follow @johninpompano



THE LAST WORD

The art of the spin



We should be doing far more to help young people navigate the vast and all-encompassing modern media landscape, says **John Lawson**

Robin Smith was among the very best batsmen for England when it came to dealing with seriously fast bowling. Smith averaged a respectable 43.67 across 62 test matches from 1988 to 1996 – but his career sadly collapsed once opponents realised he couldn't read spin.

Anyone regularly following today's increasingly polarised news media – including our students – must learn to distinguish between spin of a different sort – namely commission and omission.

My hair conditioner is supposedly 'seven times more moisturising' than other leading brands. My jar of coffee provides '210 cups' (albeit thimble-sized ones, presumably). A recent university lecture revealed that during the protracted miners' strikes of the 1980s, the BBC came under pressure from Downing Street and duly highlighted every instance of miners opting to return to work. It was left to Channel 4 News to tell us how many miners were actually joining the strikes.

Inflammatory rhetoric

In the here and now, nurses were recently offered a taxable rise of £1,300 – but if they'll be expected to pay £1,200 on newly reintroduced annual parking fees, doesn't that amount to a pay cut?

LBC radio presenter James O'Brien recently examined how certain tabloids spun particular stories concerning the Royals. During her pregnancy, pictures of Kate Middleton touching her bump were accompanied by reports approving of her 'maternal instincts'. When Meghan Markle did the same, it became 'attention-seeking behaviour' deemed worthy of excoriating character analyses by the same papers' resident psychologists. Over a further 29 examples, O'Brien showed how stories would be routinely spun to present Markle as the wicked witch of a media-created pantomime.

Closer to home, meanwhile, the national press will regularly and ruthlessly expose the perceived professional and personal failures of teachers across the country, but these often won't constitute factual news. Rather, they're intended to provoke readers' suspicions of rampant 'wokery', and in the worst cases, amount to straight-up inflammatory rhetoric.

As an aside, those who argue that superheroes 'shouldn't all be white males' do have a point.

Though I would take issue with the idea that a modern Superman ought to be shown struggling with issues of self-identity and personal crises. That sounds less like a 'superhero' and more like, well, *us*. There is something to be said for the fantasy and sense of mystique that's historically resonated so much with the innocence and boundless imagination of youth...

Twisted words

Our schools should be obligated to teach teens media literacy. When we imply that all news is reported objectively, we effectively do the opposite of educating.

Tomorrow's judges, journalists, politicians and, yes, teachers can be found sitting in today's classrooms. It's therefore imperative that we teach children the importance of compassion, justice, integrity and honesty. Our primary responsibility isn't to be 'politically correct', but to be as morally, factually, and contextually correct as possible.

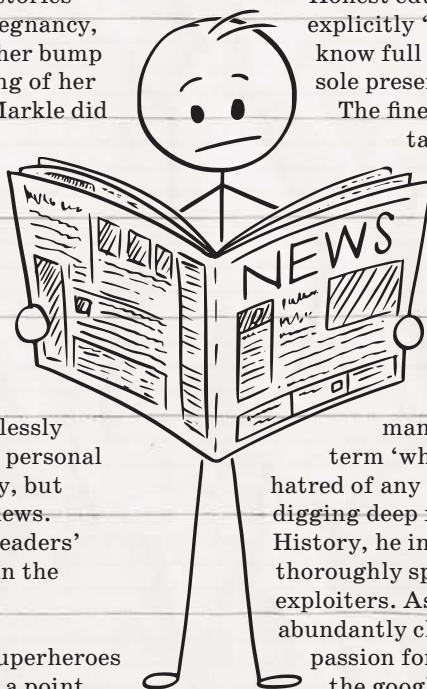
Similarly, I find myself longing for media outlets willing to act as proud and truthful voices for the otherwise unheard. When powerful figures seek to oppress the innocent and powerless, I take solace and inspiration from seeing people I admire courageously challenging those forces.

Honest educators will rarely, if ever, speak from explicitly 'left' or 'right' perspectives because they know full well that right and wrong are seldom the sole preserve of either side.

The finest teacher I ever had, Mr. Wright, once taught me how 'twisted words' are the most effective weapons of mass destruction that modern societies have ever seen. Alas, he was later 'invited to retire' after connecting the 'rape of Africa' (his words) to the greed and wealth of the British Empire, which prompted a parent to complain.

Mr Wright consistently refused to sanitise the extent of man's inhumanity to man, but at the same time he never deployed the term 'white privilege'. Nor did he ever encourage hatred of any kind, though he did insist upon on students digging deep for objective facts.

History, he insisted, is often 'his story' – that is, thoroughly spun stories detailing the exploits of male exploiters. As wonderful as Google may be, it remains abundantly clear that we still need teachers driven by a passion for relaying important truths to help us spot the googlies that seek to deceive us.



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