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teach SECONDARY

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NATASHA DEVON



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more than ever"*

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learn at break

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FROM THE EDITOR

“Welcome...”



The notion of ‘being your own boss’ can be a powerful lure for some professions. Life as a freelance consultant or creative can be unpredictable, but on the plus side, at least there’s no one telling you what to do.

In private businesses, anyone below the level of director or CEO will typically accept the trade-off of complete professional freedom and independence in return for the reassurance of a regular salary and the other benefits that come with working for a large organisation. You’re subservient to their rules – but with promotion will generally come an increasing degree of flexibility in terms of managing junior staff, allocating time and strategic planning.

In schools, it’s a bit more complicated. Your ultimate boss is the government, in the form of the DfE, with your adherence to targets and general performance kept in check (or possibly enforced, depending on who you ask) by Ofsted.

At the same time, every school is, to some extent its own operating entity – albeit one to a greater or lesser degree overseen by a trust or local authority. In some respects, at least, school leaders can have a great deal of operational freedom, which they may pass on to their staff to varying degrees, depending on their vision and priorities for the school.

But then a letter may arrive on headed paper that will have enormous repercussions for what your daily routines in school will look like henceforth.

Two developments in recent weeks serve as neat illustrations of this. The first was the headline-grabbing announcement by the Education Secretary of the government’s intention to formally ban smartphones in schools – though as Gareth Sturdy points out on page 12, we’re still really talking guidelines at this stage, but ones which may have unintended consequences if they were to be made statutory.

The second was the announcement of a review into the compulsory RSE teaching required of schools since 2021. It doesn’t seem too unreasonable to check in on how schools have been faring in that department two years on – but as *Teach Secondary*’s new regular columnist Natasha Devon observes on page 21, there should perhaps be some scrutiny of the motivations and purpose behind the review itself.

A centralised education system such as ours will inevitably be subject to new rules and interventions. Yet at the same time, we’ll often extol the virtues of independent learning, critical thinking and informed arguments to students. The authority flows from that direction – what if some takeaway lessons could travel back there from here?

Enjoy the issue,

Callum Fauser
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Ed Carlin is a deputy headteacher

KEEP IN TOUCH!

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teach SECONDARY

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Published by: Artichoke Media, Suites 2 & 4, Global House, Global Park, Eastgates, CO1 2TJ



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The newsletter

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

The UNINFORMED teacher's guide to...



1989 (TAYLOR'S VERSION)

If you've recently been having flashbacks to your boozy student union singalongs upon hearing the sound of teens bellowing 'Shake it Off' around the school corridors, there's a reason for that. This month saw Taylor Swift's re-recorded version of her fourth album 1989 drop (as the young people say), some nine years after its original release. And because the progression of mainstream pop culture has all but slowed to a crawl, it's 80s pop-influenced charms are finding a whole new receptive audience.

Mind you, the very existence of 1989 (Taylor's Version) contains some points of teachable interest. Yes, your head of music can roll their eyes and again guide students through the chord structure of 'Style' if they want - but the saga of how Swift signed away the commercial rights to the master tapes of her first six albums at the age of 15, became stratospherically successful and saw said rights acquired by a hostile new owner in 2019, prompting her to produce note-for-note re-recordings of those records is a cautionary business case study for the ages...

DO SAY

"It's like I got this music in my mind"



DON'T SAY

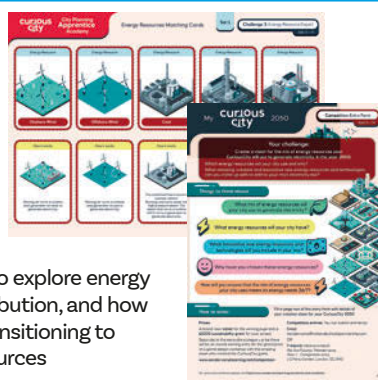
"I stay out too late, got nothing in my brain"

BEAT THE BUDGET



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Materials and resources for two hour-long lessons in which students get to explore energy generation and distribution, and how urban centres are transitioning to renewable energy sources



What are we talking about?

The Wonderverse - a STEM learning platform produced with funding by international energy company Equinor

How might teachers use the resources?

The resources include two presentations, videos and worksheets to accompany interactive classroom activities

Where is it available?

wonderverselearning.com

DON'T QUOTE ME...

"Improvements have already been identified to ensure similar mistakes are not repeated in the future"

DfE Permanent Secretary Susan Acland-Hood in a letter to the Education Committee, following an error in the forecasting of pupil numbers that resulted in the removal of around £370 million from the 2024/25 schools budget

Think of a number...

1 million

The number of children made destitute at some point in 2022

Source: Joseph Rowntree Foundation

24%

of secondary students have used to mobile devices to view violent or harmful content during lessons

Source: Survey of 2,000 secondary students by Impero Software

2,334

Number of teacher vacancies thus far in 2022/23, compared to 1,564 at the same point in 2021/22

Source: Data collation by Engage Education

ONE FOR THE WALL

"We've got to live, no matter how many skies have fallen"

D.H. Lawrence



Minimum Service Levels

The government has announced its intention to introduce minimum service levels to ensure continuity of education provision, in the event of any future industrial action on the part of school and college staff.

The move comes in direct response to the teacher strikes over pay that took place earlier this year, which resulted in 10 days of action at schools. The strikes were suspended in July, following an agreement between the government and teaching unions on a revised pay award for teachers, which included a raising of starting salaries to a minimum of £30,000 p/a.

Commenting on the announcement, Education Secretary, Gillian Keegan, said: *“Last year’s school strikes were some of the most disruptive on record for children, and their parents. We cannot afford a repeat of that disruption - particularly as schools and teachers continue to work so hard to help children recover from the pandemic. I am asking the teaching unions to engage with us and agree to put children and young people’s education first - and above and beyond any dispute.”*

In a written response to the news, NASUWT general secretary Dr Patrick Roach said: *“Today’s announcement comes just hours after the government suffered some of its worst ever by-election results. The message is loud and clear: the public wants more investment in our schools and colleges, not a government that is hell-bent on attacking the rights of dedicated, committed and hard-working teachers.”*

SAVE THE DATE

SPEECHES AND CORRESPONDENCE

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



THE SPEECH:

Prime Minister announces ‘Advanced British Standard’ qualification

WHO? Rishi Sunak, Prime Minister

WHERE? Conservative Party Annual Conference

WHEN? 4th October 2023

“We will introduce the new rigorous, knowledge-rich Advanced British Standard, which will bring together A Levels and T Levels into a new, single qualification for our school leavers. First, this will finally deliver on the promise of parity of esteem between academic and technical education because all students will sit the Advanced British Standard. Second, we will raise the floor, ensuring that our children leave school literate and numerate because with the Advanced British Standard, all students will study some form of English and maths to 18, with extra help for those who struggle most. In our country, no child should be left behind.

Third, our 16- to 19-year-olds spend around a third less time in the classroom than some of our competitors. We must change this. So, with our Advanced British Standard, students will spend at least 195 hours more with a teacher. And fourth, A Level students, generally, only do three subjects compared to the seven studied by our economic competitors. The Advanced British Standard will change that too, with students now, typically, studying five subjects.

Our new plan will require more teachers in the coming years. So, I can announce today that in order to attract and retain more teachers, those who teach key subjects in schools will receive special bonuses of up to £30,000 tax-free over the first five years of their career.”



THE LETTER:

Education Secretary addresses the sharing of RSE curriculum resources

FROM? Gillian Keegan, Secretary of State for Education

TO? School leaders in England

WHEN? 24th October 2023

“Where contractual clauses exist that seek to prevent schools sharing resources with parents at all, they are void and unenforceable. This is because they contradict the clear public policy interest of ensuring that parents are aware of what their children are being taught in sex and relationships education.

If faced with such clauses, schools should write to providers asking for those clauses to be withdrawn on the grounds that they are unenforceable. To help with this, I have provided a sample letter that schools in this situation can adapt and send to external providers.”

20-21 NOVEMBER 2023 EdTech World Forum 2023 | 23 NOVEMBER 2023 Positive Dyslexia Conference | 24-26 JANUARY 2024 Bett

20-21 NOVEMBER

EdTech World Forum 2023
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edtechconferences.london

Those keen to get acquainted with the bleeding edge of edtech should clear a space in their diaries for this combined meeting of minds and networking event. On the agenda will be presentations concerning the future of assessment and the transformative potential of AI, alongside insights into areas ranging from schools’ COVID responses and metacognition to speech recognition.

23 NOVEMBER 2023

Positive Dyslexia Conference
Adelphi Hotel, Liverpool
positivedyslexia.co.uk/events

A specialist conference aimed at sharing best practice and ideas in the areas of dyslexia and neurodiversity, visiting SENCos, teachers and TAs can expect to pick up plenty of practical guidance and advice on techniques they can use support learners in their settings and help them reach their full potential.

24-26 JANUARY 2024

Bett
ExCeL London
uk.bettshow.com

After a brief post-COVID move to March, this long-running showcase of leading education specialists, products and service providers is once again occupying a more familiar January spot on the event calendar. As well as the sizeable exhibition space and packed speaker schedule familiar to Bett regulars, this year sees the return of the Connect @ Bett meetings facility, plus the addition of edtech tutorials and working groups for educators dubbed ‘Tech User Labs’.

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Get Into Film

VERTIGO
(1958, 128 MINUTES,
AGES 14+)

CURRICULUM LINKS:
Film Studies



Retired detective

Scottie Ferguson, who quit the force after developing a fear of heights, thinks he's pursuing a regular lead when he is hired to follow Madeline – the beautiful wife of a friend. As he begins to fall in love with her, his whole world is shattered when his vertigo prevents him from saving her from an apparent suicide.

Devastated, Scottie begins to shut himself off entirely, but when he later glimpses Madeline's perfect double in the sun-soaked San Francisco streets, his feelings of obsession and paranoia begin to spiral out of control.

This tense thriller from director Alfred Hitchcock – often spoken of as one of the greatest films of all time – is a fascinating marriage of psychology and cinema.

Discussion questions:

- Vertigo was voted the greatest film of all time by critics and filmmakers in the 2012 Sight & Sound poll. What do you think it means for a film to be labelled 'the greatest of all time'?
- What do you believe is the most memorable aspect of Vertigo? What sticks out in your memory of the film?
- Are you aware of the cinematic term 'the male gaze'? How does this apply to Vertigo?
- Do you think Scottie is a likeable character? Does your opinion of him change throughout the film?

Head online to intofilm.org to stream this film for free, and visit our film studies A Level curriculum page, where you can find further films to watch with supporting resources

Retweets
Who's been saying what on Twitter this month?

Miss B @MissBThe3rd

Giving my classroom gluesticks human names has been revolutionary. Does a student care if a glue stick goes missing? No! Do they care if DEREK the glue stick has not been returned? ABSOLUTELY. It's like a manhunt until Derek has been returned to his rightful spot.

Amy Forrester @amymayforrester

Today a wasp the size of a bird was in my classroom. It was so bad I had to send an SOS plea for help. It was eventually beheaded by a very brave teaching assistant. I'm traumatised. It's November. What's this mutant super wasp trying to do? Is the end nigh?

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

TEACHER TALES

True stories from the education chalkface

Modern art

I've long felt that modern art can be both pretentious, and seemingly lacking in any particular creativity and skill. As a mild protest I entered a painting into our school's local art exhibition that had been painted by my 3-year-old daughter. As you might expect, it was just a mass of colour with no structure. We named it 'Dancing in the Dark', gave it a high price, mounted it in a posh frame and invented a profile for a fictitious artist to sit alongside the painting. It was sold in no time at all, confirming my long-held opinion of modern art and its devotees.

We then took my daughter to McDonald's to celebrate her sale. However, two days later I received a message from the art show organiser, asking me to contact the woman who had bought it as she 'wanted to know more about the artist'. After a very awkward and protracted conversation, I finally admitted that the artist was my daughter

and naturally, I had to return the buyer's money.

It was only afterwards that I discovered that the 'purchase' and subsequent phonecall had been set up by a school colleague, who knew exactly what I'd done and decided who should have the last laugh...

Not likely

In an effort to make our cross country course a little more challenging, we added a 6-inch deep flooded area. Despite encouragement from staff, the Y7s refused to enter the shallow puddle upon seeing me – a 6' tall man – kneeling down in the freezing water, giving the impression that they'd have to wade in up to their waists...

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

A FEW MINUTES OF DESIGN

#27 JOINT ENDEAVOUR

A Few Minutes of Design JOINT ENDEAVOR



Explain in a drawing how you would join the objects below. You can cut/multiply them if you need to. Label the drawing with instructions and indicate any extra materials you would need to make the joints sound.

It doesn't have to be a product with a recognisable function; you just have to work out how you could join the parts neatly and securely.

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[MATHS PROBLEM]

PERPENDICULAR GRADIENTS

Colin Foster unpacks why relationships between the gradients of perpendicular lines can cause students some confusion

In this lesson, students draw lines with different gradients to see what is needed for the lines to be perpendicular.

THE DIFFICULTY

I'm thinking of a line that has a gradient of $\frac{2}{3}$.
What is the gradient of a line that is **perpendicular** to this line?

A. $\frac{2}{3}$ B. $-\frac{2}{3}$ C. $\frac{3}{2}$ D. $-\frac{3}{2}$

Students may need to remind each other that 'perpendicular' means 'at right angles'. If they have no idea about the correct answer, that is OK, because that is the point of today's lesson.

THE SOLUTION

What does a line with gradient $\frac{2}{3}$ look like?

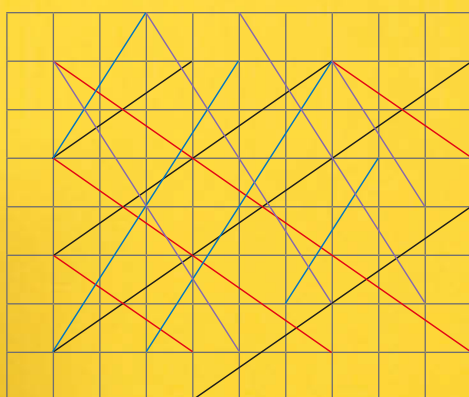
Students could answer on mini-whiteboards. (This would be easier if the mini-whiteboards had a squared grid background.) If they have all used, say, black ink, then you could next ask:

Now, using **red pen**, draw a line with gradient $-\frac{2}{3}$.

Now, using **blue pen**, draw a line with gradient $\frac{3}{2}$.

Now, using **purple pen**, draw a line with gradient $-\frac{3}{2}$.

Several possible examples of correct lines are shown below.



Which colour line is **perpendicular** to the original black line?

The **purple** lines, with gradient $-\frac{3}{2}$, are perpendicular to the black lines.

Students may notice that the **red** and **blue** lines are **also** perpendicular to each other.

In general, lines with **gradients that multiply to make -1** are perpendicular to each other:

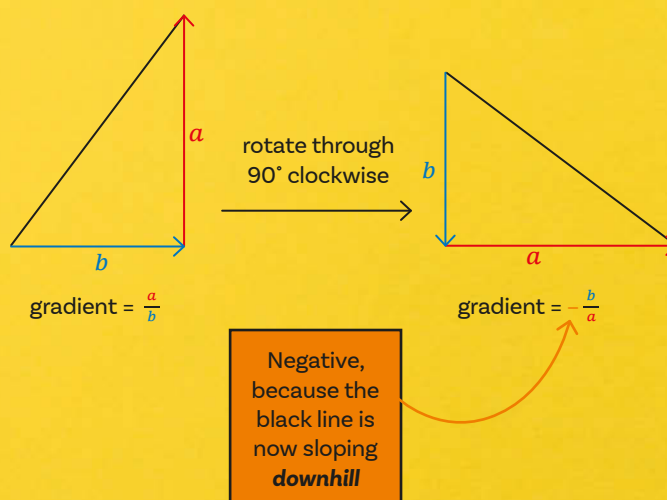
$$\left(\frac{2}{3}\right) \times \left(-\frac{3}{2}\right) = -1$$

$$\left(-\frac{2}{3}\right) \times \left(\frac{3}{2}\right) = -1$$

The converse is **almost** true, except for the case of horizontal and vertical lines, which **are** perpendicular, but do **not** have gradients with a product of -1.

Checking for understanding

To assess students' understanding, ask them to try to prove this result for the general case of a line with gradient $\frac{a}{b}$, where $a, b \neq 0$. For example, they could make an annotated drawing something like this:



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“Your call isn’t important to us”

Gareth Sturdy weighs up the government’s decision to finally try and settle the ‘Should smartphones be allowed in school?’ debate once and for all...

“**T**he distraction, the disruption, the bullying...”

That was the grave lamentation with which Education Secretary Gillian Keegan set the tone for her blanket ban on smartphones in schools at the Conservative Party conference last month. She painted a picture of schools virtually overwhelmed by pupils clutching phones, struggling to cope with their wholly negative impact.

Only a government-level blanket ban could match the scale of the mounting crisis, she suggested. Such a ban would represent ‘support’ for heads, whom Keegan promised to back to the hilt. The implication was that school leaders are keen to ban phones but are powerless to do so in the face of... what?

The quiet bit was that this resistance is presumed to come from feckless parents and their kids, who are so addicted to phones that they’re prepared to fight schools for their right to Snapchat.

Those pointing out that this ‘ban’ only amounted to non-statutory DfE guidance, which schools would be entirely free to ignore, tended to miss the stick concealed behind the carrot. If an insufficient number of heads are suitably grateful for such state ‘support’ and decline the opportunity to enact Keegan’s kindly ‘guidance’, then legislation will surely follow.

Straw man argument

Consequently, it’s been hard to accept such a self-contradictory declaration at face value. Most commentators have opted to treat it as yet another lame bandwagon leap by a struggling government desperate for positive pre-election headlines.

However, this fails to recognise the peril this issue presents. Not one concerning the threats lurking within smartphones themselves, but

more confidence.

Other pro-ban educators have presented the issue as a matter of hard science, circulating academic papers in support of their position. One of them is a 2016 paper by Beland and Murphy, ‘Ill Communication: Technology, distraction & student performance’ (see bit.ly/ts128-TP1), which claims that mobile bans improve test scores “by 6.41% of a standard deviation.”

This, however, is a straw

man argument. Nobody on either side of the school gate needs researchers to tell them that it’s not desirable for children to be Candy Crushing when they should be calculating during a maths lesson. Data gathered by Teacher Tapp indicates that school leaders have increasingly adopted phone bans over the last five years, without being compelled by the state, to the point where around 80% of schools now have them.

No, the lobbying and activism for mobile phone bans isn’t simply about providing better learning environments. It speaks to something else. Note this further claim from the aforementioned Beland and Murphy paper:

“State-sponsored phone bans are unlikely to empower teachers, produce better cognitive outcomes or improve student wellbeing”

rather with the creation of a dangerous new social climate. One that we’re at risk of sleepwalking into, unless we’re willing to have a mature public debate.

I asked one leading schools adviser what he made of Keegan’s announcement. He told me that teachers’ threats to confiscate phones until the end of the day are of little deterrence, and that in many schools, pupils flatly refuse to hand their phones over when challenged.

He went on to note that staff are often unwilling to provoke high-stakes confrontations in such situations, and sometimes don’t feel supported by their SLT. He thought a government ban might therefore give school leaders



“Low-achieving students have lower levels of self-control and are more likely to be distracted by the presence of mobile phones.” No prizes for guessing to which end of the economic spectrum attention is being tacitly drawn here.

Cultural insecurities

We could also consider other research conducted by Jean Twenge at San Diego State University, later popularised by the influential teaching guru, Doug Lemov. In his view, the research showed that mobile phones are responsible for increases in rates of youth depression, anxiety, and isolation.

Social psychologist Jonathan Haidt has also recently tweeted University of British Columbia research from last year with similar findings, concluding that, *“To reduce loneliness among adolescents, get phones out of school now.”*

Inspired by these research examples, the parental lobbying group UsForThem is pressing for a total ban on phones for all under 16s as part of its #SafeScreensForTeens campaign. It wants to see a stringent, tobacco-style regulatory regime applied to all digital devices. The campaign is endorsed by Katharine Birbalsingh – former social mobility tsar and headteacher at Michaela Community school, where families are given the option to have pupils’ phones locked in a school safe for weeks or months at a time, as part of a ‘digital detox’ programme.

State-sponsored phone bans are unlikely to empower teachers, produce better cognitive outcomes or improve student wellbeing. Why? Because they’re the locus of diffuse cultural insecurities around authority and childhood vulnerability.

‘Pied piper’ tech

Supposed grown ups are feeling less and less in charge, to the point where many don’t feel capable of demanding that truculent pupils hand over their phones. But instead of drawing on our own inner resources to rise to the challenge, it’s easier to project these fears outwards onto digital media.

If we feel we’re losing connection with our kids, it can be more palatable to apportion blame to ‘Pied Piper’ technologies luring away our ‘screenagers’ than it is to take a long, hard look at our own moral resources.

Focusing on technology as being the main problem behind the socialisation and education issues young people are experiencing only serves to encourage technical, behaviourist solutions. Encouraging freedom through the cultivation of individual agency is demoted, in favour of promoting conformity through coerced behaviour.

As the government seeks to impose smartphone bans in schools, we see it adopting a similar strategy aimed at wider society through the Online Safety Bill, which was recently passed by Parliament. In both cases,

the modus operandi is the same – illiberal, restrictive and authoritarian measures becoming habituated in the name of protecting vulnerable youth from the corruptions of technology.

Pointing the finger

To push back against this trend isn’t to deny *‘The distraction, the disruption, the bullying’* which can surround smartphones. Or to deny the threats posed to young people by online pornography, suicide forums or svengalis like Andrew Tate.

It does, however, recognise that smartphones can be just as much a wonderfully liberating tool for education. That to a parent, their child’s mobile phone provides a valuable reassurance of safety and a tool for co-ordinating family life. Phones can aid literacy, creativity, learning and social interaction as much as they can hinder them – especially for the 1 in 20 children who Ofcom says have no other access to digital technology.

To what extent this is allowed to intrude into the school day is a matter of negotiation between parents and schools, with good faith assumed on both sides. The state shouldn’t encroach. Several government consultations held on the subject in recent years all came to the same conclusion.

Those encouraging government bans, statutory or not, in the hopes of protecting kids or empowering heads are ultimately mistaken. Draconian edicts handed down by the state can’t engender self-assurance any more than an overbearing parent can. If they implicitly point the finger at families – especially working class families – they will only sow discord in situations where parental buy-in is vital.

IN BRIEF

WHAT’S THE ISSUE?

The government has signalled its wish to see smartphones banished from within schools, albeit without legislating for that to happen – yet.

WHAT’S BEING SAID?

The move has attracted vocal support from some parts of the profession and parental groups, who welcome it as a means of tackling the distractions and mental health issues phones can cause.

WHAT’S REALLY HAPPENING?

There’s been a growing trend in recent years of schools voluntarily enacting phone bans of their own; the proposed state intervention fails to recognise that phones can deliver benefits too, and will deprive schools and students of their agency.

THE TAKEAWAY

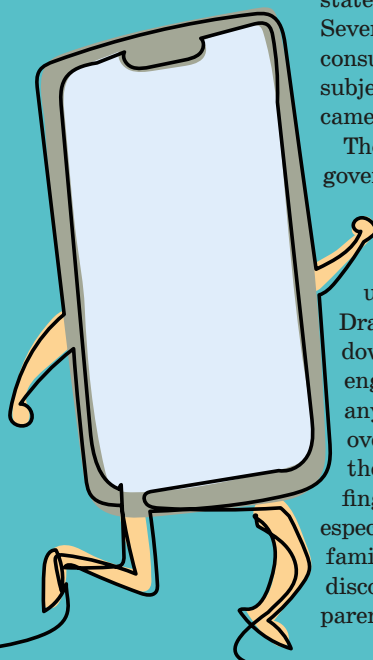
Phone bans imposed from the top will fail to account for the issue’s various complexities (psychological, social, economic, pedagogical) and won’t encourage ‘better behaviour’ – only coerced conformity.

As former headteacher David Perks tweeted in response to the news of Gillian Keegan’s ban, *“Why welcome the state imposing restrictions and controls on us? Don’t you remember lockdown? Why invite it now? You will regret this later.”*



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Gareth Sturdy (@stickyphysics) is a former teacher now working in edtech



BREAK OUT OF THE CLASSROOM

GROW! Students' positive character traits on a cross-curricular enrichment adventure!

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5 REASONS TO TRY... PGL GROW!

NEW! Character-building adventures for secondary schools



30 SECOND BRIEFING

At PGL we believe that some breakthroughs can only be made outside the classroom. That's why we teamed up with teachers and created R.E.A.C.H., our new outdoor learning framework that puts a fresh spin on how young people develop. GROW! adventures sit at the heart of it and develop vital character traits that prepare students for what life brings.

1 CULTIVATE THEIR CHARACTER

We know personal development provision is crucial when providing education at secondary school. GROW! has been specifically designed to help students reflect wisely, learn eagerly and cooperate with others. GROW! adventures go beyond our standard outdoor activity programmes; they're dynamic experiences interwoven with character-development threads. Every moment is an opportunity to unlock their true potential. Demonstrating positive character traits like empathy and curiosity is easier when you're supporting and encouraging one another while 10 metres high on the abseil tower!

2 TOTALLY TAILORED FOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS

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3 SPARK STUDENT BREAKTHROUGHS

GROW! has been developed to tie in learning outcomes, even when outside the classroom. With a range of character-building activities available to take part in from dawn till dusk, your students will boost their social and emotional skills.

Our adventure activities help students **BOOST INDEPENDENCE** and improve self-motivation; **BUILD RESILIENCE** by trying new tasks, recognising strengths and boosting self-esteem; **GROW CONFIDENCE** and take newfound leadership skills back to the classroom; **ENCOURAGE EMPATHY** and understanding of others; and **FOSTER CURIOSITY** by making learning more enjoyable and rewarding.



Contact:
0333 321 2114
pgl.co.uk/quote

4 JOURNEY OF SELF-DISCOVERY

At this age, we know it's important to start preparing for what life brings. We provide the tools and the breakthroughs come from the students themselves. For students wanting to push their limits and reach for the skies, GROW! is the perfect fit. Even for students of a different disposition, GROW! adventures can still create supportive spaces that offer a variety of experiences they can learn from in a different way to widen their knowledge and develop their ambition. We provide the equipment, but the champions of GROW! are your students.

5 TEAMWORK MAKES THE DREAM WORK

Bouncing back from setbacks is easier when you have a little help from your friends. GROW! adventures inspire connections and help to build empathy and the ability to regulate social and emotional intelligence – skills essential to cooperation. Between the three to five days of outdoor education, and time spent bonding as a group, our centres are perfectly positioned to take your next learning-outside-the-classroom, relationship-building experience to higher levels. Plus, our dedicated Customer Service Team are always on hand to make your journey with Team PGL run smoothly.

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Don't just take our word for it: *"The impact of the residential trip on students' self-esteem and confidence is tangible. A massive achievement."*
– Dawn House School

Ready to go beyond the textbook? Join us in putting a fresh spin on how your young people grow and develop. GROW! – enriching experiences for character development. Find out more at pgl.co.uk/grow

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'A unique project that has high expectations of the students as musicians which gives them confidence. They were engaged and inspired.'



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- A short film, especially commissioned for young audiences, presenting the operatic music piece
- Online Teacher CPD, co-delivered by a specialist music teacher and the ENO
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- Films to play in the classroom, introducing musical concepts and the composition process
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- ENO Composer workbooks and certificates, posted directly to your school
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Free to all state schools nationwide.

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Many of the issues assailing England's education system can be put down to short-term thinking on the part of policymakers. Based on both main parties' recent pronouncements, how likely are we to see that change under a new administration?



Melissa Benn

'Long Term Decisions for Britain's Future' was Rishi Sunak's slightly clunky party conference slogan this year – a clear attempt to distinguish his administration from his two disastrous 'quick-fix' (but fix nothing) predecessors. Similarly, Keir Starmer has spoken of the 10 years needed to solve Britain's problems, asserting that "Long-term solutions are not 'oven ready'."

According to a recent report by former Labour Shadow Chancellor John McDonnell and Andrew Fisher, previously the party's executive director of policy and research, if Labour win the next General Election, *"The inheritance of that Labour government will be the toughest of any incoming administration in living memory."* (see bit.ly/labourinrayreport)

Starmer has consequently pledged to take extreme fiscal caution. See education, for example. Restoring education spending to 2010 levels, as a percentage of GDP, would cost an additional £21.3 billion per year. Labour's promise to levy 20% VAT on private school fees would raise a mere £1.5 billion.

But the problem isn't just about revenue, important though that is. It's about the direction of policy making itself, and the need for any government that's serious about making long-term changes to set out a roadmap for reform underpinned by clear principles, wide consultation and provision of sufficient resources.

Shallow ideas

And yet, our current politics couldn't be further from that approach. We're presented instead with only shallow, headline-grabbing ideas. Gillian Keegan wants to ban smartphones in school (when many schools already have such policies in place). Keir Starmer wants schools to oversee toothbrushing (when the real problem there is a lack of

affordable dentistry).

More broadly, we've seen decades of structural upheaval, dreamt up and directed from an over-confident centre. The introduction of academies, Free Schools, regional school commissioners and multi-academy trusts has led to a fragmented mishmash of institutions that's increasingly shaped by private and charitable interests, but which still leaves us with one of the unequal education systems in Europe, a generation of disenchanting teachers and stressed pupils.

It's salutary to remind ourselves of how other countries have gone about things differently. Countries like Finland, where, from the 1960s onwards, the political left and right came together to shape a new kind of school system.

Collegial, intellectual, holistic

The Finnish educator and author Pasi Sahlberg recently identified three core values that shape the highly effective Finnish system. The first is that education shouldn't be managed as a business, but rather be seen as being reliant on effective collaboration, trust and collegial responsibility.

The second is a recognition that

teaching is a high level, intellectual profession requiring advanced academic education, solid scientific and practical knowledge, and continuous on-the-job training.

The final core value is an awareness that a successful education system shouldn't be judged on literacy or numeracy scores alone, but also emphasise whole-child development, equity of education outcomes and wellbeing, while ensuring the arts, music, drama and PE remain as central offerings.

In England, we've pursued principles that run directly counter to all three of these core values, as well as those of other comparatively successful education systems. It's frustrating to watch England continue making so many missteps, but it's important to also understand why.

Embedded deep within the English psyche is the belief that our education system exists to produce an elite – a cadre of the confident and clever either drawn from an existing privileged caste (those educated at private schools) or else picked out from the masses via meritocratic opportunity (grammars, selective sixth forms and Oxbridge). For the rest, 'standard fare' will have to do.

This powerful, if largely unarticulated ideology creates a profound lack of trust in all but the elite, from local government leaders down to teachers themselves. If the political class has little trust in those running our public services, then they'll try to control them – with the result that those services become less effective.

There's little indication so far that Labour plans to reorient education in a radically different direction, but winning power might galvanise a new Labour government into at least adopting a long term education policy. Only then will we get the effective, fair and sustainable system this country deserves.



DRIVEN TO DO BETTER

Ed Carlin believes the profession should be zeroing in on the fundamentals of teaching and learning – and has just the tool with which to do that...

I imagine the following scenario. While out on his latest driving lesson, little Liam is getting increasingly frustrated. His instructor's a really nice guy, often sharing stories that make Liam's driving lessons all the more interesting and memorable. The trouble is, it's now Liam's third lesson with Mr Stevenson, and he still doesn't understand how to engage the clutch.

Liam desperately looks to Mr Stevenson to ask for instruction. Sadly, he's met with yet another pearl of wisdom from his guide: "*Liam, learning to use a clutch is a bit like music. Pedal in and pedal out, all in harmony with the beat. Rhythm, Liam my boy! Rhythm...*"

By now, Liam's sat through dozens of stories, anecdotes and observations, while Mr Stevenson seems to have lost all sense of purpose. Liam is 55 quid down, yet barely able to back out of driveways. Still, ask him about Mr Stevenson's holiday to Cyprus, and he could probably give you a blow-by-blow account...

Getting from A to B

Our students depend on us to utilise our expertise, knowledge and agency to deliver the best possible learning experiences and outcomes, because they know only too well that there's an endpoint. Irrespective of whatever the latest learning trends are, their learning journey will inevitably end with some form of assessment or test.

Returning to Liam, he has

enough money to cover 10 lessons with Mr Stevenson. He's anxious about the driving test he'll sit in a matter of weeks, and has lost all faith in his teacher. The highly knowledgeable Mr Stevenson will doubtless continue to be pleasant company – yet he simply can't teach, due to him having no concept of planning, implementation and practice. Liam will fail his test. It won't be his fault.

We're wasting too much time promoting the notional advantages of rapport, personality and entertainment"

It's my belief that we're wasting far too much time in our schools promoting the notional advantages of rapport, personality and entertainment. Yes, we must foster authentic and meaningful relationships with the students in our care – but in my experience, the very best relationships are built on students having faith in their teachers to get them from point A to point B successfully. *That's* sustainable rapport.

Introducing DRIVE

Let me therefore introduce you to DRIVE – a creation of mine several years in the making which, at first glance, may seem at odds with the profession's current trajectory. DRIVE is a learning and teaching programme that's all about stripping things back, and restoring a sense of purpose to our classrooms that has been lost.

As we desperately claw at imaginative learning activities, and spend ever more time on 'getting to know our students', we move further away from the job at hand – that of teaching excellent lessons, every time. Mr Stevenson had 10 lessons to get Liam through. If Liam was your child, how would you want each minute of those remaining lessons to be spent?

Even the most experienced practising teachers need training from time to time. Hence the existence of career-long professional learning which – if it's to be successful, at least – will have learning and teaching at its core.

That's where DRIVE comes in. It's a structured framework, designed to improve the quality of teaching and learning within a school, that's built around five key components – Development, Research, Impact, Validate, and Evaluate. Each one plays a crucial role in enhancing both the educational experience for students, and professional development processes for teaching staff.

How it works

Let's drill down into each element, with illustrative examples of how the programme can be put into action.

1 DEVELOPMENT (Lesson planning and observation cycle)

Teachers engage in a continuous cycle of lesson planning, delivery and observation. This includes creating detailed lesson plans

with clear learning intentions and success criteria, while ensuring the use of differentiated activities to promote inclusion and implementing effective classroom management strategies.

2 RESEARCH (CLPL, CPD, leadership)

Teachers participate in continuous professional learning (CPL) and continuous professional development (CPD) opportunities to enhance their teaching skills. They also take on leadership roles within the school, such as mentorship or leading workshops, to share their knowledge and expertise with colleagues.

3 IMPACT (Attainment and achievement; experiences and outcomes)

The programme emphasises the assessment of student attainment and achievement. Teachers regularly evaluate student progress not just in terms of grades, but also in terms of their overall learning experience. This includes assessing the impact of teaching strategies on students' engagement, understanding and enjoyment of the learning being provided.

4 VALIDATE (Learning walks, pupil evaluations, lesson observation feedback)

School leaders and administrators conduct learning walks in which they observe classrooms to gain insights into teaching practices. Pupil evaluations involve obtaining feedback from students about their learning experiences. Additionally, lesson observation feedback is used to provide constructive comments and suggestions for improvement.

5 EVALUATE (Sharing good practice, willingness to change, commitment to improvement)

Teachers and faculties

regularly come together to share best practice and successes. This collaborative approach fosters a willingness to change and adapt teaching methods to better serve students. Data from evaluations, including lesson observations and pupil feedback, are used to guide decisions and promote continuous improvement.

Stay focused

The overarching goal of the DRIVE Programme is to ensure all learners receive a high quality educational experience. To achieve this, the programme seeks to address various aspects of learning and teaching, including the development of clear and focused learning intentions to guide instructional objectives.

This then leads to the establishing of challenging, inclusive success criteria to measure student progress, alongside the implementation of engaging and relevant lesson starters to help capture student interest. Over time, the use of differentiated learning activities will come to accommodate diverse learning styles, while teachers ensure that lessons maintain an appropriate pace and level of challenge.

At the same time, there will be acknowledgement of students with additional support needs and appropriate support for them put in place, as well as promotion of positive behaviour management strategies to create environments that are conducive to learning. Alongside this will be the adoption of consistent entrance and exit routines for a more structured learning environment, and the provision of appropriate extension work and homework assignments.

At its core, the DRIVE Learning and Teaching Programme is a comprehensive framework designed to foster continuous improvement in learning and teaching, empower staff to collaborate and innovate, and ultimately provide students with a more meaningful and effective educational experience.

All too often, schools can overcomplicate their priorities and development plans. If, however, we can challenge ourselves to remain focused on our core business – learning and teaching – our schools will collectively advance ever closer to the ultimate purpose of delivering engaging and meaningful experiences and positive outcomes for students every lesson, every time.



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

Readers can download a 10-part structural outline of the DRIVE programme, complete with planning templates and evaluation sheets via bit.ly/ts128-DRIVE

RULES OF THE ROAD

As part of the DRIVE programme, teaching staff will be expected to:

- ▶ Keep up to date with workshop evaluations and adjust their teaching methods accordingly
- ▶ Maintain ongoing professional learning logs to reflect on their development and growth
- ▶ Use 'commitment cards' as a tool to demonstrate their commitment to their own professional development
- ▶ Update their professional learning and development records to inform annual review meetings and set future goals

Faculties will meanwhile be encouraged to:

- ▶ Promote the use of DRIVE workshop strategies within their teams to ensure consistency and alignment in teaching practices
- ▶ Support and challenge each other to continually enhance teaching and learning practices
- ▶ Complete faculty DRIVE evaluation sheets to assess their progress and identify areas for improvement
- ▶ Consider pupil evaluations and regularly consult data to evaluate the impact of the teaching and learning strategies within their faculty

4 REASONS TO TRY... The Catch Up® Interventions

Comprehensive support training for staff with the capacity to really deliver when it comes to student outcomes

1 THE INTERVENTIONS

Catch Up® Literacy and Catch Up® Numeracy are structured one-to-one interventions proven to significantly improve the achievement of learners who find literacy or numeracy difficult. Both interventions are based on rigorous academic research and are easy to deliver, manage and sustain.



2 BENEFITS FOR STAFF AND STUDENTS

Achieve double the normal rate of progress in reading and number ages. Maximise the effectiveness of support staff through high quality intervention CPD training, while improving students' confidence, behaviour and engagement with the whole curriculum. Encourage learning

through success, with interventions targeted to individual needs.

3 THE TRAINING

Catch Up® provides online training and support for teaching assistants, tutors and teachers so that they can deliver proven one-to-one interventions. The training takes place over three

two-hour sessions and includes all initial training materials, guidance and proformas required for delivery and management, plus easily accessed ongoing support.

Contact:
catchup.org
training@catchup.org
 01842 668080

4 SCHOOLS FEEDBACK

"Very happy with the training and delivery... the supporting documents are excellent."
 "Excellent course which I feel will be of great benefit to our pupils."
 "I would highly recommend this course. It was well organised, with clear descriptions and lots of opportunities to ask questions."

At a glance

- Achieve double the normal rate of progress
- Maximise the effectiveness and confidence of support staff and tutors, who will be trained in delivering proven interventions
- Improve learners' confidence, behaviour, and engagement with the whole curriculum

ASK THE EXPERT

Not all classrooms have walls

Sarah Wood from Forestry England discusses the importance of learning outdoors and how to get started



1 BUILD THOSE CONNECTIONS

Getting young people outdoors, building their connections to nature and helping to develop their love for the natural environment will not only help them become more well-rounded adults, but also boost their engagement levels and encourage more active forms of learning. Nor are the benefits just confined to students – teachers engaging with outdoor learning say it's increased their job satisfaction, impacted positively on their health and helped improve their relationships with students.

provide your students with real life, hands-on experiences. Even if you can't access your local forest or green spaces, trees are all around us and can be a base for turning classroom theories and scientific enquiries into live experiments and avenues of exploration.

2 RIDE THE FEEL-GOOD FACTOR

Research shows that spending time in forests can improve our health and wellbeing – and that's even before you

3 PHASE IT IN GRADUALLY

We know that time constraints and a lack of flexibility can limit the amount of outdoor learning you can do. We suggest starting small and first familiarising yourselves with your spaces. Start with a 15-minute activity and build up from there. Take a classroom activity you're confident in delivering and adapt it for outdoor use, or take those noisy debates and role plays outside.

4 GET TRAINED

There are many training options that can help you become more confident at taking learning outside the classroom, ranging from short online or face-to-face beginner CPD sessions, to courses on specific skills, such as the use of hand tools. Once you're confident enough to venture further afield you can seek accreditation, such as the Level 2 Outdoor learning Practitioner and Forest School leader courses.

At a glance

- There's a wealth of existing resources out there ready for you to adapt
- We can share best practice and help to co-create new forest education resources
- Use our support to plan a visit to a suitable local woodland setting

Contact: forestryengland.uk/learning | learning.england@forestryengland.uk

A review of how statutory RHSE is being taught in schools may well prove helpful – but not if it's intended by certain people to achieve specific policy goals before it's even started...



Natasha Devon

When relationships, health and sex education was made compulsory in 2020, most people were pleased.

Of course, there were the usual (valid) objections about schools not having enough resources, or the mandated hours being shoehorned into form time. But it was at least an acknowledgment of how important it is that all young people have access to responsible information on relationships and sex.

In a world where more than half will have watched online pornography by the age of 12, many report first seeing it as young as 7, and where misogynistic influencers like Andrew Tate enjoy terrifying popularity, it's needed now more than ever.

Where delivered skilfully, it's already working. The teenagers I encounter have started discussing concepts I wasn't even peripherally aware of at their age, like consent, coercive control and gender fluidity.

Myths and misconceptions

Progress, however, inevitably sparks backlash. In March 2023, the Conservative MP Miriam Cates asked a question during PMQs in which she claimed that 'Graphic lessons in oral sex,' and 'how to choke your partner safely,' is 'what passes for sex and relationship education in British schools'. A review of RHSE was swiftly promised, but is – at least at the time of writing – still forthcoming.

The Education Secretary has, however, taken it upon herself to write to all schools twice in the interim, reminding them that parents have the right to advanced sight of RHSE lesson plans. She has also written to parents, encouraging them to remove

their child from said lessons if they find them inappropriate.

At a time when a deliberate moral hysteria around this subject has been whipped up in both traditional and social media, I fear that many of those parents will take her up on her offer.

"The problem is, they don't know what they're reviewing," one teacher told me. *"There are so many myths and misconceptions about what's actually in the curriculum, put out there by pressure groups who claim to be 'concerned'."*

Another told me they'd had to spend more than a week 'calming everything down' after a pupil asked a question about anal sex during an RHSE lesson. One of their peers relayed this to their parents, who then took to Facebook to complain.

This story plays into a concern I've repeatedly heard from school staff. How can you answer questions from students honestly, without getting yourself into trouble? After all, education is about meeting young people where they are, not where you wish they were.

It's common knowledge that tabloid journalists routinely trawl Facebook

looking for parental complaints. This particular saga could have easily ended with a series of pearl-clutching headlines about how the school was 'encouraging children to practice sodomy', or something equally ludicrous.

Moral panic

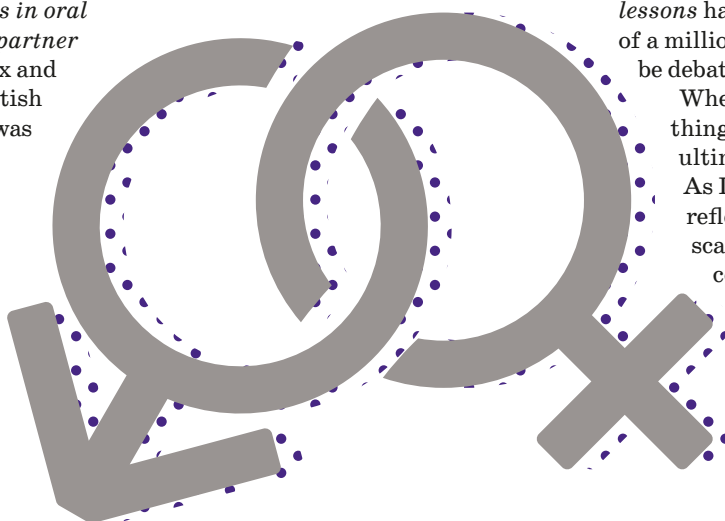
"Of course, this is all ultimately about the trans thing," one head of year told me, concerned that she'll now have to reorganise her meticulously planned roster of lessons once the results of the review are eventually published.

In recent years there have been relentless attacks in both media and politics on trans people. *The Daily Mail's* website alone has published some 1,600 overwhelmingly negative and sensationalist articles focusing on 'gender ideology' since December 2021.

This has inevitably increased hatred towards the entire LGBTQ+ community. As the 20-year anniversary of the repeal of Section 28 looms, us queer folk are finding it hard to celebrate. That's because a Parliamentary petition to remove *all mentions of queer people in school lessons* has gathered almost a quarter of a million signatures, and will hence be debated this autumn.

Whether taking on 'the trans thing' has always been the ultimate aim is open to dispute. As I heard one teacher recently reflect, "Maybe it's just about scaring us into not having these conversations at all and sticking to Shakespeare."

Well, good luck to anyone trying to understand Shakespeare without mentioning sex and relationships...



Natasha Devon is a writer, broadcaster and campaigner on issues relating to education and mental health; her YA novel *Babushka*, which explores consent, victim blaming and misogyny, is available now (UCLan Publishing, £8.99); to find out more, visit natashadevon.com



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THE TS GUIDE TO... OUTDOOR LEARNING

The classroom may be the cradle of your students' academic learning, but there are some lessons – about resilience, teamwork, friendship, empathy and themselves – that will hit home all the more when taught outside in the open air...

IN THIS SECTION

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Students will spend break times discovering social structures, empathy and themselves, notes Charlotte Lander – but are they learning the right lessons?

27 ALL CHILDREN DESERVE BREAKTHROUGH MOMENTS

Amid financial uncertainty, parents and schools may well withdraw from offering students memorable outdoor experiences – but as Anthony Jones explains, it doesn't have to be this way...

28 MEETING THAT EXTRA EXPENSE

Schools typically take pride in offering students and parents an array of trip options throughout the year – though as Nikki Cunningham-Smith finds out, this might be actively off-putting to some...



IN FIGURES:

WHAT TYPE OF VISITS DO SCHOOLS WANT – AND WHICH ARE } MOST POPULAR?

74.62%

of surveyed schools regularly organise residential trips of one or more nights

76.1%

of respondents considered the holding of workshops as being 'important' when deciding which attractions to visit

37.5%

stated that 'museums and art galleries' were the most popular trip destinations among their students (with 32.68% citing activity centres and 32.24% natural/outdoor attractions)

Source: School Trips & Learning Outside the Classroom Survey 2023 carried out by School Travel Organiser

3

TEACHWIRE
ARTICLES
FROM THE
ARCHIVES

WHY IT'S GOOD FOR YOUNG PEOPLE TO BE SCARED

Exposure to the controlled risks of outdoor adventure activities can do much to build students' resilience, says John Allan

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ADVICE FOR A TROUBLE-FREE TRIP

You may think that you've thoroughly prepared for that upcoming foreign excursion, but you can never be too careful, advises Daniel Harvey...

bit.ly/128special2

ROOM TO BREATHE

Rebecca Leek explores how you can lend an outdoor dimension to students' learning with the facilities and spaces you already have

bit.ly/128special3

The politics of play

Students will spend break times discovering social structures, empathy and themselves, notes **Charlotte Lander** – but are they learning the right lessons?

What is the purpose of break time?

What do schools want their pupils to gain?

The answers may vary, but most will likely fall within a functional, social or emotional bracket. Without even realising it, your pupils will be spending their break times developing complex skills of negotiation, resilience and cooperation.

These social experiences can often teach children and young people some of the biggest and toughest lessons of all. From the dreaded waits to be picked for a team, to the unforgiving hierarchies of social cliques or that anxiety-inducing decision to spend break with a new group of peers, the social structures of the playground are in a state of constant flux.

One thing that doesn't change, however, is our intrinsic need for social interaction. We are all wired to seek out social connections and a sense of belonging.

Psychologically together

A 2013 study by Butler & Walton (see bit.ly/ts128-OLBT1) examined the impact of feeling 'psychologically together', in an experiment whereby children completed a puzzle. The children taking part were told that an 'unfamiliar' child was working on the same puzzle as them elsewhere, but that they were 'essentially' completing it together.

Under two different control conditions, the children were either told that another child had already

worked on the puzzle weeks ago, or that they were taking turns in completing the puzzle there and then with another child in a different room. The results showed that children in the latter 'psychologically together' condition dedicated more time to completing the task compared to the children in the control groups, and also reported enjoying the task more.

“Peers often challenge and extend each other's thinking. Disagreements allow children to express their point of view”

From this, the researchers concluded that a sense of feeling 'psychologically together' could increase children's intrinsic motivation.

In the zone

Pupils thrive on routine. As educators, we understand that it's our job to ensure that every minute spent in our classrooms is time well used. Yet when it comes to break time, should this typically welcome pause in the regimentation of the school day be utilised for more than just a cognitive reset?

Break duty provides us with often useful and fascinating observations into the reality of our students' social context. We watch as huddles of peers excitedly fight to get their voices heard in the conversation, whilst others scramble at the football that's been itching

to escape from their backpack since registration. It's a rare opportunity in the school day for pupils to choose how they want to spend their time.

Yet for some, the sudden lack of structure can be overwhelming, a time of chaos and noise. Perhaps there is scope to broaden the options. For example, you could appoint 'student reps' who would have the

Values and socialisation

Nostalgic recollections of our school days will often centre on those times we spent outside the classroom with our friends. These would have been periods when we were blissfully unaware of the many implicit and explicit lessons we were learning – about ourselves, our peers and of the wider world around us.

The majority of students' time at school will be spent with their peers, so it's natural to question the 'social' lessons they learn through the behaviour and interactions that unfold around them. Pupils can sometimes find



themselves torn between the desire to individuate, whilst desperately seeking social approval – a balance that can, at times, feel impossible to achieve.

According to Rubin et al. (see bit.ly/ts128-OLBT2), classmates may be a significant source of influence on children's values and socialisation. Some of our earliest memories of what it's like to feel 'left out', or indeed what it's like to 'fit in' are determined by our daily exposure to choice and play in the playground.

A significant proportion of children's sustained conversations will be had in their social times over the course of the school day. Whether it's talk of the latest trends, news of developments in football or exchanging of novel slang and terminology, the

whirlwind of break time chatter encapsulates our ever changing society.

Parents can usually expect a non-committal shrug in the evenings in response to the traditional '*How was your day?*' query. It's the child's friends who'll be given the backstage pass to their lives.

Shared understanding

Peers often challenge and extend each other's thinking. Disagreements allow children to express their point of view. Prolonged debates give them opportunities to acknowledge differences in thought and opinion. Extended discussions regarding their friends' experiences enable children to develop empathy.

In many ways, children will co-construct a shared understanding of what's 'fair' and what's 'right'. As students pile out of the classroom and into the fresh air to reunite with familiar faces, they may well believe that they're escaping the bounds for learning. Yet as we know, the learning doesn't stop.

The social context in which children may feel most like themselves can often allow for unfiltered, expressive points of view; one where the focus isn't on getting answers 'right', but rather on belonging to a group. It's a time and a place where pupils can switch off from being a 'student' and get stuck into the business of being a friend.

Children are ultimately shaped by their experiences, and it's important to recognise that those taking place outside the classroom just as fundamental to their personal growth. During lessons, children will be surrounded by their peers, problem solving and sharing their ideas. Social times allow for those relationships to be further invested in and enriched – in a sense, making the context of the playground a vital stepping stone towards the realities

of what their social lives will be like beyond school.

SO WHAT IS BREAK TIME FOR?

- Ask your students to consider the questions 'What is the purpose of break time?' and 'What do you gain from this time?'
- Prompting them to consider what their break time means may spark discussion that can feed into new, creative ideas for play and activities that they're yet to explore
- It may be time to redefine what 'break time' is at its core, and consider the possibility that children, like adults, may need time away from their work in a different context (such as a 'quiet zone') rather than traditional spaces (playgrounds, playing fields)

Each day, your pupils are gaining ever more self-awareness – about what causes them to feel left out, what excites them, how it feels to have their peers cheering them on, the situations that leave them feeling unsettled. Having the freedom of play enables children to draw links between their context and their emotions – a fundamental level of awareness that even many adults are still trying to finesse...



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Charlotte Lander is a teacher of English and psychology, and specialist in Talk for Learning



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LIVE! is the perfect platform to enhance your students' existing subject knowledge and breathe new life into their exam topics. By linking the curriculum with the real world, your students will achieve core learning objectives that prepare them for both their future studies and the professional workplace.

ON-SITE SUPPORT

Our educational conferences are expertly managed by our in-house events team, ensuring a fantastic experience for you and your students. Said teams will remain on-site for the duration of every event, thus guaranteeing an amazing educational journey.

All children deserve breakthrough moments

Amid financial uncertainty, parents and schools may well withdraw from offering students memorable outdoor experiences – but as Anthony Jones explains, it doesn't have to be this way...

Self-esteem is a vital step towards achieving potential. It's the bridge between the essential and the possible – what every child needs to thrive.

However, I'm conscious that the cost-of-living crisis is impacting schools hugely, and that the definition of 'needs' is in danger of reverting back to the basic requirements for learning. Yet my concern is that enrichment opportunities are being deprioritised, causing young people to miss out in what's a challenging period.

Outdoor education

Self-esteem is built in every classroom every day, of course – but there are some things that can't be taught within those walls, which often prove to be those experiences that will stay with children forever.

One man who understood this was Peter Gordon Lawrence. After leaving college in 1955, he embarked on a canoeing holiday down the River Danube. The experience was transformative, prompting him two years later to set up a company arranging trips for young adults down the UK's River Wye.

By the time of Peter's passing in 2004, that company, PGL, had grown to provide

similar opportunities for children across the country, enabling several generations to benefit from their initial experiences of overcoming challenges in the great outdoors and staying away from home for the first time.

Every week, I witness children discovering their self-esteem at PGL centres across the UK and France – be it overcoming their fears on a high rope, building a raft that floats or conquering the Jacob's ladder with their classmates.

Listening to teachers and parents

Bonds forged outdoors empower children with the self-belief needed to tackle academic challenges at school. Peter believed, as I do, that *every* child and young person should get to benefit from such experiences – not just those whose parents can afford the cost of the trip.

Three years on from the global pandemic denying many schoolchildren such wonderful opportunities, however, the cost-of-living crisis is now deepening the social divide

between children whose families can afford enrichment experiences and those who can't. This is something we have to address.

Research we conducted with teachers in February this year revealed that those schools with the highest levels of Pupil Premium were spending more of their funding on meal provision and other essentials, making them less able to provide opportunities for outdoor learning.

"These trips are vital for social, emotional and character-building, and gaining independence for our pupils," one teacher told us, "yet finance is a huge barrier to providing amazing experiences."

Around the same time, we at PGL undertook a review of our curriculum in light of recently issued Ofsted guidance on character building and in the wake of the pandemic. What became very clear to us, based on our conversations with teachers and parents, was that the opportunities we provide remain valuable to all children and young people at every stage of their education.

Designed for life

This research resulted in the launch of two initiatives. The first is PGL's new education framework, REACH, which is structured to deliver different learning outcomes at each stage of a child's development, through to Y11. Whilst children in primary school can

benefit from trying new experiences and bonding as a group, activities for secondary school pupils should be geared towards the development of more complex communication skills and the building of confidence, wellbeing and resilience.

Put simply, we recognise that needs differ from age group to age group, and even between different stages throughout the academic year. Our programmes are led by the outcomes teachers tell us that they need for their pupils.

The second initiative is The Breakthrough Fund, designed to give more schoolchildren across the UK the chance to experience those breakthrough moments on residential outdoor learning trips, irrespective of their financial situation.

Different forms of funding support can be offered, depending on the level of need. For schools with high levels of need, 50% of the total trip cost will be funded by PGL. Where there's less overall need for financial support across the student population, we'll provide a range of funding options to ensure that those children who do require support can experience the same opportunities as their classmates. For schools with the highest levels of need, we're even offering a number of fully funded trips each year! To find out more and register your interest, visit pgl.co.uk.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Anthony Jones is the CEO of PGL



Meeting that EXTRA EXPENSE

Schools typically take pride in offering an array of trip options throughout the year, but that may ring alarm bells for some parents, says **Nikki Cunningham-Smith**

Having been in teaching for the best part of two decades across a multitude of disciplines – from support staff, to TA, to SENCo and then leadership – I really thought I’d seen and done it all.

Until last year, when I received an email from my LA. This wasn’t especially unusual in my professional capacity, since I’ve often worked closely with them on preventing permanent exclusions. But this email was personal. It was a reminder that since my child was born at a certain time, I should be aware that she was now falling into the bracket of ‘school-age child’.

As such, there was now a national deadline by which I needed to make the single most important decision of her three short years on the planet, and select the school we’d be hoping for her to attend – and thus align her trajectory for the rest of her life.

That’s right. Her chance to access Oxbridge, or become the first female Prime Minister of colour started here.

Counting the cost

I was suddenly thrown into that world where the conversation at children’s parties changed from growth spurts and potty training to what phonics schemes the local schools did, and the wraparound care options that could support our working parent schedules.

I really thought I’d covered every aspect of what was important for my daughter’s

next steps – the curriculum, the environment, the EYFS outdoor learning space, the distance from our house, the uniform. Until one day, when I bumped into someone I used to sit with at a baby group, before our children formed their own social circles and our paths stopped crossing as much. She mentioned how she’d been looking at the local schools in terms of their *affordability*.

Whilst this had been factored into my ‘next steps’ list, it wasn’t an especially high priority. After all, once my daughter started

A parental stressor

According to figures from Gingerbread, a national charity supporting one parent families, lone parent families are five times as likely to have an income of less than £200 per week, making it very difficult for them to cover the cost of school trips. As we ran through the school options we’d been looking at, her response to one of them was, “*Oh, they have too many school trips there.*”

As educators, we’re usually conscientious of the need to make school trips

both affordable and relatively infrequent, ensuring that we only organise them if we can justify how they’re going to support and enhance our pupils’ learning. But until that moment, it had never occurred to me that they could be a *parental stressor*.

Sure, there might be grander trips abroad that you may simply miss out on if you can’t afford them, but now I was seeing school trips of all kinds from a wider perspective. For the first time, I could see it wasn’t a question of parents not wanting to engage, but of the acute pressure they would likely feel if they couldn’t.

Before this, I’d only ever seen our frequency of trips and the opportunities they offered as a net positive, rather than a potential

“Implement a supportive process that lets parents feel confident in reaching out for support”

attending school, any costs would be considerably lower compared to the nursery fees we’d been paying. But for my baby group friend, living as she did in a single-income household while keeping her son at home with her, the impending rise in outgoings was a daunting prospect.

Her concerns sat beyond the uniform costs I’d thought of, and extended to school trips.



barrier to parents otherwise interested in sending their child to our school.

The cost-of-living crisis can't help but loom large in these kinds of conversations, and it's not likely to be going away any time soon. One demographic it hits particularly hard are, of course, parents of nursery and school-age children. The National Foundation for Educational Research recently found that over the past year, there have been significant increases in the numbers of pupils requiring additional welfare and financial support, simply to access basic learning, social and extracurricular provision (see bit.ly/ts128-STC1).

As you'd expect, the financial pressures are greatest in special schools and the most disadvantaged mainstream schools. Special school senior leaders are reporting especially high increases in need for pupil welfare support (from 28% to 36%) and financial support (33% to 43%) over the last year.

Spikes in support

The strains that households are now under when paying household bills, combined with food costs soaring to their highest point in 45 years, plus the impact of rising interest rates on mortgage repayments and rents, has resulted in households everywhere having far less disposable income.

Many more households hence have less in the way of savings, and are increasingly living pay cheque to pay cheque, affording little wriggle room for unexpected expenses. (Though one thing that hasn't changed is the threshold for Pupil Premium in light of these developments, in a way that might enable more families to become eligible for it).

Because it's not just children currently eligible for Pupil Premium who are receiving extra support. In 63% of secondary schools, leaders report that just over half of those pupils receiving additional support from their school weren't PP-eligible. The same could be

said for around 42% of special schools, suggesting that the current eligibility criteria for free school meals may be too restrictive.

One parent of a SEN child once highlighted to me how difficult it can be to access trips due to the additional costs incurred from having a pupil on the SEND register, which other parents and teaching staff may not realise. The example she gave me of having to buy three sets of ear defenders priced at £30 each at the start of a school year is one such cost that not all parents will face.

Another parent told me how she had previously tried to keep her daughter off school in the week leading up to one trip, specifically so that she'd miss the building buzz and excitement, and hence not know the extent to which she'd be missing out because the parent couldn't afford to pay.

In a post-pandemic climate, where pupil attendance is still giving us significant causes for concern, how can we tackle these anxieties that seem so closely associated with paying for school trips?

Parental finances

One thing we can do is provide parents with clear timetables at the start of the academic year that record proposed trips and upcoming costs, to help with parents' budgeting. If your capacity extends to it, you could even look into setting up financial literacy support sessions for any parents needing to improve their ability at budgeting successfully.

Where possible, look to provide a monthly payment system, whereby parents regularly deposit small sums in a dedicated account, before then making withdrawals once a trip has been arranged.

There's scope to subsidise the trips themselves using Pupil Premium and/or SEND funding, or you can

SUPPORT FOR PARENTS

- ▶ Consider helping parents access financial literacy workshops from a local support organisation, or potentially by providing them yourself in after-school sessions
- ▶ Ensure that parents feel able to inform you in the event of financial concerns or shocks that might be affecting them and their families
- ▶ Engage with charities that might be able to offer financial support to struggling families and pass on any useful advice or guidance
- ▶ Some LAs can provide support with additional school expenses in 'exceptional circumstances'

approach your PTA about supporting funded places.

A good way of getting parents to engage can be to research any local financial support organisations and share details of these in your school newsletters and parental forums

The onus is on schools to embed these kinds of practices into their daily routines. If a school can demonstrate that their parents' financial status is an area they're sensitive to, this will help build a sense of openness. Because we all want schools to be places where no child need miss out on exceptional learning experiences – whatever their socioeconomic status.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Nikki Cunningham-Smith is an assistant headteacher based in Gloucestershire



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ASK THE EXPERT

“Our trips adapt according to age and ability”

NST's head History Subject Expert, Alana Britton, explains how accompanied study trips bring history to life in enlightening ways...

What is an NST Subject Expert?

An NST History Subject Expert is an experienced educator who provides context and detailed subject-specific knowledge for students on NST's history trips, which are tailored for the individual needs of the group. Our History Subject Experts are available in numerous destinations and knowledgeable in a variety of topics, from Irish history and The Third Reich, to The Cold War, The Holocaust, WWI and WWII.

Why would you recommend a History Subject Expert?

A Subject Expert can make all the difference between merely visiting a location, and having a learning experience at the location. As well as helping to give teachers time to reflect, the group leader can benefit from the Subject Expert's local knowledge.

A History Subject Expert can really bring places to life – one of the key reasons for touring a historical site – and help enhance students' understanding by making history more relatable for them.

What are the benefits to taking an accompanied history trip?

Our accompanied history trips provide valuable support to teachers.

Our expert team is on hand to help plan tailor-made itineraries that suit the individual needs of different groups – and with our Subject Experts able to take pressure off teachers during the tours themselves and adapt quickly to unforeseen situations, teachers can focus more on their students and on making the trip more enjoyable.



EXPERT PROFILE

NAME:

Alana Britton

JOB TITLE:

NST's head History Subject Expert

AREA OF EXPERTISE:

WWI Battlefields

BEST PART OF MY JOB:

The wonder I see in students' eyes when they walk in the footsteps of people from history

What learning styles do you use to make the trip memorable?

We utilise different questioning techniques, which helps to engage the students by making them part of the trip. We also demonstrate the use of artefacts. For example, on a recent Battlefields trip we gave students the opportunity to try on uniforms and interact with a range of WWI artefacts. By combining visual stimulus and providing openings for interaction and exposition, we can cater to all learning styles and adapt according to age and ability.

What preparation goes into a personalised trip to match learning objectives?

Our educational travel experts will first commence discussions between the teacher and Subject Expert to establish the school's desired outcomes. This is based around linking the content to specific examination board requirements, the students' prior knowledge and current working level, and any other focus the group would like. NST can adapt to any requests, and most importantly, will listen to the needs of the Group Leader, so that they and their students will get the most out of the experience.

ASK ME ABOUT

OUR DESTINATIONS – Find out about the wide range of locations where our accompanied study tours take place

ONE-TO-ONE LEARNING – Discover how, with an NST Subject Expert leading the group, you'll be able to provide students with individual tuition

WHAT SUBJECT EXPERTS CAN DO – Find out how your expert will be with you to provide both local knowledge and educational support

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teach SECONDARY AWARDS 2023

LET'S HEAR IT FOR THE WINNERS...

Which education products and services successfully wowed our judges this year and why? It's time to find out, as we announce the winners of the 2023 Teach Secondary Awards...

Being a teacher can be hugely rewarding, but also enormously challenging. For all the joy to be had in guiding students through a tricky topic and having them emerge from the other side more informed than before, there's the time management involved in delivering lessons that never seem quite long enough, the complex business of assessment and the multifarious demands of the students themselves – behavioural, academic, social and everything in between.

Enter the education industry. If you need help with unpacking that thorny, yet vital curriculum topic, making your classroom delivery more dynamic or monitoring your students' wellbeing, there's an army of product and service providers out there, ready to meet your every need.

Yet while it's good to have an extensive range of options to choose from, it can also be overwhelming. Which specialists are genuinely good at what they do, and can anyone vouch for what they have to offer?

Over the next seven pages we hope to at least begin answering those last two questions. The products and services that work best for you may depend on all manner of school-specific factors – but you can at least be assured that the providers highlighted here all come highly recommended.

HOW IT WORKED

We invited companies and individuals providing education resources to enter one or more of their products and/or services for the 2023 Teach Secondary Awards. After assessing the entries received, we produced a series of shortlists – one for each of our 7 categories – and passed these to our panel of expert judges, who proceeded to examine the merits of each entry.

While the specific judging criteria differed according to category, areas that all judges were tasked with looking at included the following:

- ▶ Does this resource meet a genuine need?
- ▶ What impact will it have?
- ▶ How easy is it to implement and use?
- ▶ Can the resource be adapted for use in different situations and settings?
- ▶ Does the resource represent good value for money?

Our judges then confirmed for us their overall category winner, alongside a second and third place entry they saw as being worthy of 'highly commended' accolades.

MEET THE JUDGES



EDTECH & SOFTWARE

ROB WRAITH

is head of learning, technology and digital learning at NCG



ASSESSMENT

ED CARLIN

is a deputy headteacher at a Scottish secondary school, having previously held teaching roles at schools in Northern Ireland and England



CPD

DR CHRIS BAKER

is leader of professional development at Cabot Learning Federation



CURRICULUM IMPROVEMENT

NIKKI CUNNINGHAM-SMITH

is an assistant headteacher based in Gloucestershire



FREE RESOURCE

HANNAH DAY

is head of art, media and film at Ludlow College



HEALTH AND WELLBEING

ANN MARIE CHRISTIAN

is a safeguarding and child protection consultant, trainer, author and troubleshooter



SEND

REBECCA LEEK

is an experienced school leader and former SENCo, as well as a regular education trainer, speaker and writer

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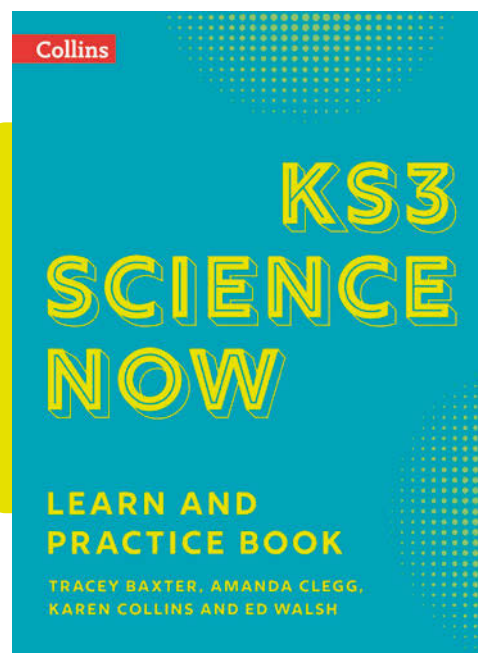


WINNERS

CURRICULUM IMPACT

WHAT WERE WE
LOOKING FOR?

Resources that will support the ways in which a particular subject can be taught, and/or boost students' progress in that subject



teach
SECONDARY
AWARDS 2023
WINNER

KS3 SCIENCE NOW

Collins

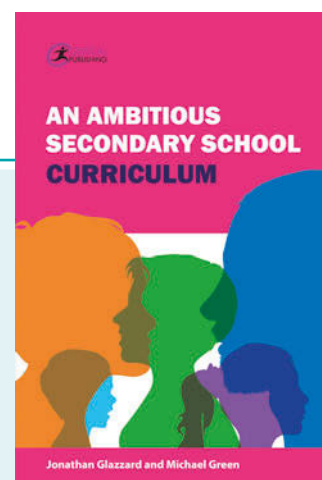
collins.co.uk/pages/ks3-science-now

"The KS3 Science Now 'Learn and Practice' book is a great resource, providing challenge and engagement - though I would love to also see some adaptability beyond misconception and response to pull in lower ability KS3 pupils." - Nikki Cunningham-Smith

AN AMBITIOUS SECONDARY SCHOOL
CURRICULUMJonathan Glazzard and Michael Green
(Critical Publishing)
bit.ly/ts128-TSA1

"A book that's both a great challenge to, and form of support for any teachers' pedagogy across pretty much any subject - no matter what stage of their career they're at." - Nikki Cunningham-Smith

teach
SECONDARY
AWARDS 2023
HIGHLY
COMMENDED 2nd



teach
SECONDARY
AWARDS 2023
HIGHLY
COMMENDED 3rd

RETEACH

Reteach
reteach.org.uk

"A fully-loaded history and geography resource that ticks many boxes, offering a range of digital material from interesting perspectives, and teaching options to help support curriculum engagement." - Nikki Cunningham-Smith

teach
SECONDARY
AWARDS 2023
FINALIST

CATEGORY
FINALISTS:

FRECKLE

Renaissance Learning

KNOWHOW:
FIELDWORK
COMPLETE
SERIES SETThe Geographical
AssociationOXFORD SMART
CURRICULUM

Oxford University Press



teach
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AWARDS 2023
WINNER



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LanguageLink

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The Speech and Language Link
whole school approach

WINNERS

SEND

WHAT WERE WE LOOKING FOR?

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



teach
SECONDARY
AWARDS 2023
WINNER

KAZ TOUCH TYPING SOFTWARE VI AND BLIND EDITION

KAZ Type Limited
kaz-type.com

"This is a product that does what it says it does really well. Adaptations have been well-researched, and it will make a difference to so many learners, as it's an accessible tool that enables students to develop an invaluable life skill. It's good value for money, and has been sensitively developed over time, with due consideration paid to different learners' needs."

- Rebecca Leek

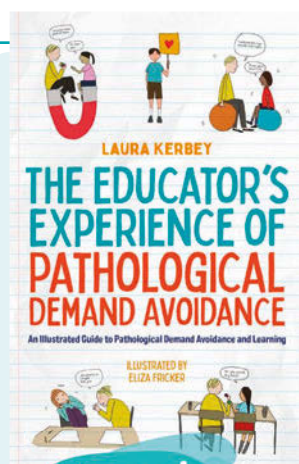
DYSLEXIA AND LITERACY CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT UNITS

Dyslexia Action
bit.ly/ts128-TSA2

"This training is well-structured and very comprehensive - you get a lot of content for a relatively small investment. There's a clear commitment to ensuring that it's up-to-date, it's neuro-affirmative and enables the learner to work through the material in a reflective way. The study guide also contains information on how to seek reasonable adjustments as a learner."

- Rebecca Leek

teach
SECONDARY
AWARDS 2023
HIGHLY COMMENDED 2nd



teach
SECONDARY
AWARDS 2023
HIGHLY COMMENDED 3rd

THE EDUCATOR'S EXPERIENCE OF PATHOLOGICAL DEMAND AVOIDANCE

Laura Kerbey with Eliza Fricker
(Jessica Kingsley Publishers)
bit.ly/ts128-TSA3

"This book is a valuable addition to the resources we have on PDA, and will be of great help to educators who are new to PDA. The writing is digestible, which combined with the format's 'on point' illustrations, makes for a very enjoyable and insightful read. The book contains helpful scenarios and practical strategies, enabling readers to come away with a deep understanding of PDA, as well as the beginnings of a toolkit they can try using in the classroom and in their teaching."

- Rebecca Leek

teach
SECONDARY
AWARDS 2023
FINALIST

CATEGORY FINALISTS:

ISLANDS

Across Cultures

SECONDARY LANGUAGE LINK

Speech and Language Link

INDEPENDENT THINKING ON BEING A SENDCO

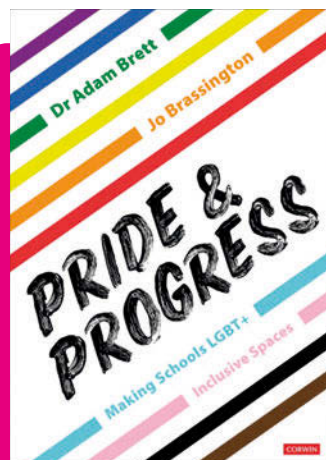
Ginny Bootman (Crown House Publishing)

WINNERS

HEALTH & WELLBEING

WHAT WERE WE LOOKING FOR?

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



teach
SECONDARY
AWARDS 2023
WINNER

PRIDE AND PROGRESS: MAKING SCHOOLS LGBT+ INCLUSIVE SPACES

Dr Adam Brett Jo Brassington (SAGE Publishing)
bit.ly/ts128-TSA4

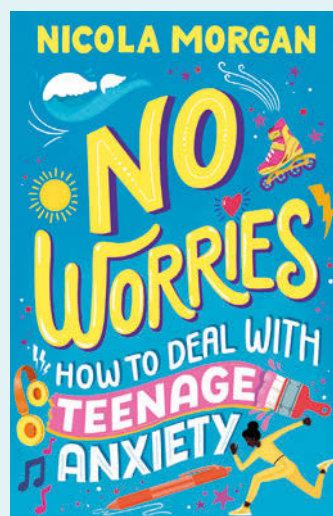
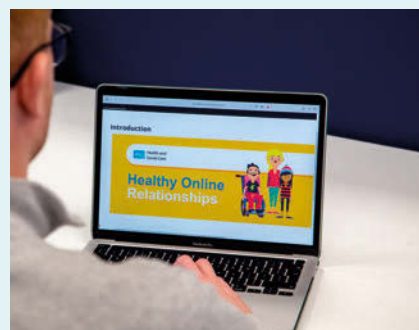
"A very topical book for schools, and useful for understanding the needs of LGBTQIA+ children and young people. It explores themes that can educate staff on how to create a more inclusive and safe environment, so that students can thrive in educational establishments. It's well-written and accessible, allowing all types of readers to put its advice into practice." – Ann Marie Christian

HEALTHY ONLINE RELATIONSHIPS E-LEARNING COURSE

INEQE Safeguarding Group
ineqe.com

teach
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AWARDS 2023
HIGHLY COMMENDED 2nd

"Online abuse remains an ongoing and difficult challenge for schools and stakeholders. This course is very child-centred, and effectively delivered in a manner that's both engaging and non-judgemental. It utilises various forms of interaction – including video clips, learning moments when users submit wrong answers and short tests required to pass each module – and participants receive a certificate at the end." – Ann Marie Christian



teach
SECONDARY
AWARDS 2023
HIGHLY COMMENDED 3rd

NO WORRIES: HOW TO DEAL WITH TEENAGE ANXIETY

Nicola Morgan (Walker Books)
bit.ly/ts128-TSA5

"Children and young people's anxiety levels remain very high across the country, not least due to the after-effects of the COVID pandemic. This book is an easy read, containing lots of practical tips and exercises for readers to complete. The theories and science used to explain what happens to the body as we grow and mature are appropriately child-centred and suitably accessible." – Ann Marie Christian

teach
SECONDARY
AWARDS 2023
FINALIST

CATEGORY FINALISTS:

SELF-WORTH IN CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Rachel Burr
(Critical Publishing)

SATCHEL PULSE

Satchel

THE MINDFUL TEACHER'S HANDBOOK

Kamalagita Hughes
(Crown House Publishing)

WINNERS ASSESSMENT

WHAT WERE WE LOOKING FOR?

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



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SAM LEARNING

SAM Learning
samlearning.com

"A fantastic resource and a really user-friendly platform that meets many assessment

needs. The activities are great, and the individual subject scores with identifiable targets are quick and easy to use. I also really like the 'set tasks'

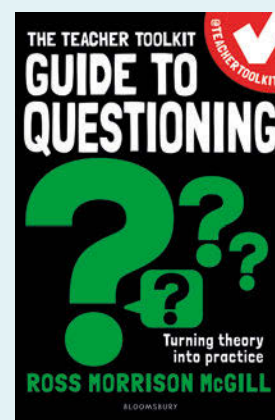
feature that helps pupils to organise their focus areas. There's plenty of scope for sharing data with parents, the system can be adapted to suit different settings and pupils get to keep their own unique records of completed activities and scores." – Ed Carlin

THE TEACHER TOOLKIT GUIDE TO QUESTIONING

Ross Morrison McGill (Bloomsbury Publishing)
bit.ly/ts128-TSA6

"This was right up my street! I really enjoyed the format of this book, and will use it to shape some of my school's CLPL plan. The text isn't overcomplicated, but a good foundation to work from. I'd recommend it as the basis for a school L&T programme, which is something I've been working on in recent years, and have found it's already helped to shape my own thinking. Sharing the book's advice with colleagues will no doubt prompt professional dialogue and bespoke changes, based on school priorities and development areas." – Ed Carlin

teach
SECONDARY
AWARDS 2023
HIGHLY
COMMENDED 2nd



teach
SECONDARY
AWARDS 2023
HIGHLY
COMMENDED 3rd

THE CAMBRIDGE WELLBEING CHECK

Centre for Evaluation and Monitoring
bit.ly/ts128-TSA7

"This online wellbeing evaluation tool addresses what schools are currently finding is an essential need. It comes across as a reliable resource for gathering key data regarding individuals' and cohorts' health and wellbeing, the use of which could be easily built into tutor time sessions or RSHE lessons, and there's an easy to use report function." – Ed Carlin

teach
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AWARDS 2023
FINALIST

CATEGORY FINALISTS:

OXFORD SMART
ACTIVATE

Oxford University Press

BEDROCK
LEARNING

Bedrock Learning

COLLINS ADAPT

Collins

GCSE, IGCSE & A level

COMPUTER SCIENCE

THEORY VIDEOS & RESOURCES



youtube.com/craigndave

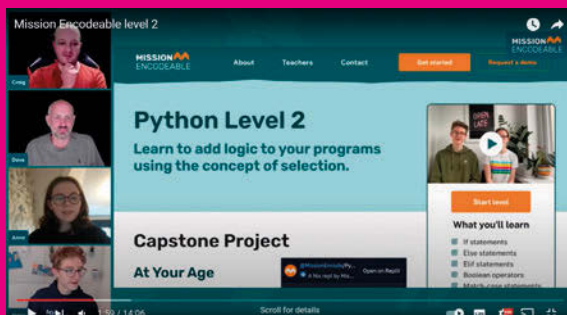
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WINNERS FREE RESOURCE

WHAT WERE WE LOOKING FOR?

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



would certainly be helpful for new teachers, or other subject specialists who might have recently moved into computer science teaching to fill recruitment gaps.” – Hannah Day

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AWARDS 2023
WINNER

CRAIG'N'DAVE YOUTUBE CHANNEL

Craig'n'Dave
youtube.com/@craigndave

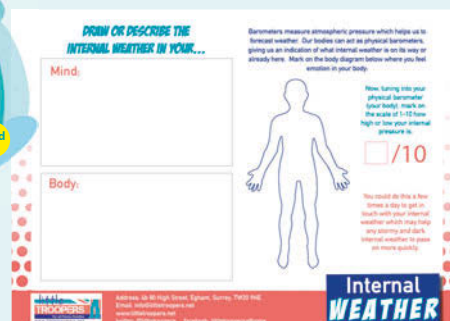
“Simple and easy to use guidance videos for computer studies teachers. The clear, well-structured instructions are matched to clear graphics, and the videos proceed at a steady pace so that they can be easily followed. They

LITTLE TROOPERS AT SCHOOL TEEN TOOLBOX

Little Troopers
littletroopers.net

“A package of three different resources to help support the children of service people. The Military Child Wellbeing Course template provides in-depth, tailored support for this particular student niche, while the SQUAD podcast is an accessible media offering that features voices from a range of young people, making it both age-appropriate and relevant. Finally, there are materials for setting up a Forces Life Club at your school. The resources are all well laid out, cover carefully considered topics and thus meet a very real need.” – Hannah Day

teach
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AWARDS 2023
HIGHLY COMMENDED
2nd



BBC BITESIZE GCSE REVISION PODCASTS

BBC Education
bbc.in/45PkbWc

“As a visual person, I found some of these audio podcasts hard to follow – during a discussion about cells in a science revision podcast, for example, I could have done with a diagram – but with so many different resources available from the BBC Bitesize website, you can find the one that suits you (and perhaps find videos that work well as multi-layered resources). Otherwise, the site is very easy to navigate – from finding resources, to selecting certain topics within each subject, and when using the resources themselves.” – Hannah Day

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SECONDARY
AWARDS 2023
HIGHLY COMMENDED
3rd

teach
SECONDARY
AWARDS 2023
FINALIST

CATEGORY FINALISTS:

ENGLISH-
UKRAINIAN
EBOOKS

Badger Learning

STUDIO YOU

Hopscotch Consulting

NEETO

Satchel



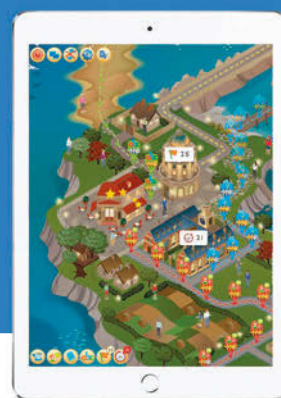
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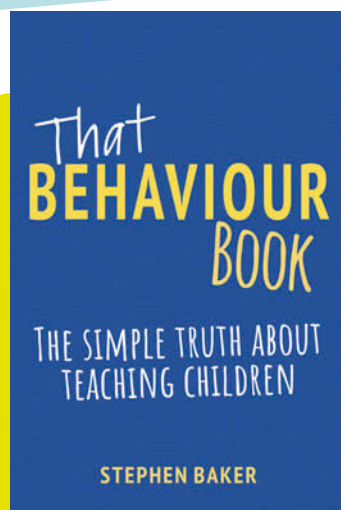
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THAT BEHAVIOUR BOOK

Stephen Baker (Crown House Publishing)
crownhouse.co.uk/that-behaviour-book

"A fantastically readable book, balancing theory with anecdotes and a welcome hint of humour. That Behaviour Book is full of useful advice that has the power to drive reflection and instantly improve practice. It's not written for any particular context or expertise level, and so acts as both a great intro for new teachers and a useful reminder for those with more experience. The structure allows readers to dip in and out of sections, while the useful 'Take away' and 'Now try this' sections support learning and deliberate practice." – Chris Baker

WHAT WERE WE LOOKING FOR?

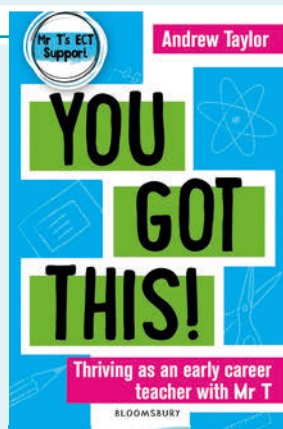
Training materials, software, books and other resources intended to enhance teachers' professional development

BLUESKY LEARNING

BlueSky Education

"People are increasingly seeking opportunities for high quality self-study, and the Blue Sky Learning system definitely provides this, with users given access to a wide range of expertly delivered resources. The real power of the system is in its flexibility – the sheer variety of videos and activities on offer means that there's the potential for impact across a wide range of different roles and experience levels. The system does a great job of organising videos into categories, and then providing tasters so that users can make the right choices before deepening their understanding via high-quality videos and reflective activities." – Chris Baker

teach
SECONDARY
AWARDS 2023
HIGHLY COMMENDED 2nd



teach
SECONDARY
AWARDS 2023
HIGHLY COMMENDED 3rd

YOU GOT THIS

Andrew Taylor (Bloomsbury Publishing)
bit.ly/ts128-TSA8

"Mr T's book would be a great addition to any ECT support programme. You Got This is beautifully set out, with great uses of images, headings, and useful sections, such as 'Daily tips', 'Coaching moments' and key take aways. The positive ethos of the book as a whole, and practicality of the advice means that it will no doubt have an impact on staff wellbeing, in addition to expertise. The book balances advice for ECTs across all phases, and the content is of such high quality that I'm sure even those of us beyond ECT could learn a thing or two." – Chris Baker

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FINALIST

CATEGORY FINALISTS: SECONDARY CPD PACK: CURRICULUM SEQUENCING IN GEOGRAPHY

The Geographical Association

REFLECTIVE SUPERVISION IN EDUCATION

Hollie Edwards (Jessica Kingsley Publishers)

TEACHER TARGETED BULLYING (E-LEARNING COURSE)

INEQE Safeguarding Group

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EDTECH & SOFTWARE

WHAT WERE WE LOOKING FOR?

Devices and software able to support learning, including mobile apps serving as resources in themselves, or as interfaces for other platforms



Hi!

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Ascent Information Technology Ltd.
huehd.com/pro

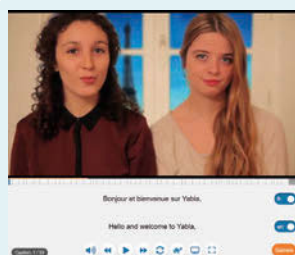
"This portable camera is easy to set up, with its flexible neck able to present anything shown on a screen or recorded as part of a webinar. It could be potentially used to capture demonstrations or experiments performed on a desk at the front of the class while being presented on a larger screen for students to observe. There are alternative cameras available, but none quite as accessible or as versatile as this one. It also provides significant value, owing to its portability, which could encourage some innovative teaching strategies. One possible application could be to record live demonstrations or classroom activities for later review and analysis." – Rob Wraith

G-TOUCH INTERACTIVE DISPLAY

genee-group.com

"This 75-inch display contains some excellent features to support teaching, learning and assessment within the classroom. Classwork can be shared with the screen via the entering of a QR Code, and completed there and then using an 'infinite' or 'split' canvas setting, both of which could be very useful for collaborative interactive sessions. Other features include an onboard protractor and compass for maths lessons, plus a 'classroom vote' facility to help with interactive whole class activities. One unique addition is its built-in automatic recording, meaning users can share a session previously delivered through the screen – including use of any external media or camera hardware – for reviews, recaps or catch-up for those unable to attend in person." – Rob Wraith

teach
SECONDARY
AWARDS 2023
HIGHLY COMMENDED
2nd



YABLA

Yabla inc.
yabla.com

"Yabla could well have an impact on how schools teach, improving practice both in class and at home. It's noteworthy for having the

flexibility and functionality to let users practice both verbal and written MFL skills via its online platform. Yabla also allows for some adjustment to suit certain ability levels and other needs within your setting, but is ultimately designed with a specific curriculum area in mind, and will deliver little support in academic areas outside of MFL." – Rob Wraith

teach
SECONDARY
AWARDS 2023
HIGHLY COMMENDED
3rd

teach
SECONDARY
AWARDS 2023
FINALIST

CATEGORY FINALISTS:

RADIX TEACHERVIEW
Radix

EARMASER
EarMaster

CLASSROOM.CLOUD
NetSupport

Call in the ‘experts’

Daniel Harvey looks at how to go about obtaining genuinely useful external advice that can help your school progress

I’ve been teaching for over 30 years, and am old enough to remember that moment in the early 80s when noted British actor and screenwriter Colin Welland clasped the Oscar he’d won for *Chariots of Fire* and chanted, “*The British are coming! The British are coming!*” The Americans politely applauded.

When staffrooms and subject teams are told ‘*The experts are coming!*’ – whether to lead on CPD, or INSET or anything else – there tends to be a range of different reactions, emotions and feelings. My own teaching experience is littered with appalling events which at best, turned out to be a complete waste of everyone’s time, and at worst, resulted in chaotic thinking and vague practices that otherwise capable educators were made to implement.

“Amazing and inspiring”

Allow me to present three of the very worst expert-led sessions I’ve encountered in my time, which, as Kylie might put it, I just can’t get out of my head.

Let’s start with the external behaviour expert who once presented at our first INSET of the year. This person had been giving what turned out to be the same, identical three-hour presentation on the back of a steady-selling, yet contentious book to a range of primary *and* secondary schools, all of whom had radically different visions for their behaviour policies and wildly divergent needs. As

you might expect, the tasks presented to our staff thoroughly failed to effectively address the behaviour issues we had in our school, and the subsequent staff feedback was *not good*.

At another INSET day, an external presenter (who in hindsight, was perhaps less of an expert than they had made out) guided us through detailed work that he had researched and prepared for a completely different school to ours – right down to highly specific reflections for

‘*amazing and inspiring*’ and would ‘*go down really well*’ with our staff.

As it turned out, this former headteacher told some funny jokes, was clearly a seasoned public speaker and told us about some evidently impressive work that he’d been doing at his school.

However, my colleagues ultimately spent four hours listening to a very nice ex-head before all going back

“It was long, slow and ultimately a waste of six hours that could have been spent on real work”

this other setting, the relevance and importance of which he was evidently trying to bluff.

It was long, slow and ultimately a waste of six hours that could have been spent on real work leading to improved student outcomes and attitudes. The final part was so bad there were loud mutterings from staff, resulting in a tricky end to a difficult day.

Finally, there was the school leader who had previously seen an inspiring presentation from a well-known secondary headteacher, which had been



to focusing/worrying on the serious issues facing our school – though we did receive a signed copy of his book.

What to avoid

Middle leaders and school leaders must be alert when choosing an expert speaker to present to staff. I have a friend who describes some educator consultants as ‘surfing the zeitgeist’ – selling their wares (often a book), presenting the latest ideas and/or recycling others’ thinking and work.

The prominence of certain social media accounts can sometimes blindside school leaders into choosing speakers who, in reality, simply aren’t the people those social media presences make them out to be. Leaders need to check that a speaker’s grasp and understanding of the relevant research is always solid, rather than tenuous.

The examples outlined above all demonstrate the issues can arise from a fundamental failure to communicate. These events were all planned without anyone specifying exactly what the outcomes should be, what staff would do and work on, and how that work could be developed into effective practice.

In the worst example, the event took place simply so that *time would be occupied*. All further failed because school leaders didn’t plan the session in conjunction with the external consultant. The onus for successful school CPD is on leaders to make it work.

What to do

Schools will work hard to produce improvement plans for addressing identified issues and priorities within their existing provision. Any INSET days, CPD sessions or workshops planned during

the school year ought to be focused around these plans and themes. Schools should make sure that the main thing *is the main thing*.

Moreover, any CPD programmes from external providers that schools turn to should adhere to the principles set out by the likes of the Education Endowment Foundation and Teacher Development Trust. The articles I’ve linked to in the ‘Further reading’ section set out some simple, principled methods for teachers and leaders to follow.

To take one example from my own experience, I managed to previously oversee a successful INSET day and subsequent work by first identifying a potential speaker who was an evident expert in cognitive psychology and the science of learning and memory.

At the time, the importance of knowing about such work had been firmly established. Through effective planning and collaboration, our staff were able to participate in an informative and engaging day that gave them the necessary knowledge, motivation and prompting to change their practice. Follow-up sessions were then planned and implemented, so that staff understanding and practice could continue to improve thereafter.

External speakers or consultants will often be able to provide genuinely valuable insights and expertise in areas where schools have real knowledge deficits. The very best ones will possess extensive practical experience of working somewhere broadly similar to your school, and a deep understanding of the research base, how to engage staff and get them thinking, and how to effect a positive change in practice to meet

FURTHER READING

- Since 2014, The Teacher Development Trust has been regularly producing research syntheses explaining what schools should be doing to improve the effectiveness and quality of their teachers. Their seminal 2015 paper ‘Developing Great Teaching’, unpacks principles of effective teacher development for better student outcomes and can be accessed via bit.ly/ts128-WS1
- The EEF’s recent 2021 guidance report, ‘Effective Professional Development’, draws on evidence to explain how school leaders should approach the implementation of effective professional development, and examines the mechanisms which support building teacher knowledge, motivating staff and embedding new practice. For more details, visit bit.ly/ts128-WS2.

challenging goals and outcomes. There are many external experts who meet this mark.

The takeaway for me is that when planning CPD, schools have to choose their expert consultants wisely, and then carefully plan precisely how they intend to use these experts’ knowledge effectively.



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

Where does ART COME FROM?

Art history might be taken more seriously now at KS3/4 than it once was, but the challenge of covering all areas sufficiently has become harder than ever, **Caroline Aldous-Goodge**

Two years ago, Gavin Williamson announced a 50% cut in funding for arts subjects at university, including art history. A number of noted artists and musicians expressed outrage at the time, accusing the government of neglecting the country's 'cultural national health' (see bit.ly/ts128-AH2).

Since 2010, we can further see how curriculum time for the teaching of art within schools has been squeezed, as part of a devaluing of arts subjects more broadly. Needless to say, this has had many knock-on effects – not least to the teaching of art history at KS3.

Cultural capital

Learning art history is crucial for developing cultural capital, as it gives students valuable context, ideas and inspiration for the many different directions in which they can take their own work.

In terms of the art history curriculum, leaders have largely been given free rein as to what areas they can cover. This sounds fantastic – 'I can teach the art history I love!' – but wait, there's a catch. More than a few, in fact. In said curriculum, you must include 'Great artists, craft-makers and designers,' and ensure that you 'Enable pupils to develop a love of a subject that is both intellectually challenging and creatively demanding.'

Oh, and if you have the time, you should also include

'Examples of the diversity of art, including art, craft, design work produced outside Europe, and artists, craft-makers and designers from diverse communities.' That's a lot to cram in. So where to start...?

Art history at KS3

Having witnessed years of cuts and that aforementioned announcement by Gavin Williamson, it would seem that Ofsted and the wider DfE have at last begun to recognise the true value of the creative arts. Ofsted's outgoing Chief Inspector, Amanda Spielman, has observed how, 'Art makes a significant contribution to

simply drawing and painting. For their part, teachers need to explain the influence and importance of art on history, politics, religion and society – but how can anyone achieve that within just 50 minutes of contact time per week?

Curriculum leaders are thus left pulling their hair out trying to cover all bases, afraid of overlooking something important – which can lead to a curriculum that's thinly spread and boring.

Immersion and diversity

The National Curriculum doesn't specify how much, or

(1750-1827), Romantic (1827-1900) and finally Modern (1900-1970). But how much of that can realistically be covered at KS3? Not a lot. It's important to present a brief overview of each, but to then perhaps look more in-depth at a particular stage in art history, and maybe link this to a cross-curricular activity, trip or visit.

One successful example I can call to mind was when our school's history department was looking at the Russian Revolution, which the art department mirrored by studying artists and movements of that era, including cubism, futurism and constructivism. This culminated in an immersive day, where the work produced in the art department was used to decorate the classrooms of the history department!

In terms of contemporary art, there's an extensive array of exciting and diverse artists exhibiting work right now. The Tate Modern has done a good job of embracing diversity of late, with recent exhibitions by Lubaina Himid and Yayoi Kusama really pushing the boundaries of traditional art.

I'm as guilty as the next senior art teacher of sometimes dragging out old favourites, such as 'pop art' or 'identity', but we shouldn't avoid confronting modern forms, techniques and even technological shifts – such as digitally-produced artworks, and the advent of art made using artificial

“Students need to appreciate and understand that there's more to art than simply drawing and painting”

our society through human innovation, imagination, and thought. A high-quality curriculum in art, craft and design, enables pupils to develop a love of the subject' (see bit.ly/ts128-AH1).

But how, exactly, can we foster a love of art history among students? Practical work is reliably interesting, inspiring and fun – but getting students interested in art history can be a much trickier challenge.

For that to happen, students need to appreciate that there's more to art than

precisely what art history students should study, leaving it to schools to decide on their own curriculum. Having recently read the fantastic book *The Story of Art Without Men* by Katy Hessel, my mind has been opened to how the art history most of know is hugely biased and discriminatory – and that we teachers may well have to start from scratch!

Traditional timelines of art history tend to start with prehistoric art, before moving through Baroque (1600-1750), Classical

intelligence. The AI system DALL·E 2, for example, is already capable of creating realistic images and art from written descriptions and prompts – but does this even count as art at all?

Engaging students

Artists such as Himid, Kusama and Marina Abramović are, in their own ways, actively questioning what art is, the audiences it reaches and the subject matter it covers. What students wouldn't be intrigued and captivated by the Marina Abramović retrospective taking place at the Royal Academy at the time of writing, where visitors have to squeeze themselves through two naked people when entering?!

I was interested by the reaction of my Y13 art students to this. They were shocked and disgusted, with some arguing that it wasn't 'proper' art. Could that be

because their experience and education of what art is has been so narrow? They believed that art was just painting and drawing in an accurate way, and that only this practice denoted true, skillful art. I was surprised at their closed mindedness, prompting me to reflect on what might have led them to such a viewpoint.

In the short amount of time available to art teachers, they're expected to cover a lot. At KS3, there's also the challenge of capturing their imagination. I personally believe that teachers should select artists for study who have inspired them personally, and who they feel have contemporary relevance, over trying to follow a prescribed, white, European, male-dominated curriculum.

Many exam boards offer courses that can help with the process of choosing artists, some of which are aimed specifically at GCSE or A Level – yet nothing beats a

trip to a gallery to get you really thinking about the meaning and relevance of art. I, for one, have already booked my ticket to squeeze past those naked models at the Marina Abramović retrospective, though I doubt I'll be taking any students with me...

Cross-curricular collaboration

It's always fun to collaborate with other departments and see if they can incorporate elements of art history into their subject curriculum. In history, for example, one could look at Henry Moore's sketches of Londoners sheltering from WWII

air raids in underground stations, which he created in his capacity as an official War Artist.

Language teachers could potentially discuss Picasso's 'Guernica' – the large 1937 oil painting depicting the Spanish civil war that's regarded by many art critics as among the most moving and powerful anti-war artistic statements in history.

There are many different approaches and areas you could consider when inspiring students by linking art history to different subjects. Above all, I would hope that all schools are eventually given sufficient time and resources to maintain a broad and diverse art history curriculum.

CELEBRITY STUDENTS

The following famous faces all studied art history in their youth...



Eddie Redmayne



Lily Cole



Loyd Grossman



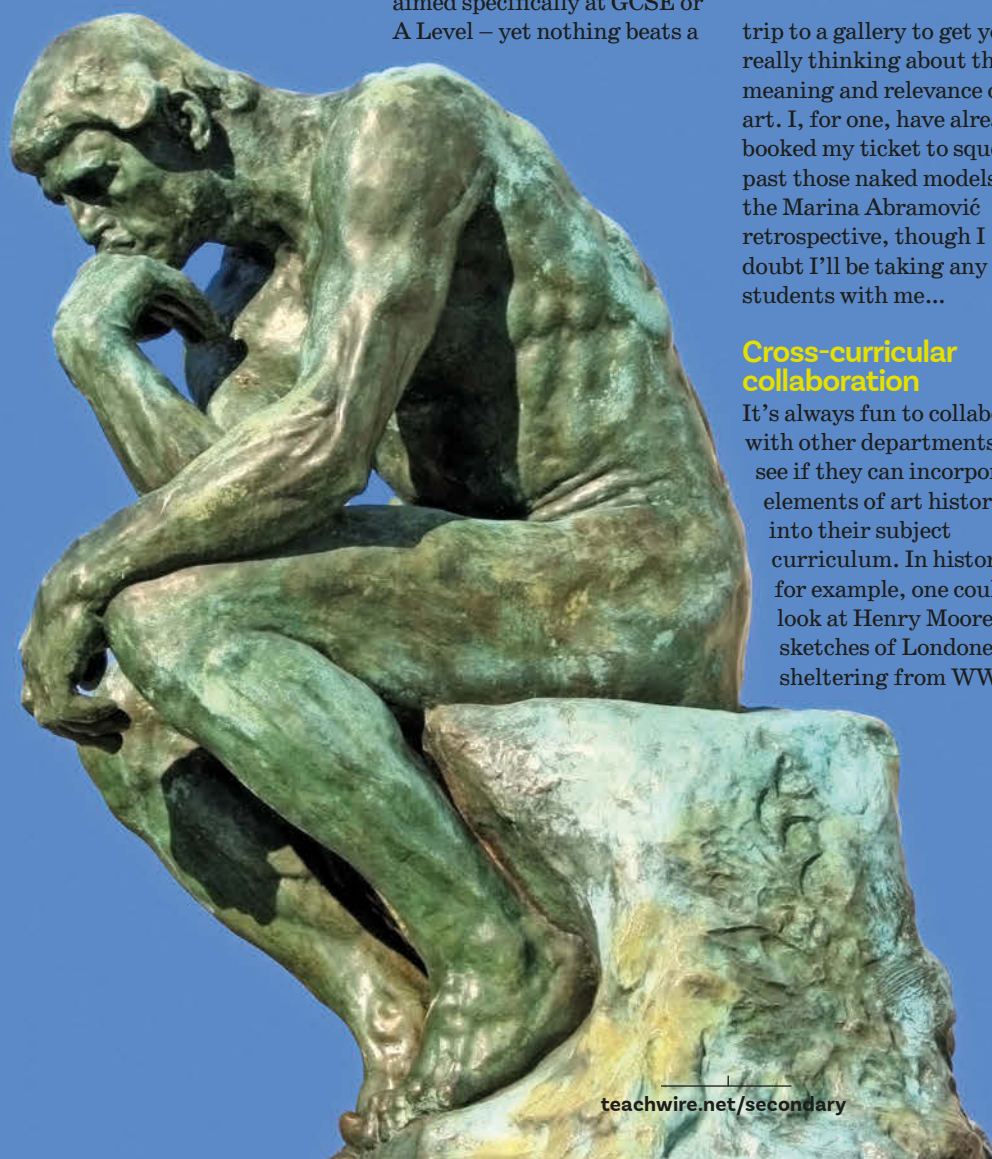
Kate Middleton



Gwyneth Paltrow



Prince William
(although he dropped out!)



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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

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5 REASONS TO TRY... Conway Centres: Anglesey

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30 SECOND BRIEFING

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

1 STUDENTS BUILD RESILIENCE

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3 EACH DAY IS A SCHOOL DAY

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4 DISCOVER STUDENTS' CAPABILITIES

Residentials present great opportunities for learning more about your students' strengths, weaknesses, interests and capabilities when they're in new surroundings. Upon your return to the classroom, you'll be able to tailor your teaching approach to their individual needs, thus helping them reach their full potential. Building positive relationships with your students will further enhance their learning experience and provide them with a new zest for learning.

5 BOOST SELF-ESTEEM, RAISE ATTAINMENT

Whether it's gorge scrambling in the hills of Betws y Coed, or mountaineering in the Snowdonian mountain range, young people will get to take part in a series of genuine adventure activities. As they achieve the unachievable, their self-esteem and confidence will be lifted. Back at school, they'll be imbued with a renewed sense of confidence in their abilities and their learning. From participating more often in class, to feeling more confident when asking questions or taking on new challenges, this positive attitude can in turn lead to further academic and personal achievements.

Key Points

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“O brawling love! O loving hate!”

If you're an English teacher thoroughly jaded by *Romeo and Juliet*, let **Bhamika Bhuda** explain why the Shakespeare play everyone knows needn't be a plague on your curriculum...

It's surely impossible for anyone in their teens or older to know nothing about Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*. It's been an established part of the English curriculum in KS3 and 4 in schools across the country for decades, but as with anything taught in the same way for so long, it can become stale.

So let's look at how this classic tragedy can be taught in a way that refreshes and invigorates the curriculum, and see if we can resist the temptation to cast it aside purely for the sake of introducing something new...

Non-fiction: 'Star-crossed lovers' and 'ancient grudges'

Reinvigorating the curriculum needn't mean getting rid of it and thereby throwing the baby out with the bathwater. Instead, it should involve changing the way the curriculum is both viewed and used, and entail bringing new life and myriad creative options to bear on students' learning.

If *Romeo and Juliet* is taught through the same lens in KS3 as it is in KS4 – and through literary analysis alone – then we risk turning students off Shakespeare altogether. More importantly, it can cause students to miss out on all the richness that this particular play has to offer – an interesting structure, dynamic characters and

timeless themes.

The reason that *Romeo and Juliet* has been taught to teenagers for what seems like forever is because its themes transcend time. The human condition doesn't change, and the play's themes encapsulate precisely this – teenage love, overbearing parents, grudges, all wrapped up in tension, violence and drama.

And yet, you can still

possibly providing a springboard for students to produce non-fiction writing of their own.

Structure: 'Death-marked love'

Romeo and Juliet is a gripping story, told in a way that piles on the tension as it progresses. A structural study breaking down pivotal moments, how they connect the play and their impacts on

carefully consider writers' choices and deepening their understanding in preparation for when they will need to analyse this at KS4.

Another option could be to carry out a side-by-side comparison with one of the numerous modern texts that borrow much of *Romeo and Juliet*'s plot – including *West Side Story* and *Lion King 2* among many, many others. How do they compare? How do their beginnings and endings differ? What are the outcomes in each, and do they alter the way each text is consumed and perceived?

Opinion: 'I hate the word'

Another aspect students can struggle with at KS4 is understanding that there isn't a singularly correct answer in English, and that their opinions on the texts are not only relevant, but very important.

The top ends of the literature mark schemes require personal responses to texts, but getting students to actively include these in their writing, or even form them can be challenging. A unit using *Romeo and Juliet* as a springboard to produce writing to argue will provide low stakes opportunities for students to comprehend Shakespearean language, without having to get stuck into word level analysis or writing out the the same old paragraphs again and again.

A unit such as this should

“Romeo and Juliet has been taught to teenagers for what seems like forever because its themes transcend time”

depend on hearing ‘*Why do we even have to study Shakespeare? It's got nothing to do with real life!*’ being uttered at least once a year whenever the topic is broached.

A more refreshing way of responding to that sentiment could be to actually lean into it by teaching the play alongside non-fiction texts, thus demonstrating exactly how, on the contrary, much of it *does* reflect modern life.

A unit on the play that draws on satellite non-fiction texts reflecting similar themes – but applied to a modern real-world context – can challenge misconceptions that *Romeo and Juliet* is distinct to the experiences of today. This can then feed into having students analyse a range of texts connected by related thematic threads, or

the audience's expectations could be a refreshing approach to teaching a major component that students often struggle with at KS4.

Consider the following questions: *What is the effect of knowing the end at the beginning? How does this distort our view of the romance? Of the characters? Why open with servants? What if Tybalt wasn't in the opening scene? How does Rosaline serve as a plot device? Why the tragic ending? How would it be different if this wasn't the case?*

This approach can offer a variety of creative options. Firstly, students could rewrite a particular section of the play as prose, utilising or subverting Shakespeare's own structural choices, thereby forcing them to

allow students to fully engage with the plot and characterisation, to understand that their opinions have merit, and to practise articulating said opinions in a clear and convincing way. This develops many of the reading and writing skills required at KS3 and beyond, and can even grant students greater autonomy outside the classroom.

Drama: 'Tis but a scratch'

The English curriculum often doesn't do justice to the dramatic form. Drama is a beast of its own, and it's easy to get so lost in the intricacies of Shakespeare's language that we can inadvertently overlook the fact that it isn't something meant to be *read*, but rather *watched* – or indeed heard and gesticulated.

Teaching *Romeo and Juliet* through a dramatic lens will afford a deeper understanding of the nuance behind the language. It will force students to reflect on how the meanings of words change with tone and expression – not to mention the effects that physicality, such as body language and positioning, can have on how words are interpreted by audiences.

At its most basic, this approach can produce a vastly superior understanding of the purpose and effects of stage directions, but the potential extends much further in that it can really bring the story to life.

It can develop students' understanding of how the play can be influenced by dramatic choices relating to staging, setting, costume and delivery, which can only

enhance the quality of their analysis and comprehension.

Media and time: 'Two hours' traffic'

Different media representations of *Romeo and Juliet* can provide varied and hugely engaging insights into the text. A comparison between Zeffirelli's and Lurhman's portrayals of the characters, along with their choices concerning setting and costume based on when their respective film versions were made, can be a fascinating approach to contextual analysis – *the story doesn't change but the viewers do*.

It brings to mind certain key questions. How can a story written hundreds of

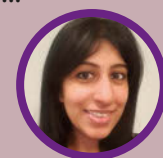
years ago still captivate the interest of so many? How is a more modern take on masculinity reflected in the portrayal of Lurhman's characters? To what extent have we meaningfully evolved from the ideals and violence depicted in Shakespearean times?

What would a version produced in 2023 change, if anything? Would setting the tale in a completely different country or time period change it then? In what ways have stage productions advanced over the years?

A unit needn't focus on trying all these approaches simultaneously; one or two of these lenses would suffice. What these approaches do prove, however, is that in an English curriculum – particularly at KS3 – there is

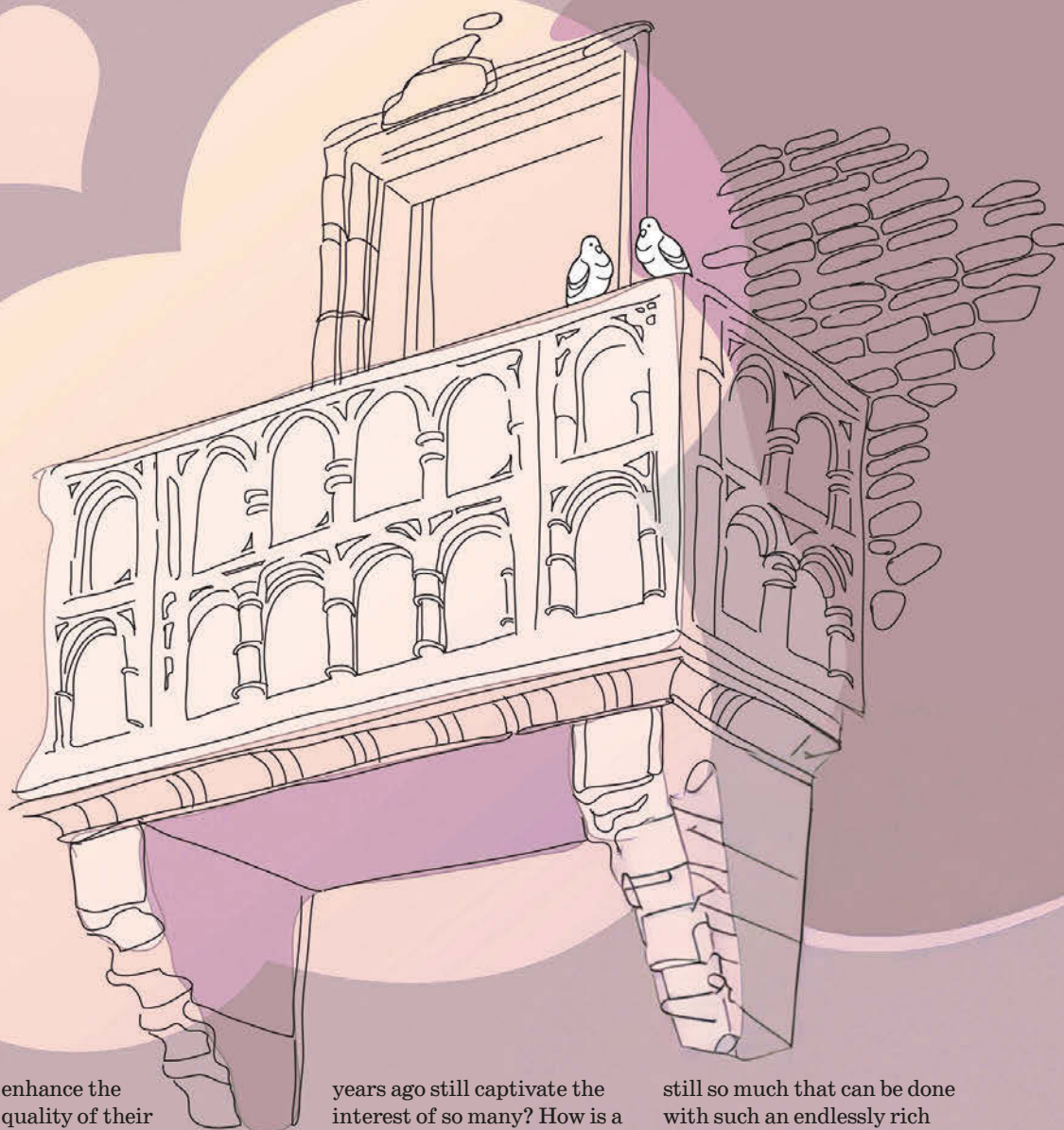
still so much that can be done with such an endlessly rich text.

"Never was a story of more woe than this of Juliet and her Romeo." A story as big as this one deserves must more than just a surface level approach. There remains a considerable amount about it that we can challenge and debate, and there's lots of fun to be had with it before we relegate it to the back of the English store cupboard – if indeed that day ever comes...



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Bhamika Bhudia is Head of English at a mixed comprehensive school in London



Expect mistakes, TEACH RESPONSES

Graham Chatterley explains how self-perpetuating behaviour cycles that do little to help children or staff can be broken...

If, as parents, we go to our own child's parents' evening and get the feeling that the teacher doesn't really know or doesn't like our child, how does that make us feel?

We may have spent five minutes with someone and our feelings towards them are negative; we don't want to listen to what they have to say, and we are probably quite defensive (or aggressive, depending on how we choose to defend our child). If pupils have the same perception, and as a result feel disliked or unwanted, this is not a good foundation for learning. Children who feel this way will be less likely to reach their potential because they will always hold back.

If we want our children to invest in us and in the lessons we teach, then we must invest in them first. Many children behave in ways that make it very difficult to feel anything positive towards them – they know exactly what buttons to push. But if we can find a way to convince the child that we are still going to like them, no matter what they do, then amazing things can happen.

Feelings stick

If you think back to your own time at school, you probably won't remember subjects or lessons, but you will remember individuals.

You won't remember the content of classes, but you will remember how you felt in them.

My outstanding memory of high school was the headteacher who came and sat next to me after I was given out in the school cricket final. I was desperately disappointed, and giving myself a really hard time, so I had gone to sit on my own. I have no memory of what the conversation was about, and he didn't attempt to make me feel better or fix

forget the most important tool we have. Human connection – how we make the children feel – is what ultimately makes the difference in a school, not what we do.

There are no magic strategies to manage behaviour. I was a well-behaved child, but I wasn't a spectacular learner generally. However, I tried harder for some teachers than others, and if Mr Wright had taught me, I would have gone through a

wide range of processes throughout the body, but too much of them over time can cause significant harm.

Teaching children how to deal with fear and stress should be part of what we do in the classroom. If we can use our relationships to support, and our connections to replace that cortisol with oxytocin (a bonding hormone that plays a huge role in connection and trust) and increase levels of dopamine (the pleasure hormone), then we reduce fear, drive connections and make young people feel loved.

If we have pupils who feel good, and know the power of making others feel good, then behavioural mistakes will decrease naturally without the need for a specific behaviour focus. They will also be in a state that is more conducive to engagement and more effective learning.

Perfection and punishments

Currently, many behaviour systems run the risk of creating an environment where behavioural mistakes are

“Human connection – how we make the children feel – is what makes the difference in a school, not what we do”

what had happened. He just sat with me and talked.

Nothing spectacular. No grand gesture or lesson that had taken three weeks to plan. It was a simple connection that helped at the time, and 20 years later I still remember vividly how it made me feel. It was Y10, and this was the only one-to-one interaction I ever had with Mr Wright, who sadly died the following year – but it makes me wonder how many others he impacted on in the same modest way.

We get so caught up in systems and policies that we

wall for him after that day.

Validate, don't fix

If we expect behavioural mistakes to happen, but teach children how and why to respond to these occurrences, then we empower them.

Nobody wants children to become distressed. Nobody wants children to react with fear, or to be fuelled by chemicals like adrenaline or cortisol (stress hormones that prepare the body for fight or flight), but they are part of life, not just school. These hormones regulate a

unacceptable and only perfect will do; anything less results in punishment, often in a way that has no link to the original behaviour.

If we don't know why they are getting it wrong, how can we teach them to get it right? For example, a child who perceives a psychological or mental threat (and whose body is flooded with stress hormones) is likely to get

into trouble because this type of active survival response isn't appropriate.

Don't ignore the mistake. Instead, see it as a chance to learn, connect, raise self-esteem and teach better responses. If someone has been wronged, a consequence will be necessary, but it must be linked to the behaviour and must give the child an opportunity to repair and

redeem themselves.

Without this, we feed into the child's narrative that they are bad and should be punished – a narrative that will become harder and harder to change if we don't challenge it.

Shame loops

In my school, there were many children who were impulsive, who would perceive a threat, storm out of the classroom and rip down the first display they encountered. They were dysregulated and had no interest in the display because they weren't thinking rationally. The priority was to get them calm, and then the behaviour could be discussed.

When the initial response is punishment, the result is a child who believes that they behaved in the way they did because they are bad, and therefore they deserve to be punished. They will take the punishment. And then they will make a similar behavioural mistake the next day because they are bad, and that is all that can be expected of them. This is a shame loop.

If, instead, the response is to look at the *impact* of the action, rather than the action itself, and if the child understands that their favourite staff member spent hours putting up that display and will be upset about the damage, then the behaviour means something, and the child feels guilty.

An expectation that the action is repaired becomes not only a logical consequence, but of importance to the child.

Often, I couldn't give that child a staple gun

fast enough to fix the damage. When guilt is used to *drive repair*, not to *feed shame*, the child's narrative changes: 'I've done a bad thing, but I'm not a bad child' is a driving force for accountability, and making amends brings with it change. If bad things can be fixed, then so can faulty beliefs.

Giving the gift

If the child has experienced how satisfying it feels to do good things, then we can keep reminding them of this feeling. Over time, the positive things win out because the child believes they can do them.

Starting with adrenaline and cortisol, and finishing with oxytocin and dopamine is a powerful process and journey. Take that path enough times, with enough connection and safety, and the adrenaline and cortisol aren't required and negative behaviour will reduce.

For many of us, there comes a point in our lives when giving the gift becomes more satisfying than receiving it. Getting something nice is great – we get a short-term buzz – but the feeling we get from creating and seeing that in others lasts longer and gives us more. This is what we must teach our children.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Graham Chatterley was a school leader who has since led training for thousands of educators across the North of England; follow him at @grahamchatter12

This article is based on an extract from his book, *Changing Perceptions: Deciphering the language of behaviour* (Crown House Publishing, £17.99, bit.ly/ts128-B1)

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FOCUS ON: SEND

From the complexities and shortcomings of EHCPs, to the vexed question of how flexible a school's behaviour policies ought to be, this issue we cast our eye over SEND provision...

With the resources currently available to them, how can mainstream schools provide all students with a genuinely inclusive education?

THE AGENDA:

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As the government pledges to try and lower parental demand for EHCPs, Debby Elley looks at why so many feel they need one – and whether we ought to rethink the role they've come to play...

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High demands, HIDDEN STORIES

As the government endeavours to address parental demand for EHCPs, **Debby Elley** looks at why so many feel they need one – and whether we ought to rethink the role they’ve come to play...

You don’t need to work in education to understand why news of a proposed 20% reduction in Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) has caused considerable alarm.

That’s just one of the intended outcomes from the government’s ‘Delivering Better Value in SEND’ (DBV) programme – which also aims to encourage less reliance on specialist settings in favour of bolstering SEND provision within mainstream schools.

The government is at pains to emphasise, however, that the headlines have got it wrong. Responding to questions raised by the parent-led group Special Needs Jungle (see bit.ly/ts128-ehcp1), the DfE SEND team clarified that the much-quoted ‘20% fewer’ figure referred to a cut in *projected EHCP growth*, rather than the total number of EHCPs issued at present.

It’s little wonder that EHCPs have become their focus of late. The number of initial EHCP requests during 2022 was 114,457 – up a whopping 23% on the previous year (see bit.ly/ts128-ehcp2). But if the projected number of EHCPs issued are to be reduced – and if the majority of SEN pupils are to remain in mainstream settings – then Phase One of the DBV (identifying and collating good practice) will need to uncover why there’s been such a growth in demand.

Compromised, but essential

The fact that EHCPs are requested so commonly shouldn’t be taken as an indication they’re working well. In fact, a whole host of bureaucratic and financial factors are currently compromising their efficacy. And yet, despite the problems, EHCPs remain

“Where schools are unable to honour an EHCP wishlist down to the letter, owing to budgetary constraints, trust between both sides breaks down”

essential – just not for the reasons you might expect.

The initial phase of the DBV will hopefully uncover the elephant in the room – that parents are using EHCPs as a failsafe to guard against the inadequacies of SEN support across our mainstream education system.

Cash-strapped schools are also relying on them to meet even the most basic of SEN needs, which current budgets won’t allow. The two issues are intertwined, both contributing to a marked rise in demand, and increased tensions between education staff and parents.

Families will often seek to get EHCPs in place during primary school. When you consider that it can take over four years just to get an autism diagnosis, you can see

why parents aren’t inclined to hang about. Mainstream secondaries also generally don’t have a great reputation when it comes to SEND, with horror stories quickly spreading among SEND parents, whose motto may as well be ‘Be Prepared’.

For many parents, an EHCP therefore amounts to a safety harness they affix to

‘equality’ hasn’t been actively embedded in a school’s culture, it’s hardly the job of an individual’s EHCP to enforce it.

Other parents have reported that getting an EHCP helped them to protect their youngster’s mental health by building awareness and ensuring that staff actually believe them – particularly when a pupil’s needs aren’t immediately apparent.

I can’t count the number of times I’ve heard a parent say, ‘School says he’s coping; I see a different story.’ The EHCP has become a way of proving that ‘different story’ to any doubters.

When a child’s needs aren’t obvious, families may well be shocked at the level of ignorance they encounter – but then that’s hardly surprising when you consider the level of SEND training that teachers are given. Autism training, for example, should be detailed

their youngster before assuring them that abseiling down a cliff ‘*will be fine*’. It’s become their protection for environments that are fundamentally non-inclusive.

Protections and proof

This begs the question – if so many people are using EHCPs as protections within non-inclusive settings, why don’t we try and make secondary schools more neurodiverse-friendly? That might sound like wishful thinking, but as things currently stand, we’re often relying on small pockets of intervention as defence against a problem that runs wide and deep.

One mother told me that her son’s EHCP ‘*Proves to his school that it’s not unfair to be treated differently.*’ If the correct definition of



enough to shine a light on behaviours such as ‘masking’, which insightful autistic teenagers will sometimes use as a survival tool in order to fit in. If the training is basic, then the level of understanding in our nation’s classrooms will reflect that.

Sources of conflict

It would also be good to move away from the kind of dedicated ‘SEND training’ that’s here one INSET day and gone the next, and instead focus on teacher training that promotes inclusive practice as standard. I recently joined forces with education specialist Gareth D. Morewood for our book *Championing Your Autistic Teen in Secondary School*, in which we relate simple strategies that can benefit all pupils and deliver calmer environments. Individual – generally smaller – schools are making progress in this area, but they’re still notable exceptions.

Greg Loynes is assistant headteacher at the Together Trust’s Inscape House School in Cheshire – a specialist independent setting for autistic pupils – and part of his remit is to advise the mainstream settings in 14 nearby boroughs. In Loynes’ view, “There is no detriment to a lesson delivered in an

autism-friendly way, because it’s going to have a clear structure, clear outcomes, clear progression through tasks and it will be visual, as well as verbal.”

My own autistic son had an EHCP that wasn’t bogged down with detailed minutiae, and which didn’t become a source of conflict. This was because his setting, Priestnall School in Stockport, invested in a culture of inclusion, proactively encouraged by leaders who had engaged a highly-prized curriculum support team.

It also enjoyed a partnership with the nearby Inscape House School, which allowed Priestnall’s SEND pupils to periodically benefit from specialist support without having to move schools permanently. This proved expensive in the short-term, but more cost-effective in the long-run. This partnership model has since been highlighted in the Autism Education Trust’s Good Autism Practice Report (bit.ly/ts128-ehcp3).

Fear and mistrust

Borrowing SEND practices from specialist settings could also have a significant impact when it comes to managing behaviour, creating less

stressful environments.

Inscape House was among the first schools in the country to adopt the School Wide Positive Behaviour Support approach. As Greg Loynes explains, “We’re working at the sharp end of challenging behaviour, and we’re turning kids around. In mainstream schools, these kids are being excluded and facing detention. In essence, they’re being punished because they’re neurodiverse and their needs aren’t being met.

“A positive behaviour support approach looks at the function of behaviour, and what need it’s trying to meet. Lots of kids are trying to self-regulate in mainstream settings, but aren’t able to.”

Mainstream schools’ non-inclusive reputation has meant that parents of children with SEND feel pressurised to oversee their children’s EHCPs like hawks. This didactic approach can lead to conflict, however, since it won’t allow supportive schools to adopt a flexible or imaginative approach in an effort to generate positive outcomes.

Where schools are unable to honour an EHCP wishlist down to the letter, owing to budgetary constraints, trust between both sides breaks down and legal daggers are drawn – making for yet another nail in the coffin of co-production.

A combination of fear and mistrust is why the darned things have become so seismic and unwieldy. Does the teacher of a 32-strong class have the time to read even one, never mind

IN BRIEF – WHAT’S WRONG WITH EHCPs?

- ▶ In review meetings, the focus sometimes strays away from interventions and outcomes
- ▶ A lack of expertise among staff involved in review meetings, leading to poor EHCP content
- ▶ The needs set out within EHCPs can be inadequately budgeted for, and hence become undeliverable
- ▶ An EHCP’s content doesn’t always tally with the expertise available within the school
- ▶ Excessive bureaucracy can cause reviews to be slow and EHCPs to become inaccurate

multiple 40+ page documents and implement what they contain? Those that can will rely on a SENCo to do that for them.

Otherwise, the chances of an EHCP being translated into good practice are pretty much non-existent.

When the Delivering Better Value in SEND programme comes to investigate EHCPs, their planning, content, delivery and updates will be carefully scrutinised, as they should be. But from a wider perspective, EHCPs could become much more effective tools overall. Take away the cliff, and you’ll no longer need such huge safety harnesses.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Debby Elley is the co-founder of *AuKids* magazine and co-author, with Gareth D. Morewood, of *Championing Your Autistic Teen at Secondary School* (£14.99, Jessica Kingsley Publishers)

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One to win

The way to make inclusion really work within the classroom ultimately comes down to tailored interventions, advises **Gary Whall**...

All children learning in front of a subject-specific teacher. Every subject teacher ably adapting their teaching to meet the needs of the whole class...

...is how things would be in an ideal world. Is this achievable? Yes, up to a point. As individual teachers, we can't resolve the recruitment crisis but we can implement interventions that enable vulnerable students to arrive at their lessons in a low anxiety state, ready to access their learning. How? It's actually quite simple.

Before the school bell

Any interventions or procedures will need to commence as soon as the child arrives at the start of the school day. This might include having a separate school entrance for vulnerable students to remove any anxieties related to crowds. Greeting students at the door can offer reassurance, and allow opportunities for parents/carers to share any concerns. Setting up a 'Start Right' Club, where students are able to get any worries off their chest before the day begins, can also work wonders.

Walking the corridors

Vulnerable students may be worried about noise, crowds and

misreading social situations. Escorting more vulnerable students to their classrooms will aid their anxiety levels, allowing them to arrive at lessons ready to learn.

In the classroom

In-class support is vital if social misunderstandings are to be dealt with as they arise. There will also likely be at least several students needing reassurance of what's expected of them in terms of their work and behavioural conduct.

Shared support works extremely well in these situations. It also allows students to be taken out of the classroom for two minutes to calm down and be offered reassurance, before re-entering to continue with their work. It's important that teachers and support staff work together and communicate throughout the lesson, so as not to undermine each other.

Toilet breaks

If there isn't a separate toilet in school that students with SEND can use, then if at all possible, consider setting

one up. School toilets are highly unsociable places, and bear in mind that some of our most vulnerable students may not be used to locking or shutting doors, thus making them more vulnerable still.

Break times

The playground can be another unsociable place, particularly for students with autism. Amidst hundreds of students in the playground, I've seen some very lonely children.

A staffed 'Buddy Club', providing vulnerable students with a safe space to encourage social interaction, can be hugely effective, aiding interactions through board games and social groups. Don't forget that dinner halls can be another problem area, especially with all the queuing. If possible, allow students with SEND to go to dinner 10 minutes earlier, and let them take their food to the 'Buddy Club' – again, reducing anxieties stemming from crowds, noise, pushing and so forth.

Home time

It's just as important to ensure students are released to their parents/carers at the end of the school day with low anxiety. Introduce an 'End Right' Club where students can talk through any problems/concerns from their day. It can also be a good idea to release any students not staying on for after-school activities five minutes early, allowing them to leave before the crowds. Where extracurricular activities are concerned, offer a range that will support your students with SEND and appeal to them. Homework Clubs and Life Skills Clubs are often popular, but there can be little time available to support such development.

A whole school approach is vital for making inclusion work, but it's important to remember there's no 'one size fits all' approach. Having identified what works best for you and your students, concrete steps will enable everybody to move forward.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Gary Whall was awarded Teacher of the Year at the 2023 nasen Awards; recently retired, he previously managed Bristnall Hall Academy's SEN provision for 27 years

For more information about the 2023 nasen Awards, visit [nasen.org.uk](https://www.nasen.org.uk) or follow @nasen_org



Reading in KS3: Challenge, impact, outcomes

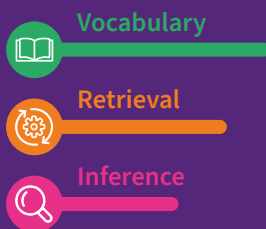
Reading Solutions UK, the home of the reading development programme Reading Plus, has released its latest white paper exploring the KS3 landscape and discussing the implications of developing an effective reading culture.

White paper results:

Students' top 3 reading challenges:

1. Comprehending complex academic texts.
2. Vocabulary knowledge.
3. A lack of engagement and reading for pleasure.

Teachers' top 3 reading priorities:



White paper survey

Over 100 UK educators responsible for delivering the KS3 English curriculum (Senior Leaders, Class Teachers, etc) contributed to their findings.



Teachers' thoughts:

5%

were completely confident KS3 students could fully access the KS4 curriculum.

38%

said assessing reading was more difficult than ever.

50%



were concerned about their disadvantaged cohort being able to catch up.

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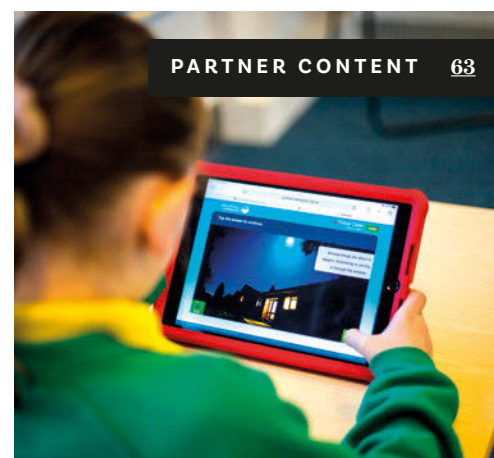
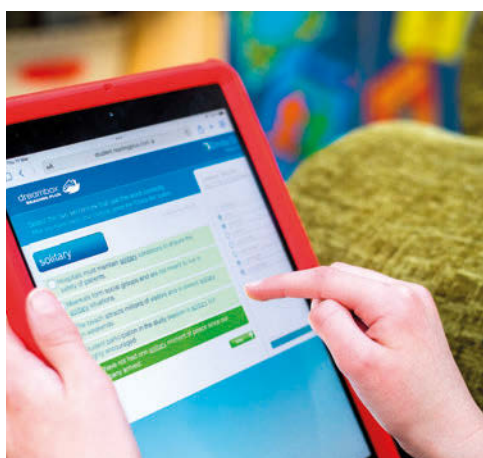
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ASK THE EXPERT

“Fluency is key”

Reading Solutions UK's Ian Fitzpatrick discusses the findings of its reading white paper, which explores today's KS3 teaching landscape

What areas are examined in the 'Challenge, impact, outcomes' white paper and over what period?

In 2022 and 2023, a quarter of students didn't reach the expected standard in reading at KS2, meaning hundreds of thousands were going to struggle to access the KS3 curriculum.

One of our core values is making a difference, which we do by providing Reading Plus – an evidence-based online reading programme – to schools, alongside sharing best practices. We wanted to explore today's KS3 teaching landscape, the solutions being offered by the government and share some proven strategies.

What are the principal trends and developments it identifies?

Early in 2023, we collected over 100 survey responses from UK educators (trust leaders, head teachers, class teachers, etc.) responsible for delivering the KS3 English curriculum.

Top level results showed that only 5% of respondents were 'completely confident' that their KS3 students could fully access the KS4 curriculum. 38% said that assessing reading was more difficult than ever, while 50% were concerned about their disadvantaged cohorts being able to catch up with reading.

What are the main reading challenges students currently face?

Educators' top three student challenges were comprehending complex academic texts, vocabulary knowledge and a lack of engagement (such as a dislike of reading for pleasure). These issues are all intrinsically linked.

In secondary, struggling readers are expected to access texts with subject-specific language written in various structures. What if they lack academic vocabulary knowledge and fluency? In that case, they will struggle to comprehend and finish the text, resulting in disengagement across all subjects, while diminishing their chances of successfully accessing the KS4 curriculum.



EXPERT PROFILE

NAME:

Ian Fitzpatrick

JOB TITLE:

Managing Director,
Reading Solutions UK

AREA OF EXPERTISE:

Developing efficient
readers

BEST PART OF MY JOB:

Making a difference in
children's reading
enjoyment

What are some of the white paper's key recommendations for improving literacy at KS3?

Reading fluency is a significant variable in secondary students' reading development, as they need to read and comprehend more informational texts with increased language demands.

Fluency requires the ability to read with accuracy at an appropriate speed. Students with poor reading fluency may get left further behind, as they're unlikely to exhibit easy-to-spot signs. This will widen the gap year on year, significantly impacting upon their academic success. Reading fluency should therefore be a priority for KS3 educators.

Why should educators' focus on improving students' reading fluency?

Reading fluency has the greatest impact on comprehension. A fluent reader can group words and recognise them automatically, enabling them to focus their attention on what the text means. A fluent reader can also decode unfamiliar words based on social and cultural contextualisation, and will find comprehending complex topics easier.

As well as aiding comprehension, students who can read fluently find reading (and learning) easier and more enjoyable, meaning they're more likely to read for pleasure.

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Consistency versus FLEXIBILITY

Nicole Dempsey shares her thoughts on how the behaviour policies in place at mixed settings can be made equally fair for students with SEND

One of the challenges we can face in our schools is finding the balance between setting a high standard for behaviour, whilst also meeting the individual needs of our students with SEND.

Core to this is the concept of fairness. Students with SEND are significantly – and negatively – overrepresented in behaviour statistics, and in data related to bullying, feelings of isolation, poor attendance and poor academic outcomes. It's clear that there's a need to do more for this group of learners, but can we maintain a consistently high standard for behaviour without discriminating against students with additional needs?

Is it possible to make exceptions, without them being questioned by students and families aggrieved at the perceived injustice of being held to certain standards that seemingly don't apply to their peers?

Creating an environment that's safe for all students, where they're allowed to be themselves and able to have their needs met as the norm, is the safety net that lets us find that balance. It's what our students with SEND – and probably many of their peers – need in order to thrive in their education.

Here are five signs of a socially safe school environment, alongside details of how you can design and embed inclusivity into

your setting's behaviour systems.

1. Consistency, not rigidity

Consistency can often be interpreted as rigidity, but in our diverse and dynamic schools, the only way to achieve genuine consistency is by being consistently flexible and responsive.

The behaviour policy itself is just a starting point.

to a culture of '*everyone gets what they need*', as opposed to '*everyone gets the same*'.

2. Teaching behaviour

Children come to school to learn – and that includes learning about themselves, and how they fit into their school, their local community and the wider world beyond. It also includes learning how to conduct themselves and how

our students and colleagues, how we organise our time, space and resources, and how we talk to and about people will all be a constant source of learning for our students, whether we like it or not. It's something we should always be aware of and improving when we can.

3. Strong relationships

Strong relationships between staff and students are built on predictability, fairness and trust. These relationships underpin not just effective behaviour management, but also standards of safeguarding, inclusivity and the very process of teaching and learning itself.

Staff will have likely received clear training and instruction on how to carry out most aspects of their role, but may well be told

“Getting things right for students with SEND is the starting point for getting things right for all students”

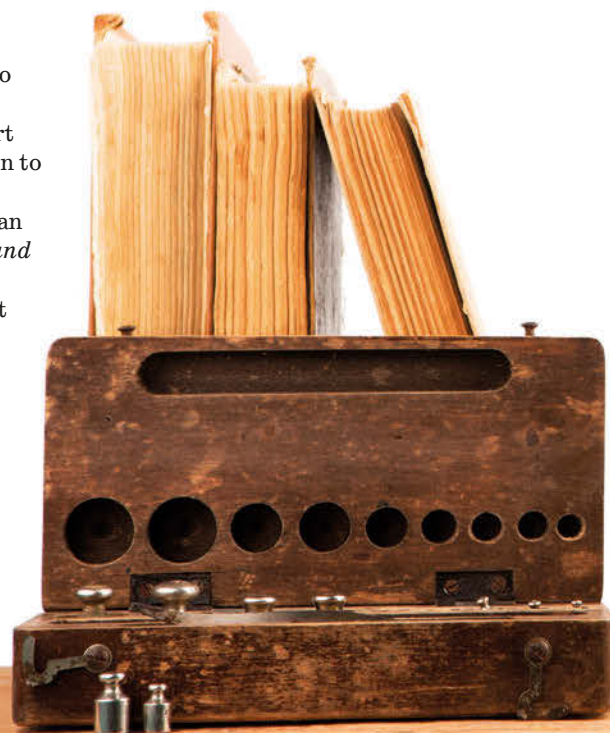
Building in a level of flexibility that takes into account factors such as students with SEND, safeguarding concerns and sensitivity to mental health needs will allow it to be implemented in a more responsive way.

Approach your behaviour policy in a way that treats warnings and sanctions as a series of barriers protecting children from the prospect of being forced away from their learning, instead of thresholds that must be met before they can be removed from the room, suspended or excluded.

With the right policy in place, staff can develop the skills and confidence needed to become the kind of responsive practitioners and dynamic decision makers that students need, leading

to treat others around them. Assemblies, PSHE and the academic curricula can all be used to directly teach our students about equality and diversity; about character and community.

We can look to provide further targeted support and intervention to groups and individuals via an '*additional to, and different from*' offer. And don't forget the '*hidden curriculum*' – the things our students observe and absorb just from watching us. How we treat



that they need to ‘work on’ their student relationships, with relatively little guidance or support. Staff should be directly taught about the importance of such relationships – how to nurture, protect and repair them, and ensure that supporting resources are in place if and when those relationships break down.

There’s scope for staff training time to be focused on learning about broad areas of need and commonly used classroom strategies, but it can also be powerful to spotlight specific groups, or even individual students within your school. Talk about these students’ strengths, their aspirations and what’s happening in their lessons, or other times when things are going well, and ensure more teachers are given the information they’ll need to build strong relationships with those children.

4. Variety is the spice of life

Social spaces in secondary schools can be noisy and crowded. They may be dominated by bigger, older or simply more confident peers,

which might have the effect of forcing some students into quiet corners, or making it difficult for them to get their voices heard.

For some, the availability of a safe space in a SEND or wellbeing department might solve the issue, but perhaps not for others. In certain cases, interventions such as the ‘circle of friends’ or similar approaches might provide the solution – but then again, perhaps not. Often, these options will only work for those students who have been identified, are eligible and who feel comfortable attending.

Being able to offer a range of options – quieter spaces, areas with more supervision, or with structured activities, such as a Lego club or an art corner – will not only give students the chance to find a space that suits them, but

also increase the likelihood that there will be like-minded peers gravitating towards the same spaces as them.

5. We learn from our learners

We needn’t wonder what we can do to make our schools more socially safe for all students, because we will always have the students themselves to show us – so long as we’re willing to learn and change, based on what we see.

Collecting student voice is important, but we can also learn from students’ behaviour by observing them. Does anyone struggle with certain spaces around the school, and if so, where do they go? Which children spend their time alone during social and unstructured periods, and what do we know of their hobbies, interests and preferences?

If and when incidents of bullying arise, what are the underlying learning needs at the root? Looked at in this way, the question can change from being ‘*What we can do differently?*’ and become ‘*What are we willing to change in the pursuit of*

inclusivity and a better experience for our more vulnerable students?’

Socially safe environments

Students with SEND are a group that need understanding, flexibility and responsiveness, but that doesn’t have to mean making exceptions to your existing policies and routines. In fact, they’re equally entitled to a behaviour policy and system that enables them to learn and grow, just as much as the next student.

Getting things right for students with SEND is the starting point for getting things right for all students. And that’s before you even get to the many reasons – whether it be mental health, or a safeguarding incident – that might entail having to quickly become familiar with a student’s individual circumstances and apply the behaviour policy accordingly.

Of course, our school populations also include students with particular needs and circumstances that are not yet known or understood, or which may be just emerging. Having consistently dynamic and responsive systems in place may better meet their needs, too.

A socially safe environment is one in which policies, systems and spaces empower both staff and students to become more knowledgeable and more confident decision makers, so that everyone can thrive together within a dynamic and responsive community.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Nicole Dempsey is director of SEND and inclusion at Dixons Academies Trust



SPOT THE DIFFERENCE

These two texts are written by one child on the same day.

Can you spot the 8 improvements
on the tinted paper compared to the white?

My name is [redacted]
I am [redacted] years old
I live in Blackburn
I used to have a fish
My fish was called dolly
My burther fish was called Memo
I like Kicboxin but my brother goes
to Krtty

My name is [redacted]
I am [redacted] years old.
I live in Blackburn
I yousta to have a fish.
My fish was called dolly.
My brother's fish was called Memo.
I like Kickboxing but my brother goes to
Krtty.

Answers:

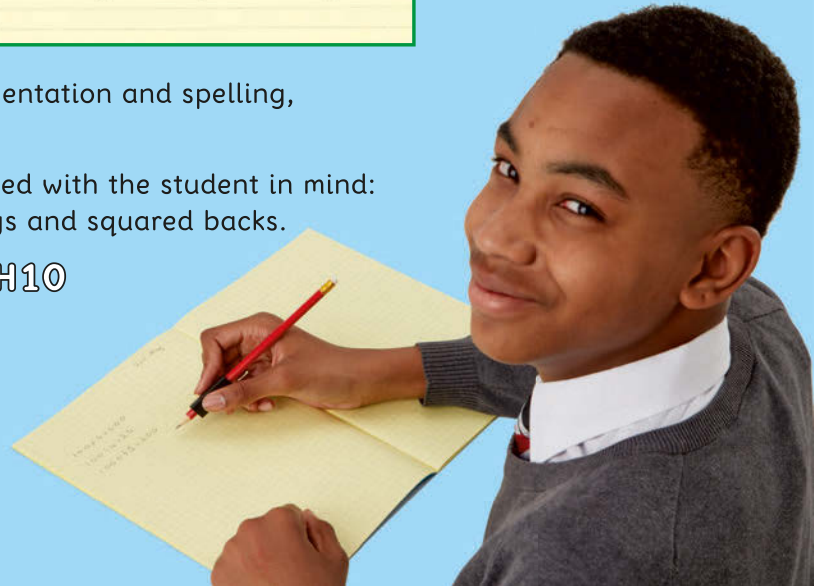
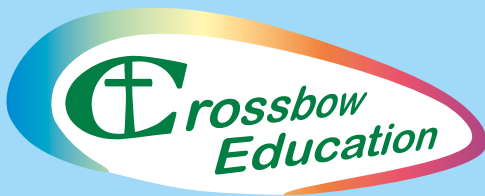
1. Improved handwriting
2. Improved punctuation
- Improved spellings:
3. yers -> years
4. Blackbun -> Blackburn
5. yho to -> yousta (used to)
6. cold -> called (x2)
7. burther -> brothers (brother)
8. kicboxin -> kickboxing (kickboxing)

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What's New?

Our pick of the latest solutions and innovations for secondary education

1

Judaism in the classroom

Join the Jewish Museum London for our Inclusive Judaism: Online Teachers' CPD session on 8th February 2024, from 4pm to 5:30pm. This CPD explores what it really means to be Jewish, and how best to teach an authentic and inclusive Judaism in classrooms. Explore whether Judaism is a religion, culture or ethnicity, Judaism as a worldview and discover top tips on using our Inclusive Judaism Image Library as a free classroom resource.

This session aims to provide the knowledge, tools and resources you need to be confident in teaching this topic in your classrooms. Tickets are priced at £10; to book your place, visit bit.ly/ts128-WN



2

Art and oratory

Each year, the National Gallery's Articulation Prize invites young people aged between 16 and 19 to deliver a 10-minute presentation on art and visual culture. The programme aims to build self-confidence, nurture original thinking and teach the vital life skill of public speaking. The research carried out for the presentations can contribute towards academic recognition, university applications and the personal essay component of A Level art.

All young people are warmly welcomed to take part, irrespective of their prior experience or background. To find out more, visit nationalgallery.org.uk/articulation

3

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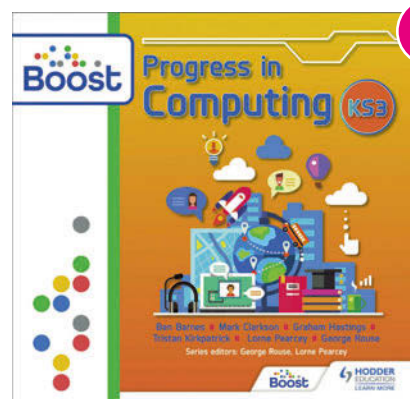
4

Future-proofed finances

Launched in September 2023, Future Skills is a free financial education resource from the online investment platform, Wealthify, created in partnership with Young Enterprise. Designed to help teachers engage 16- to 18-year-olds with the basics of finance, Future Skills includes video resources featuring the TikTok stars Maddie Grace Jepson and Kyron Hamilton, plus flexible lesson plans that enable teachers to deliver high quality financial education within the often limited time available to them. All resources can be downloaded via the Future Skills hub – for more details, visit wealthify.com/future-skills-for-teachers



5



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A problem of PLANNING

Dr Serkan Ceylan explains how the RAAC crisis has highlighted the need for better understanding and training in effective project management

Each year, enormous sums of money are wasted on failed projects. One recent report estimates the actual figure as being around £120 billion annually – largely due to mismanagement. Yet poor project management doesn't just waste money. In the worst cases, it can be detrimental in many other areas, such as public health and safety.

This recently came to light with the RAAC crisis, where school students were forced into temporary structures after a number of older school buildings were found to have structural weaknesses stemming from the use of reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete installed decades prior.

But how was the situation allowed to get to this point? When it comes to big construction projects, you might think that all the relevant precautions and measures would have been taken in an effort to prevent such disasters from happening – but that plainly didn't happen here. So let's unravel what did happen.

Big projects, common issues

The RAAC crisis emerged out of two key problems, the first being miscommunication. When issues relating to the presence of RAAC in school buildings were first raised, individual schools were tasked with identifying the presence of the material on their premises – despite most

likely possessing neither the knowledge, nor the resources to do so. This points towards a distinct lack of communication between what was needed, and ended up being actually done.

The second problem involved poor time management, in that resolving the issue took far longer than expected. When issues arising in ongoing projects are first raised, the relevant teams should be agile, responsive and flexible in a way that enables them to respond to any number of issues and hopefully overcome them.

When applied to the RAAC situation, we can see how the issue was initially raised in the 1990s, but that it took some time

for any action to finally be taken. We can assume that perhaps the consequences weren't made clear enough during this period – but after a portion of the staff room ceiling collapsed at Singlewell Primary School in Gravesend in 2018, quick action was needed.

We've often seen how effective project

management can be derailed by a combination of poor communication and ineffective task allocation – but there are some ways of streamlining the planning process to prevent these kind of issues from presenting legislative roadblocks. Which is where a common method called Agile project management, can help.

“Many headteachers have stated they were unable to properly assess RAAC in their school buildings”



Causes of collapse

Effective project management practices will be contingent upon robust planning, risk management, stakeholder engagement and clear communication. Many project managers are beginning to adopt the Agile method as it can provide a better structure, which in turn can help to mitigate some of the common issues encountered in large projects.

Agile management is an iterative approach to delivering a project throughout its life cycle that involves transparency, regular reviews and continuous improvement. Its main principles include:

- Embracing changing environments
- Breaking tasks into smaller pieces and prioritising them in terms of importance
- Promoting collaborative working by engaging all stakeholders
- Learning and adjusting at regular intervals to ensure positive outcomes
- Integrating planning with execution, to encourage self-organising mindsets that can help teams respond to changing requirements

Applied to the context of the RAAC issue, Agile management would have allowed for a quicker, more flexible approach. For

example, many headteachers have stated they were unable to properly assess RAAC in their school buildings – and that’s because, rather than undertaking a large-scale survey of the entire school estate, ministers instead relied on school leaders to respond to questionnaires that were originally sent out in 2022.

A good solution in this instance might have entailed regular, clear and structured meetings for the purpose of reviewing progress. Questions asked at such reviews could have included:

- What did we do yesterday that helped the team?
- What do I need to do today to help move things forward?
- Are there any blockers that will prevent our team from moving forward?

These questions might have drawn attention to the issue far sooner – especially if the DfE came to the conclusion that its initial

approach wasn’t working well for headteachers and school leaders. That may have prompted a series of changes and different decisions – such as enlisting teams of professional surveyors, dispatching them to schools and having them lead the assessments themselves.

Project management for school leaders

For projects to be successful – be they internal initiatives developed within your school, or prompted by collaborations with external parties – the goals you need to work towards include cultural change and leadership buy-in, alongside a willingness to adapt existing processes and structures to better align with Agile principles.

With the success of many school-based projects being dependent on multiple partners, it’s not uncommon to encounter difficult challenges with inter-organisational coordination. Many of the unresolved tensions we’ve come

across in the course of our research can be put down to cost-value concerns, project approval, matters of policy and governance, and issues with culture.

School leaders can overcome such challenges by implementing the following steps:

1. Training staff in creating a shared understanding of how Agile will alter the way you handle big changes within your school
2. Holding regular meetings and catch-ups that follow a clear agenda, to ensure things are kept on track. Remember, communication is key – prioritise your interactions with individuals over the broader process
3. When sourcing external contracting, it should be with suppliers that fit with Agile models
4. Be prepared for change, and plan for it by reviewing and developing your organisation’s structures, hierarchy and HR systems; try to respond proactively to change, rather than sticking to a set plan

For Agile transformation, a great deal of organisational design effort is still needed. To tackle this, school leaders need to work towards: people over processes, a better understanding of Agile, leadership buy-in and embracing change.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr Serkan Ceylan is Associate Dean of the Faculty of Business at Arden University, as well as a full-time senior lecturer in project management, an accredited project management trainer and a Fellow of both the Higher Education Academy and Association for Project Management. His book, *AgileFrame®: Understanding Multifaceted Project Approaches for Successful Project Management* is available now (International Project Management Consortium Ltd., £35)

Where next for TEACHER EDUCATION?

Viv Ellis and **Sarah Steadman** survey the initial teacher education landscape and put forward some ideas for how it might be improved...

Few, if any teachers in England need to be told that initial teacher education (ITE) and continuing professional development (CPD) standards are in a state of crisis. A crisis prompted not just by austerity-fuelled public sector funding shortfalls, but also by a dearth of ideas and a lack of competent government.

It's normal for a government to take an interest in improving things like ITE. Indeed, many governments have. But rare is the government which makes changes that alienate its key partners – to the point of considering whether to leave the sector completely – while also shooting itself in the foot by effectively eliminating 20% of its providers, after said providers fail to pass a hastily devised, paper-based accreditation exercise.

And yet, as we argue in our new anthology, *Teacher Education in Crisis: The State, the Market and the Universities in England*, this is precisely what's happened in England, and why we now face even greater challenges with teacher recruitment, and particularly teacher retention.

3 tips for policymakers

In our view, any future government that's serious about tackling the teacher recruitment crisis needs to address three key issues.

Firstly, embedded in any future policies should be a better understanding of why

people choose to teach and stick with teaching as a career. Secondly, said policies will need to reflect the differences between primary and secondary education, and be sensitive to the different subjects that make up the latter.

Finally, any new policies will need to seriously engage with teaching as a profession, rather than just paying lip service to the idea. Professionals are entitled to a degree of relative autonomy

to fulfil the competence-based assessment framework of the Teachers' Standards.

The development of skills, and the opportunity to practice pedagogy are both critical to the process of learning how to teach, of course – but becoming and being a teacher amounts to considerably more than just the accumulation of skills.

In the same way that becoming a pianist certainly involves learning scales, you don't simply stop there.

subsequent impact of teaching and learning.

An approach to teacher preparation with 'soul' at its centre seems like a far cry from education policies framed around 'effectiveness' that leave little room for exploration of what it means to be a teacher. Yet experience suggests that you can't produce sustainable effectiveness without considering the motivations, aspirations and wellbeing of teachers themselves.

"A 'one size fits all' approach to teacher education undermines professional autonomy"

when undertaking their work. They are not civil servants (with all due respect to civil servants!).

As a first step, we have to recognise that we've lost some pretty important things as a result of current teacher education policies, and that it's time we got them back.

The meaning of being a teacher

In England, the transition from 'teacher education' to 'teacher training' had become firmly embedded in policy by 2010, with multiple references to 'training' and 'trainees' appearing in Michael Gove's white paper, 'The Importance of Teaching' (see bit.ly/ts128-ITE1).

Behind the semantics lies the notion of the teacher being a technician, progressing along a linear pathway of skills acquisition

What motivates you to become a pianist is partly related to notions of identity – becoming a pianist, making music, and all that means for you – that extend beyond technical proficiency.

Teacher preparation can similarly centre on aspects of identity and belonging, thus building the foundations for a more culturally responsive and contextually-specific type of teaching.

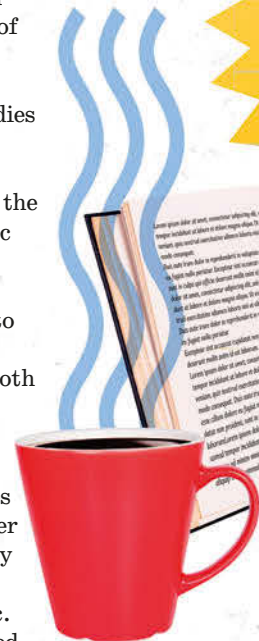
The University of Chicago's Urban Teacher Education programme, for example, includes a 'Foundations of Education' course incorporating what was originally termed a 'Soul Strand.' This sees aspiring teachers work together to understand how issues of class, culture, gender and language affect their identities, the identities of their students and the

Subject specificity

Just as there are big differences between primary teaching and secondary teaching, there are also significant distinctions between the teaching of different secondary subjects. Progression in a given subject or discipline will be marked out by different ways of knowing and different ways of representing knowledge.

Multiple studies over several decades have shown that it's the love of a specific subject or discipline that attracts many to secondary teaching. For both practical and philosophical reasons, it therefore makes sense for teacher education policy to be more subject-specific.

The prescribed



content of ITE and early career CPD currently places a high value on the theoretical understanding of memory. This leads inevitably to placing greater emphasis on retrieval practice and related concepts that draw from – it must be said – a fairly narrow slice of cognitive psychology.

But while retrieval practice may be vitally important in subjects such as mathematics, it's markedly less important in, say, English, where the subject's arguably less complex and valued aspects are those that rely on recall. That's not to say there's no place for memory in English – but its relative importance to the development of expertise is certainly different compared to other subjects.

This matters, because if you prioritise generic aspects of pedagogy above all else, you'll likely produce two negative effects. One is that

you'll discourage some students from studying subjects that don't align well with this prevailing emphasis on memory, because they don't see that as what's most valuable about the subject. The decline in students taking A Level English is a case in point.

The other negative effect will be the loss of strong subject communities among teachers, who will use these to not only develop their professional identities, but also collaborate on developing new subject knowledge.

Professionalism and agency

The teaching profession is full of talented and inspiring professionals who are willing and able to support new teachers. But the narrowing of teacher preparation to just the dissemination and acquisition of a prescribed toolkit of professional skills (underpinned by a similarly selective and narrow research base) threatens to undermine the professional agency of those in classrooms.

Mentors in schools possess specific knowledge of their own settings, and can provide valuable insights into the subtleties of practice that best serve their school communities.

Conversely, the ITE and CPD reforms of recent years are characterised more by the use of generic materials that fail to reflect the individual and often contextually-driven experience of teaching. This inevitably impacts upon the roles and identities of both aspiring and existing teachers, contributing to feelings of frustration and a sense of de-professionalisation.

A 'one size fits all' approach to teacher education undermines professional autonomy, thus making teaching a less attractive profession. And for those people who do still opt to join regardless, there are ever more limited incentives to stay.

Own goals

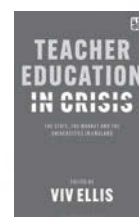
Speaking at the 2023 Labour Party Conference, Sinéad

McBrearty, CEO of the charity Education Support remarked, *"People who come into the profession have a strong sense of purpose. We've got gold dust in our hands, and all they want to do is teach. But we take bright, shiny people and grind the life out of them. It's an incredible own goal."*

Damning words, but indicative of how much the profession stands to lose if we continue to stifle the creativity of newcomers and reduce opportunities for practising teachers to share their expertise autonomously.

As the saying goes, *'Don't waste a good crisis.'* Teaching and teacher education are in crisis, but also at a crossroads. Policymakers need to take account of people's motivations and developing sense of identity as teachers, while recognising subject-specific differences.

Above all, policymakers need to understand that if you want an intelligent workforce that's both knowledgeable and adaptable, they need to be treated like professionals and encouraged to exercise their responsibilities and agency accordingly. Will England's next government be bold enough to embrace this approach?



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Viv Ellis is Dean of the Faculty of Education at Monash University in Melbourne, Australia; Sarah Steadman is a lecturer in English education at King's College London

Teacher Education in Crisis: The State, the Market and the Universities in England (edited by Ellis, with Steadman among the contributors) is available now (Bloomsbury Academic, £24.99), and also accessible through Bloomsbury's Open Access service via bit.ly/ts128-ITE2

Hanging on in there...

The headlines may suggest there's an exodus of educators from the profession, but our schools remain full of teachers opting to remain, observes **Jenny Hampton** – so what's keeping them going?

We know that teachers are leaving the profession. We know that fewer are joining.

There's no end to the statistics and headlines regarding the monumental staffing crisis in English schools, but what about those who are still hanging on in there? The teachers of 10, 15, 20+ years' experience who *aren't* starting their own businesses, or retraining, or taking leaps into other sectors?

These are the people deciding to stay in state education, despite years of underfunding, pay cuts and the challenges following in the wake of COVID. What do we know about this group of teachers who are effectively sustaining our schools outside of the headlines?

What keeps us going

There's a blob of naysayers who continue to insist, as they have done for years, that we teachers are too lazy and too in love with our endless holidays to actually leave our jobs. Now, it may be true that some people have built lifestyles and caring commitments around term-time jobs that afford a degree of flexibility after 3.30pm on certain days – but is it not equally possible that we're talking about people who are incredibly resilient and indomitable, despite contending with a mountain of accountability measures?

Maybe, just maybe, those teachers who remain teachers despite everything are professionals who are willing and able to see beyond the walls imposed by a

flawed, increasingly market-led education system. And if that's the case, what's enabling them to keep on hanging on?

Stepping away from leadership

One secondary school teacher of 27 years standing told me that it was his interactions with young people, the unexpected laughs and offers of help from teenagers, that have ultimately kept him from becoming just another retention statistic. He went on to explain that spending more time in the classroom

variety and challenge of leadership activities – be it analysing data, leading assemblies or designing curriculums (or an endless list of other tasks) – increase one's motivation and sense of fulfilment.

Yet the fact remains that the recruitment and retention crisis has cast a shadow over such leadership roles, from dealing with non-specialists to addressing holes in the timetable. So let's frame the question differently. Are there any posts in educational settings that aren't weighed down by

holding a tiny handbag. I'd somehow convinced myself that teaching involved the most mundane activities in the world, and that in no other industry were trained professionals expected to punch data into information systems or lug boxes about in the name of admin.

I also fancifully believed that teachers were the only ones who regularly 'dealt with behaviour' as part of their job. I was soon to be proven wrong on all counts.

During the five months I spent in the wilds of the corporate sector, I observed educational trainers load vans with boxes ahead of appearances at conferences. I came to see just how many drop-down menus and clicks my GP had to complete just to schedule a routine appointment. I started noticing the omnipresence of those signs warning the public that *'Abusive language won't be tolerated.'*

Outside of teaching, my days felt slower, longer and markedly inactive by comparison. It turned out that for me, at least, chatty corridors, hastily eaten home-made lunches and bulky bags weighed down with exercise books made for

"I'd somehow convinced myself that teaching involved the most mundane activities in the world"

and less on fulfilling management responsibilities in an office worked best for him.

A turning away from leadership opportunities was a common thread amongst a number of people I spoke to, and reflective of a wider picture. Teacher Tapp and School Dash's latest annual report on recruitment and retention highlights concerns around recruiting future heads, noting that, *"The percentage of deputy and assistant heads expressing an aspiration to become a headteacher has fallen to 43%, down from the pre-pandemic figure of 56%."*

There are others who argue the opposite – that more experienced teaching colleagues should, in fact, actively seek out additional responsibility, as the added

all the usual demands of middle leadership? What about important, yet rewarding whole school responsibilities like primary outreach, leading on literacy or overseeing new STEM initiatives?

The typical teacher will have developed an enviable skillset over the years they've spent in the classroom – so could the prospect of being able to draw on these outside of the classroom persuade some teachers to remain within the profession?

Beyond the greener grass

I myself previously left teaching, but later returned. I remember harbouring fantasies about leisurely queuing at lunchtime for an expensive sandwich while

more fulfilling workdays. And needless to say, that fancy sandwich queuing routine I'd coveted quickly became both expensive and boring.

Finding the joy

The vibrant voices of #edutwitter seem to suggest that engaging in bigger, more far-reaching conversations around key issues in education – assessment reform, funding, etc. – could help balance out the monotony of teaching the same topic for the 16th time.

Similarly, the continued abundance of blogs and websites dedicated to pedagogy indicate that reflecting on our daily practice in the context of broader pedagogical trends and ideas can help us better cope with those heavy marking loads. The same goes for extracurricular activities – whether it's coaching the Y8 cricket team, producing the school show or getting an environmental protection group off the ground.

In my case, I found carrying out school-based action research for my MA to be hugely motivating. It helped me draw a clear line between what was happening in my classroom and the ever-growing body of education literature and research.

Part of this process involved interviewing students and listening to them reflect on their learning, which helped me fully recognise the importance of what we do. We alter minds and change lives. Because of us, young people know more, can understand more and think more critically. Sometimes, students can simply feel less anxious and more content for being with us – which is why it's sometimes well worth finding ways to remind ourselves of the power and impact in what we do.

Colleague interactions

I love watching the teachers that fiction gives us. From *Mathilda's* Mrs Trunchball, to *Dead Poets Society's* Keating or *The Worst Witch's* Miss Hardbroom, they always get me thinking.

But how many of us devote similar levels of thought to our own colleagues and the effects they have on us? We all love a moan – and will have frequently earned it – but it can be hard when continually exposed to others' grievances, however justified, and difficult to make the most of our scant PPA time in shared rooms dominated by riotous gossiping.

Equally, however, there are those colleagues who always have time to listen, or an endless reserve of hilarious tales to lighten a gloomy January afternoon. I'm not suggesting laying down staffroom laws will transform teacher retention for the better – but it might be worth thinking about the people we

COACH YOURSELF FITTER

Few of us have the time to stop and reflect on the quality of our professional lives, which is a huge part of the problem. Difficult though it may be, making a concerted effort to pause and ask yourself some or all of the following questions can mark an important step in making your working day better.

- ▶ If I could wave a magic wand for a better work day, what would it look like?
- ▶ What is within my control to change?
- ▶ What activities bring me most joy?
- ▶ How can I do more of that, and less of the other stuff?
- ▶ Which people bring joy, ideas and laughter to my day?
- ▶ What steps do I need to take to make this happen? Who do I need to speak to? What do I need to find out?

find ourselves working alongside, and whether they improve our days or make them longer.

Across the country, teachers are turning up, working hard, changing lives and making a difference. Until we see some deep-rooted educational reforms, their hanging on is something we should all be grateful for.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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

Betrayals of trust

Gordon Cairns examines an academic study that sheds worrying light on the extent of sexual harassment directed against pupils by teaching staff

A recently published report has revealed a startling list of poor behaviour demonstrated by teachers towards their teenage students – from comments on some students’ physical appearance, to attempts to kiss them and even ask them out via dating apps.

Produced by a team of four researchers, ‘An Exploratory Study on Teacher Perpetrated Sexual Misconduct in Irish and UK Secondary Schools’ (see bit.ly/ts128-SH1) compiles the findings of a survey conducted among almost 600 adults about their experiences of sexual misconduct perpetrated by teaching staff while they attended secondary school in either the UK or Ireland in the recent past.

Virtually all respondents reported experiencing some form of sexist harassment (different treatment, offensive remarks), while 85% reported experiencing sexual harassment (ranging from offensive remarks relating to bodily appearances and sexual activity, through to unsolicited sexual messaging and unwanted advances).

One in five respondents reported that a teacher had attempted to establish an unwanted romantic or sexual relationship with them, while 10% recalled having been sexually harassed online by a teacher.

Upsetting stories

A detail that one of the report’s authors, Dr Kate Dawson of the University of Greenwich, found especially

distressing were the reflections by some respondents on the impact that sexual harassment had had on their academic lives in school and subsequent career choices.

Nearly half of the study’s Irish respondents and a third of those from the UK said that unwanted attention from a teacher had affected their participation in school-wide and extracurricular events.

In Dr Dawson’s view, “The most upsetting stories were from people in their early 40s who were really good at a

why it would be any different in a school context,” she notes.

Since the report’s publication in August 2023, Dr Dawson has been contacted by a large number of teachers harbouring concerns over a colleague’s behaviour, but unsure of how to proceed. She further adds that many have gone on to share the report via social media platforms, and have been met with a number of responses from other teachers describing similar recollections and experiences.

“In society at large, where there have been moves to teach people about what is appropriate behaviour, it’s bizarre that it isn’t included in teacher training”

particular subject, or had really enjoyed it, but had to avoid it [because of the teacher], or were made out to be a ‘troublemaker’, after missing multiple classes for a reason they couldn’t come forward and explain. This would also be a potential reason why young people would drop out of school.”

The study is among the first of its kind, and could be considered a snapshot of the issue as it currently stands – though Dr Dawson believes the problem is far bigger than is currently understood and will demand more data, given how existing research into hierarchical institutions consistently shows abuses of power taking place in all walks of life. “I can’t imagine

‘Weird conversations’

One possible reason for the under-reporting of teacher-perpetrated sexual harassment could be victims’ lack of awareness that an abuse has been committed. As Dr Dawson explains, educating victims can play a huge role in accurate reporting of the problem and its scale.

“Teenagers often have a very black and white understanding of what ‘sexual misconduct’ or ‘abuse’ means, and will often think of rape or forced sex,” she says.

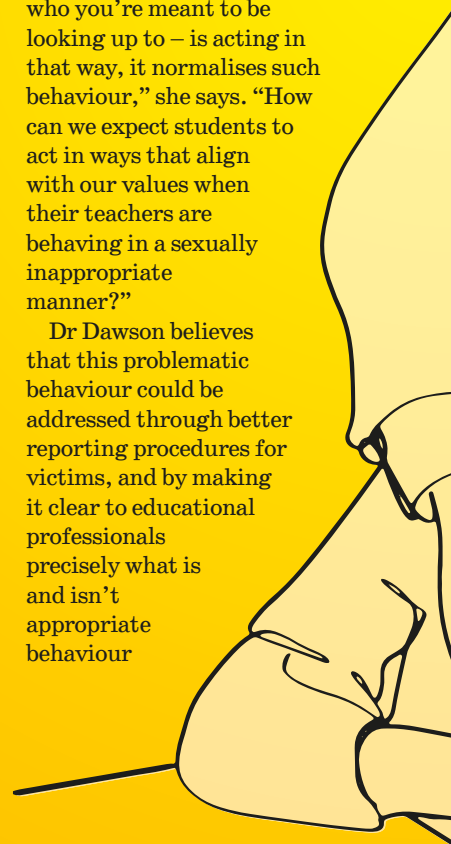
“If they’re being harassed by somebody, they might know it feels wrong, but lack the right words to describe it – and therefore find it

difficult to report or wrap their heads around it themselves. They might just think of the experience as a weird conversation, rather than as something illegal or inappropriate.”

While peer-to-peer sexual harassment remains an unfortunately visible problem within schools, impacts for victims tend to be far more severe when sexual harassment is meted out from someone in a position of relative power or trust. Dr Dawson observes that since harassment from teachers typically occurs on school grounds or in classrooms, it will often be witnessed by peers nearby.

“If the teacher – a person in a position of authority who you’re meant to be looking up to – is acting in that way, it normalises such behaviour,” she says. “How can we expect students to act in ways that align with our values when their teachers are behaving in a sexually inappropriate manner?”

Dr Dawson believes that this problematic behaviour could be addressed through better reporting procedures for victims, and by making it clear to educational professionals precisely what is and isn’t appropriate behaviour



(something that doesn't happen presently in England), beginning at the point of initial teacher training.

Culture of acceptance

As the report makes plain, sexual harassment can occur through flirting or inappropriate conversations, and doesn't have to involve sexual touching for it to be described as such.

So what would an effective response look like? "There are lots of different strategies that we need to take at various levels," concedes Dr Dawson, "but ultimately, it has to be about changing the culture of

acceptance around behaviours that could contribute to harassment. The first step would be for teachers to be trained on specifically what constitutes appropriate or inappropriate topics of conversation, and on ways of engaging with students."

Dr Dawson has reviewed the literature currently emerging from teacher training institutions that pertain to appropriate conduct with students and found them to be quite vague – with statements declaring that teachers need to 'maintain professional

relations with all staff and students', without explaining what a 'professional relationship' might actually look like in practice. Instead, where possible, she would like to see teacher training colleges providing detailed examples of what is and isn't okay to say to a student.

"In society at large, where there have been moves to teach people about what is appropriate behaviour, even on the tube, it's bizarre that it isn't included in teacher training – particularly when teachers have access to a huge number of students and vulnerable people, and are in a position of power over them."

"We would think people would use their common sense, but common sense *in relation to sexual harassment* isn't that common, because it's not something we talk about in public – we don't know what is and isn't inappropriate. And I don't know why we would assume teachers have this knowledge, when we recognise that the rest of the country doesn't."

Reporting mechanisms

Dr Dawson would also like to see the creation of mechanisms for recording harassment of students by staff that don't involve directly approaching a figure of authority within the school context, as doing so can be quite daunting.

"There needs to be an alternative avenue students can use to report incidents, and then have these followed up by a proper investigation, as we don't want people

making unsubstantiated claims."

She adds, "It's not fair for teachers to be called out on something that didn't happen – but if we can compare an incident in one school to, say, different, yet similar incidents flagged by students at other schools where a teacher previously worked, we can then see how that would be indicative of certain patterns of behaviour."

So where do we go from here? "The next step will be to develop a taskforce to see how we can develop a training resource, pilot it with teachers, and then roll it out to general teacher training for anyone who will be working in a secondary school or college," suggests Dr Dawson.

"We'll be conducting a large, nationally representative study to see how prevalent these experiences are, but we'll also be looking to speak with teachers in an anonymous study to examine the issue of school culture, and the acceptance or tolerance of harassment among teaching staff.

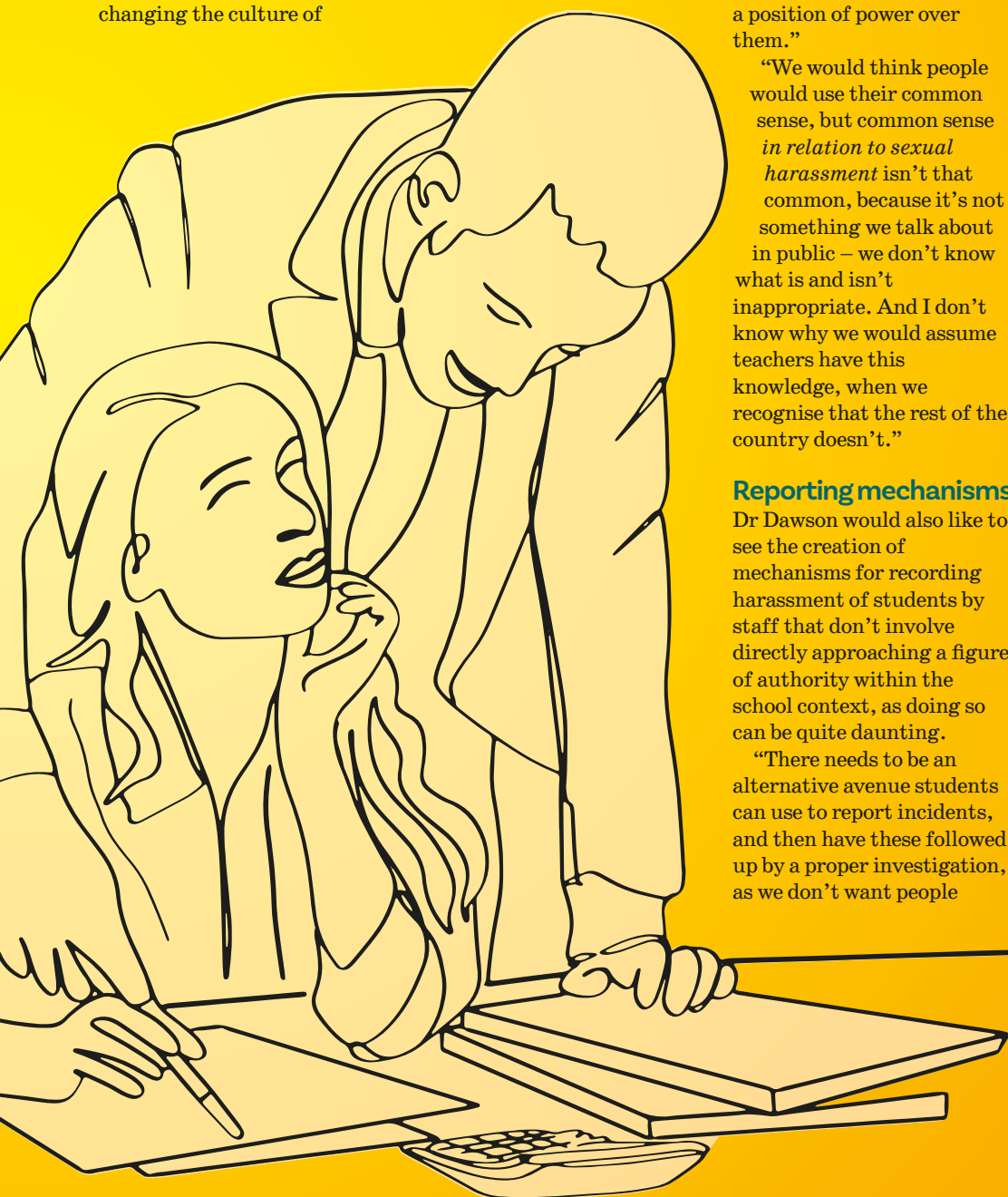
"Details of these further studies will be shared over the coming months. Readers can follow me on Instagram or X to keep up to date with the studies' findings, participate in future studies or potentially collaborate on the development of harassment prevention resources."



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

Dr Kate Dawson is a lecturer in psychology in the School of Human Sciences, University of Greenwich; follow her at @drkatedawson (Insta) or @katedawsonphd (X)



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IN THIS ISSUE

- + Help students with SEND establish friendship groups
- + The 'visible radar' approach to behaviour management
- + What impact can flexible working have on staff outcomes?
- + Your guide to ... classroom positioning
- + Sharpen students' problem-solving skills with the 'Got It' game
- + The government's expectations for AI in schools
- + The working memory essentials all teachers should know

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Thinking about...

GIRLS' ENJOYMENT OF PE

Girls' enjoyment of PE in school has declined dramatically over the past seven years, with research showing a lack of confidence, concern about periods and anxiety about appearance as the biggest barriers to girls being more physically active while at school.

The Youth Sport Trust has conducted its annual Girls Active survey since 2016, to try and uncover girls' issues and motivations when it comes to physical activity and sport.

This year's survey generated responses from over 14,000 girls at secondary schools in England – just 59% of whom said they enjoyed PE, compared to 74% back in 2016. In contrast, responses to that same question among boys this year was a much higher 84%. At a time when levels of social and emotional wellbeing are reaching unprecedented lows, we know that getting things right for girls in PE can be life-changing – yet it's clear that much more needs to be done if girls and young women are to be encouraged and supported in taking part.

This year's findings reveal that girls *do* want to be more active, with 'having fun' and 'being with friends' the top motivating factors. PE departments should thus consider how their provision could be aligned more closely with those motivations and drive engagement.

What also came through loud and clear was that girls want a greater choice of activities, and for their voices to be heard on how existing barriers might be broken down.

YST has been working with Olympic pole vaulter Holly Bradshaw, who has long campaigned for girls to have more choice with respect to the kit they wear in PE lessons. *"Girls should be able to what feels most comfortable to them, allowing them to focus on the activity and not what their body looks like,"* she says. *"The priority has to be supporting more girls to be active in a way that works for them."*

The need to ensure equal access and opportunities for girls is a key topic for everyone involved in physical education, and one that will be discussed at the upcoming Youth Sport Trust conference, which takes place in March 2024.

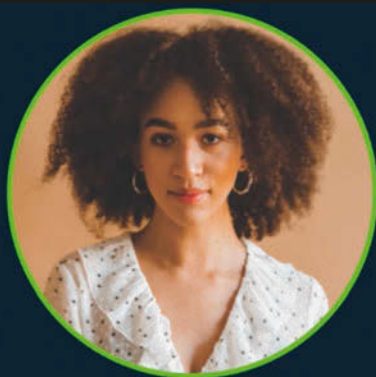
It's vital that we continue exploring girls' and young women's experiences of PE, how these are constantly changing and how we can become better at addressing the barriers they face. Via the free resources provided as part of our Girls Active programme (see bit.ly/ts128-LL1), and by highlighting the views and experiences of other high profile role models, we want to empower girls to the point where they themselves can play a role in designing and helping to deliver PE and sport that's both engaging and relevant to them.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Wendy Taylor is Development Manager for Girls at the Youth Sport Trust; for more information, visit youthsporttrust.org

CLOSE-UP ON... UNLOCKING FRIENDSHIP: A PERSONAL JOURNEY WITH SEN



FAMILY

GOOD FRIENDS

FRIENDS

PEOPLE THAT HELP ME

OTHER PEOPLE



I can't imagine a world without my friends being there to lean on, laugh with and share my time with. Why should my daughter be any different?

For children and young people with SEND, friendships can often pose unique challenges. The process of understanding how to build and maintain such relationships – and when might be time to part ways – can be fraught and complex.

In response to these challenges, a new and completely free resource is seeking to address the need for guidance and support, particularly for individuals with SEND. Educational lead and SEN consultant James Hanley has partnered with Amanda Attram, a qualified therapeutic counsellor, to candidly explore a wide range of different relationship issues and provide valuable insights into the multifaceted social aspect of friendships.

The 'Caring Friendships'

resource series forms part of Learn and Thrive's 'Learning for Life' project (see bit.ly/ts128-LL2), and is presented in an age-appropriate format for older learners who need the concepts around caring friendships traditionally taught in primary RSE to be reinforced.

With the help of these downloadable resources and practical activities, teachers can create engaging lessons tailored to different learners, while ensuring that messages between home and school align. The resources provide families with structured guidance for confidently and sensitively navigating complex conversations around friendships. By arriving at a better understanding of their child's social development, families can then empower them to cultivate supportive friendships and handle real-life friendship challenges.

Groups working with young individuals who have SEND can incorporate the Caring Friendships series into

their support programs. Those young people can then take what they've learned and put that knowledge into practice in a safe environment alongside their peers and supporting adults.

The reality is that individuals with SEND are comparatively more vulnerable upon reaching adulthood, being potentially exposed to crime, financial abuse, and exploitation, like cuckooing. It's therefore essential that we equip them with the knowledge and skills they'll need to build genuine and supportive friendships and recognise when they might need to seek help.

The overarching Learning for Life resource is designed to address the complexities of friendships for individuals with SEND. By giving educators, families, and community groups the tools and knowledge to foster caring friendships we can help to build a sense of collective resilience, alongside some much-needed support networks for vulnerable individuals.

DO THIS VISIBLE RADAR

Exercise better class control with these tips from Robin Launder...

Be a human radar by constantly scanning the room looking for instances of misbehaviour. If we catch misbehaviour quickly we can catch it early, making it easier to deal with.

If you make it obvious that you're always scanning the room – *really* obvious – the students will notice you're scanning and consequently be less likely to misbehave.

A variation of 'Visible radar' is the 'Pretend to notice' strategy. Let's say you're working with an individual student or a small student group. At a certain point, pretend to notice some form of classroom misbehaviour. Then stand up, take an obvious step forward or lean to the side and adopt a facial expression that says, 'Did I just notice something?'

Then, having scanned, very obviously switch your expression again to one that says 'No, I was mistaken. All is fine.' Then sit back down.

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



JOHANNA AIYATHURAI IS THE CEO OF LEARN AND THRIVE – A NEW CHARITY WHICH EMPOWERS LEARNERS WITH DOWN'S SYNDROME THROUGH DIGITAL LEARNING TOOLS AND VIDEO RESOURCES; FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT LEARNANDTHRIVE.ORG.UK

0.62%

The amount by which the 2024-25 schools budget was accidentally inflated, following an error in forecasts of pupil numbers – prompting a downward adjustment amounting to around £370 million

Source: DfE

The Education Endowment Foundation has produced a mixed methods review focusing on the prevalence of flexible working in schools and how it's used (bit.ly/ts128-LL4). Based on an analysis of existing evidence, job vacancies and School Workforce Census data, as well as interviews with representatives from support programmes and organisations, the review concludes that more robust evidence is needed to demonstrate its impact, but that there's considerable *perceptual* evidence pointing to its benefits for job satisfaction, staff productivity, diversity in recruitment and reducing the gender pay gap.

However, the review also notes feedback from school leaders citing negative impacts of flexible working on budgets and consistency of pupils' learning. Part-time employment was by far the most common form of flexible working, though a noticeable minority of teachers were found to be employed under flexible hours, remote working and phased retirement. Flexible working in all forms was practised more by primary educators than those at secondary, and was less likely to be found at schools in disadvantaged areas.

While acknowledging the difficulty of separating the impact of flexible working *per se* from the effectiveness of a school's leadership, staff culture and overall workload, the review concludes that the prospect of flexible working is something that staff value, and could therefore potentially have a role to play in improving rates of retention.

YOUR GUIDE TO...

CLASSROOM POSITIONING



The positioning you adopt in the classroom can have a huge impact on the flow of a lesson and influence you have over students' responses and behaviour. To that end, it's important to be acutely aware of the power your positioning can have, so that you're able to exploit this most intricate aspect of delivery and fine tune your lessons.

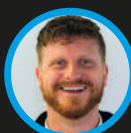
Many will intuitively assume that maintaining a central point in the classroom for delivery is the best approach. However, if we consider the field of view we'll need to see the whole class, we soon find that we'll need a 180° plane of view before we can see everyone.

Standing in the middle gives us 135°, which means that at any given time (so long as we don't move position) we can see just over two thirds of the class. Standing to one side, we can reduce our plane of view to 90°, letting us increase the number of students we can see by 33%. This is not only helpful for behaviour management, but can also make reading the room more efficient and effective.

Moving around the classroom whilst your learners are working allows you to better evaluate their progress over the lesson. It may be that you don't have to intervene explicitly; simply circulating around the classroom will give you a chance to check and monitor what's happening, which will in turn help to inform your teaching decisions in real time.

Circulate with purpose via a route that changes each time, since you don't want to be consistently starting with the same students in the same order. Effective circulation will also help you pick up on misconceptions as they arise, and let the students see for themselves that you're fully engaged in their learning.

Whether your preferred position is static or moving, making minor tweaks to where you are in the classroom can have a profound impact. There's lots that can go into those big, ambitious, aspects of lesson planning and delivery – but often, it can be the small things that make a lesson truly exceptional.



ADAM RICHES IS A TEACHER, EDUCATION CONSULTANT AND WRITER

139,000

The number of pupils severely absent from school (missing 50% or more of their possible sessions) over the autumn 2022 and spring 2023 terms

Source: School-Home Support

Need to know

A YouGov survey of 1,035 teachers commissioned by the assessment provider Renaissance has found that 57% of respondents believe that lack of confidence is the key barrier to pupils' enjoyment of maths.

Other barriers highlighted by the survey's respondents included pupils being unable to discern real-world applications and benefits of maths (cited by 55%), and the sense of an unhelpful acceptance among wider society that 'maths is hard' (identified by 46%). Nearly a third of respondents (32%) reported frequently hearing parents speak negatively about maths.

In terms of the teachers' own attitudes towards maths, 39% stated liking the subject 'a lot', though a substantial 30% said they would feel uncomfortable if tasked with solving a maths problem in front of their students.

When asked how pupils' maths learning could be improved, their suggestions included making use of more engaging classroom and homework resources (39%), setting personalised maths practice in mixed ability classes (27%) and utilising education technology more extensively (27%).



WHY NOT TRY... 'GOT IT'

Share this low threshold, high ceiling quickfire activity with your students to give them a chance to dig deeper and develop their problem solving skills..

'Got It' is a two-player game which, at least on the surface, is all about simple addition and subtraction. However, the *real* challenge here is to find a winning strategy that always works.

The game involves students working systematically, conjecturing, refining their ideas and putting their knowledge of factors and principles into practice. So let's get started...

How to play

'Got It' can be played in pairs, or online against an AI opponent by navigating to rich.maths.org/teachsecondary

1. Start with a 'Got It' numerical target of 23.
2. The first player selects a whole number from 1 to 4.
3. Players then take it in turns to add a further whole number, again from 1 to 4, to the running total.

4. The player who manages to hit the target of 23 with their selected number wins the game.

Sounds easy enough, right? Ask your students to play the game several times. Can they find a winning strategy? Using this strategy, can they guarantee that they'll always win, or does the success of their strategy depend on which player goes first?

Try changing up the game by choosing a new Got It target, or playing with a different range of numbers. Does the strategy need adapting? Is it always best to start the game?

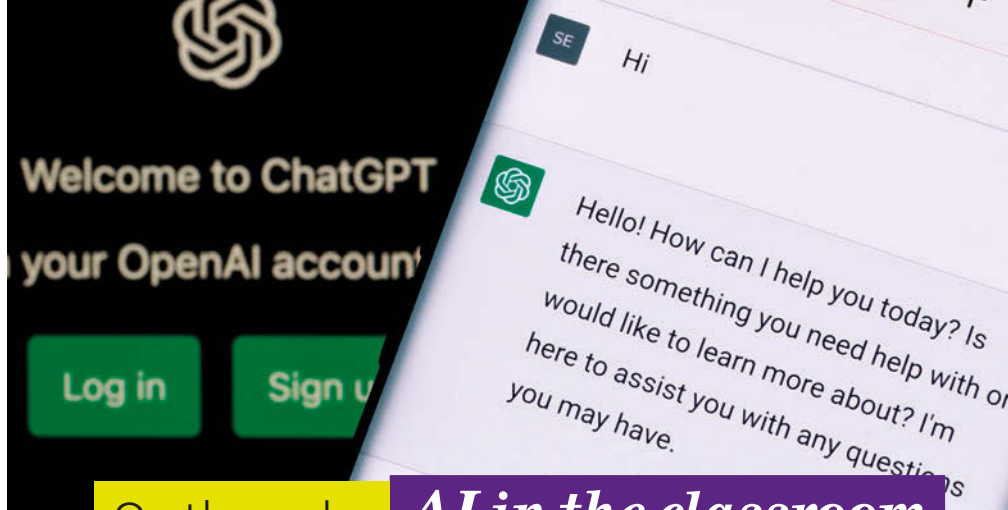
Extending the game

To add further challenge, you could change the rules so that a player can't add the same number that their opponent used when it was their turn. Alternatively, you could ask the students to see if they can exercise their strategy without writing anything down.

You can play the game online, and also download some supporting teacher notes and a classroom poster from the NRICH website via rich.maths.org/teachsecondary



DR EMS LORD IS DIRECTOR OF NRICH. PART OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE, NRICH FOCUSES ON PROBLEM SOLVING AND ON CREATING OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENTS TO LEARN MATHEMATICS THROUGH EXPLORATION AND DISCUSSION. DISCOVER MORE PROBLEM SOLVING ACTIVITIES, AND REGISTER TO BECOME A PROBLEM-SOLVING SCHOOL AT rich.maths.org/problem-solving-schools-teach-secondary



On the radar *AI in the classroom*

The DfE has published a policy paper (see bit.ly/ts128-LL3) setting out its stance on the use of generative artificial intelligence – think ChatGPT, Google Bard and similar examples – within education settings. The document doesn't delve too deep into details, but rather summarises a set of broad principles and practices it wants to see the teaching profession adopt with respect to AI moving forward.

Core to the government's vision is the harnessing of AI's rapid content analysis and production processes to

reduce workload and free up teachers' time – though the policy paper does acknowledge current issues with the accuracy, tonal suitability and timeliness of AI-produced content.

To that end, the government makes clear where liability for AI-produced content will lie, stating that, *"Whatever tools or resources are used to produce plans, policies or documents, the quality and content of the final document remains the professional responsibility of the person who produced it and the organisation they belong to."*

The policy paper goes on to note that existing directives with respect to data privacy and online safeguarding will very much apply in the context of AI use for educational purposes. Schools and colleges will need to ensure protected intellectual property and student-authored work aren't used to train generative AI models without appropriate consent or copyright exemptions, and observe Keeping Children Safe in Education guidance and content filtering/monitoring standards when students engage with AI technologies.

TRENDING

Our pick of the recent resources and launches teachers might find useful...

EMPLOYEE INSIGHTS

ImpactEd has launched a new online service called The Engagement Platform, which aims to assist schools with the collection of employee engagement data. As well as providing leaders with timely feedback and access to benchmarks, the service also offers a range of resources and case studies to support schools with their recruitment planning and retention efforts. tep.uk

LESSONS FROM NATURE

As part of its Nature Park initiative to encourage the embedding of nature in everyday teaching and learning, The Natural History Museum has made available a series of free natural science and outdoor learning resources spanning EYFS to KS5. educationnaturepark.org.uk

1 MINUTE CPD

WORKING MEMORY

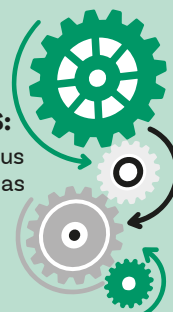
THE KEY WORKING MEMORY FACTS THAT EVERY TEACHER SHOULD KNOW...



- LIMITED CAPACITY:** Working memory can only hold small amounts of information (typically 4 to 7 items) for short periods

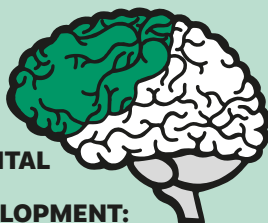
2 CRUCIAL FOR COGNITIVE TASKS:

It's essential for various cognitive tasks, such as problem-solving, decision-making, comprehension and mental arithmetic



3 FRONTAL LOBE DEVELOPMENT:

The prefrontal cortex (located in the brain's frontal lobes) plays a central role in maintaining and manipulating information in working memory



4 DEVELOPMENTAL CHANGES:

Working memory capacity tends to increase with age, particularly during childhood and adolescence



5 VULNERABLE TO DISTRACTIONS:

Working memory can be easily disrupted by distractions, stress or multitasking



ZEPH BENNETT IS A PE TEACHER AND SCHOOL ACHIEVEMENT LEADER WITH 25 YEARS' TEACHING EXPERIENCE; YOU CAN FIND MORE OF HIS EDUCATIONAL ILLUSTRATIONS BY FOLLOWING @PEGEEKSCORNER

Got a great learning idea? Email editor@teachsecondary.com or tweet us at [@teachsecondary](https://twitter.com/teachsecondary)



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

Lessons learned



Every day spent in the classroom presents a valuable opportunity to learn about yourself and discover ways of becoming better, counsels **John Lawson**...

"Education of the heart is every bit as important as the education of the mind." – Aristotle

One of the world's wisest teachers once shared two tips with me that could dramatically transform anyone's career. I've forgotten the first, but I definitely remember the second as being 'Write stuff down, or you'll forget and have to re-learn everything.' So true.

To this day, I'm still amazed when I see teachers at training sessions who aren't taking notes. Why assume that a speaker won't say nothing worth jotting down? While I generally dislike the imposition of dogmas, I'm prepared to make an exception when it comes to keeping a thoughtfully curated learning journal, since doing so can genuinely benefit most teachers and disadvantage none.

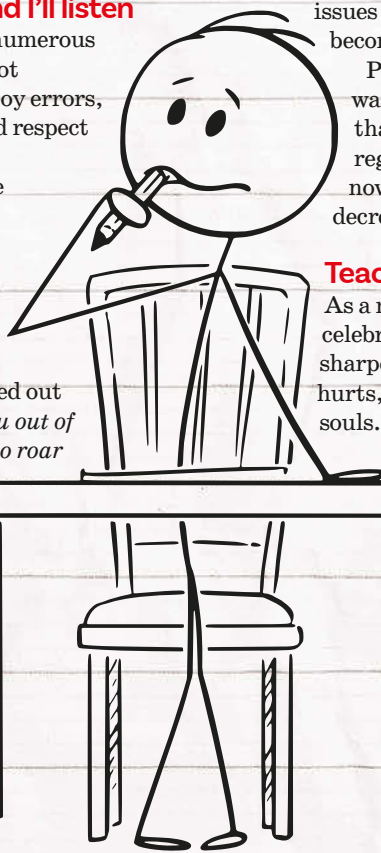
When used properly, a good learning journal can become a guide to teaching excellence that resonates with our unique daily experiences. If I could add one mandated task to our national teaching programme, it would absolutely be collaborative and guided journaling for teachers – 'What did we learn about ourselves and our teaching this week...?'

Shout and I'll hear you; speak and I'll listen

My own NQT year was a nightmare for numerous reasons, but my gravest failing was to not effectively correct my recurring schoolboy errors, making it impossible for me to command respect from those who gave me the most grief.

I learned too slowly that authoritative teachers are also astute and methodical learners. On countless occasions I was goaded into one-on-one verbal 'battles' with students that I always lost (as most teachers do) – even those I fancifully imagined at the time that I'd 'won'. As an Irish farmer once pointed out to me, "A donkey might be roaring at you out of a field – but you're under no obligation to roar back." To often, I'd been that dumb ass bellowing back...

Worse, I wasn't just shouting. I'd consistently allow pride and prejudice to engender anger in me, instead of stepping back and composing myself. After all, it was so easy to blame the students for provoking my anger, since they could zero in and press all the right buttons. No matter how often I was told to not take things personally, I invariably did.



Elusive perfection

When students threw all my heartfelt efforts at educating them back at me, untouched, I'd feel affronted. Yet the thing is, anger never helps us remain as composed and professional as we should be. Once we've lost our temper, the subsequent focus will rightly centre on any unprofessional behaviour we exhibit, rather than whatever fault may have provoked the outburst in the first instance. (Plus, administrators will naturally prefer to deal with one teacher, rather than many parents.)

After school each day, I'd therefore compose a sentence or short paragraph centring on something I'd learned about the children, the school I was based at, or teaching and education more generally. Even when I felt I hadn't learned anything all that novel, I'd still spend around 10 minutes quietly reflecting on the woes and wonders of the day just gone. Flawless days were rare.

By the end of that first school year, I'd identified many priceless principles that would go on to serve me well throughout my career – such as always putting behaviour before the curriculum, because if we can resolve behaviour issues calmly and sensibly, then everything else becomes much more manageable.

Perfection truly eludes us all, but in hindsight, I was more confident than I'd dared hoped to be after that car crash of a first year at the chalkface. I still regularly revise my own Learning Journal, even now – though the rate of fresh insights naturally decreases as we improve...

Teach as you can

As a mentor, I now regularly encourage ECTs to celebrate their mistakes, because they're among our sharpest teachers. When we make a mistake that really hurts, the pain lingers and the lesson seeps into our souls. I continue to have occasional recurring nightmares of being naked and losing control of a class. If we want to enrich young people's lives and enjoy doing so, then we must swiftly correct any consistent gaffes as early as possible.

Perhaps the greatest value of keeping a Learning Journal is that it eventually becomes a personalised account of our own individual teaching journeys, in contrast to the latest guru's guide to 'effective teaching'.

Teach as you can, and not as you can't – because the way that works for you is always the best way to teach.

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