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FROM THE EDITOR

“Welcome...”



As any history teacher will gladly tell you, it can be fascinating to look back on major historical pivot points and sketch out the far-reaching, transformative changes they set in motion. Observe the 2007/8 financial crisis, for example, and how it went on to shape the economic policies and political upheavals – Brexit, anyone? – of the 2010s. Some shrewder economists did their best to draw attention to those repercussions at the time; most of us will have only come to appreciate its true

magnitude some years after the fact.

Now consider COVID. Yes, there’s been plenty of commentary and speculation as to what the true lasting legacies of the pandemic will be, and much debate over what the ‘new normal’ actually refers to. What can’t be denied, however, is that its long term material impact is now impossible to ignore.

One post-COVID phenomenon that any teacher or SLT member will be all too familiar with is the dramatic rise in student absence. Can it be ascribed to a new, widespread form of teenage anxiety? Or a sense that distance learning tools now make a student’s presence at school neither here nor there in the eyes of their parents – just so long as they’re listening to what their teacher says, whether on-screen or in person?

The EEF is one of many organisations busily uncovering some of the factors that might be at play (see page 15). Schools, confronted with worrying registration data, are meanwhile responding as best as they can, through increased parental engagement, retaining distance learning as a core part of their offering, and by building up those aspects of the school experience that are impossible to experience at home – such as extracurricular sporting activities (see page 61).

From our current vantage point, it’s tempting to see the spike in absence rates as a temporary, if stubborn blip, rather than a permanent and troubling shift in how pupils, parents and school leaders see each other. And yet, the government has deemed the issue serious enough to warrant the creation of a sprawling centralised attendance data set, to which all schools in the country will henceforth be regularly sending their daily attendance registers (see bit.ly/ts133-EL1).

It remains to be seen what that data tells us – how unprecedented the situation now is, the extent to which the problem varies by region, whether we’re ever likely to see a return to 2019-era absence figures. It could yet turn out to be another ‘new normal’ the profession has to reckon with. Let’s hope for everyone’s sake that it isn’t.

Enjoy the issue,

Callum Fauser
callum.fauser@theteachco.com

On board this issue:



Ama Dickson is a maths teacher



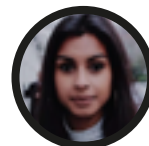
David Voisin is a head of MFL



Freya Morrissey is specialist for learning behaviours at the EEF



Tony Ryan is chief executive officer of the Design and Technology Association



Meera Chudasama is an English, media and film studies teacher



Phil Mathe is a PE teacher, researcher, speaker and author

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

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teach SECONDARY

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The newsletter

Teach Secondary's digest of the latest goings-on in the profession...

The UNINFORMED teacher's guide to...

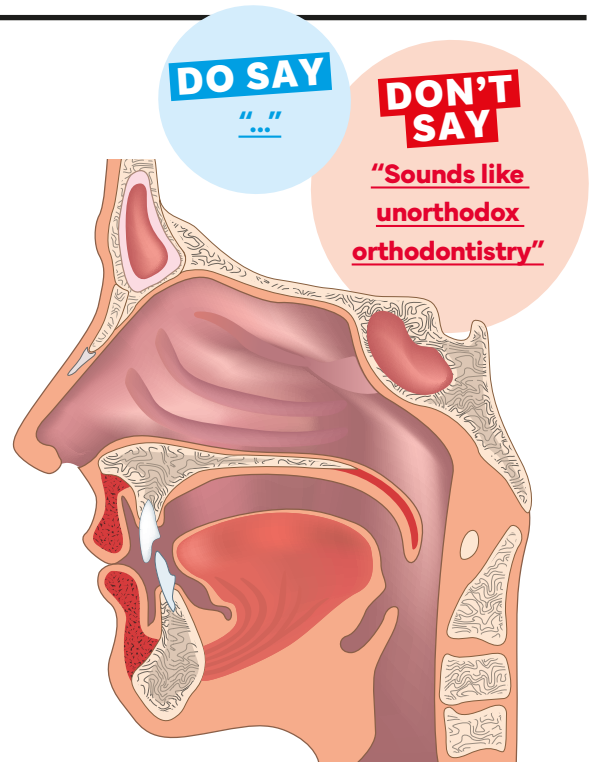
MEWING

There may be some among us who greeted with glee the recent passing of a congressional bill that will effectively outlaw TikTok in the US – and potentially everywhere else – unless parent company ByteDance divests itself of the equally loved and loathed video sharing platform.

We'll have to wait and see how that plays out, but in the meantime, those TikTok trends just keep on coming, the latest being 'mewing' – an activity that involves pressing your tongue against the roof of your mouth for prolonged periods, in order to supposedly strengthen and accentuate your jawline.

While you're busy doing that you can't speak, of course – which is why students can now be found mischievously 'mewing' in class, and responding to questions from teachers with a silent 'finger on lips, finger tracing jawline' gesture.

Its viral popularity among teens might be a relatively recent phenomenon, but mewing's been around for a while, having originally been devised and propagated by John and Mike Mew – a father/son duo who have spent decades fighting the orthodontic establishment, after Mew senior was struck off for pursuing his novel treatments. Mew junior is meanwhile in the midst of a General Dental Council misconduct hearing, with proceedings due to resume in mid-April – so make of that what you will...

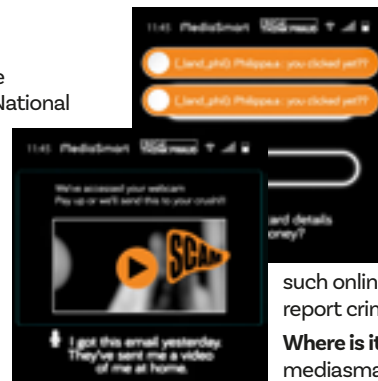


BEAT THE BUDGET



What's on offer?

Designed to support the government's ongoing National Campaign Against Fraud, these resources consist of a downloadable 4-minute video and advice flyer providing advice on how spot the warning signs of possible online frauds and scams.



How might teachers use the resources?

The video and accompanying information can be incorporated within citizenship and/or PSHE lessons exploring topics such as online interactions and how to report criminal activity.

Where is it available?

mediasmart.uk.com/scams

What are we talking about?

Scam flags add up to a scam

Who is it for?

KS4/5

WHAT THEY SAID

"I heard recently from a fantastic school I went into. They told me how their Ofsted experience had gone, and I was shocked, I was actually shocked. I thought, 'If I'd have met these people I'd have probably punched them.' They were really rude."

Education Secretary Gillian Keegan, speaking at the 2024 ASCL Annual Conference

Think of a number...

57%

of 8- to 17-year-olds feel politicians rarely or never listen to them

Source: Opinion polling commissioned by the Our Generation. Our Vote coalition of charities and NGOs

61%

of teachers believe their workload to be unmanageable
Source: Tes Wellbeing Report 2024

19,563

schools in England are currently judged by Ofsted to be Good or Outstanding – approximately 90% of the total

Source: DfE

ONE FOR THE WALL

"Fail we may, sail we must"

Andrew Weatherall



A stark divide

Amid eyewitness accounts of schools increasingly giving students meals, changes of clothes and even showers, a new report from the Centre for Young Lives and Child of the North (see bit.ly/ts133-NL1) has sought to highlight some of the latest statistics concerning child poverty in the UK.

The report notes that 4.3 million UK children currently live in poverty, with 1.05 million of that group in the North of England alone. It also flags up some stark inequalities, pointing to how 58% of children in the North of England reside in LAs with above average numbers of low-income households; in the rest of England, the same can be said for 19% of children.

The report goes on to set out three key policy recommendations: making the eradication of child poverty a national priority; adopting a new national strategy that would see the existing educational infrastructure formally utilised in addressing child poverty; and focusing 'levelling up' efforts in those areas where schools are serving the most disadvantaged communities.

According to Anne Longfield, executive chair of the Centre for Young Lives and a former Children's Commissioner, "The report makes it clear that we need to start prioritising children by promoting an equal life chance from all aspects. It is not enough to raise children's aspirations through education alone without poverty-proofing schools, narrowing the gaps in attainment, or by allowing children to sleep in a cold bedroom or study on an empty stomach."

SAVE THE DATE

SPEECHES AND CORRESPONDENCE

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



THE SPEECH:

Sir Martyn Oliver addresses 2024 ASCL Annual Conference

WHO? Sir Martyn Oliver, His Majesty's Chief Inspector

WHERE? Bett 2024, ACC Liverpool, Merseyside

WHEN? 8th March 2024

"We want to see high standards for all children, and positive outcomes for all children. This is how we start to tackle disadvantage as a society – by opening new doors, creating new opportunities and better life chances.

We will, of course, continue to call out providers when they aren't meeting the needs of children and parents. After all, children only get one childhood. None of us want to see their potential limited because of where they were born – or their futures mapped out based on their background.

But that does not mean that we can ignore context. I know we can do more to recognise the challenging circumstances you face. To look at the bigger picture and the context in which you're working.

We can be better at focusing on the things you are and should be doing. The areas where you can add value and make a difference. But no single school can do it all. I know you want to do everything you can for the children and communities you serve, but you cannot do it alone. And we don't expect you to.

So, I want Ofsted to be better at understanding the decisions you make, in the context you are working in. Understanding why you made those decisions and the difference they made for your children and learners. And when we find problems that you can't control, I want us to do more to follow the thread and hold the right people to account."

THE RESPONSE:

NASUWT responds to Chancellor's Spring Budget

FROM? Dr Patrick Roach, General Secretary of the NASUWT

REGARDING? March 2024 Budget speech delivered by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Jeremy Hunt

WHEN? 6th March 2024



"The Chancellor had the choice today to deliver real investment to secure the future of education and public services, but he chose not to do so. Today's Budget has once again failed to deliver for pupils and their teachers.

Schools and colleges do not need any more lectures from this government. They need real investment to deliver the best for the children and young people they are responsible for teaching. Our crumbling public services will be this government's toxic and sorry legacy, for which children, families and working people will pay the price for years to come."

1 MAY 2024 The Schools & Academies Show | 13/27 JUNE 2024 Eastern/Northern Education Shows | 4-5 JULY 2024 The 14th Festival of Education

1 MAY 2024

The Schools & Academies Show
ExCeL London
schoolsandacademiesshow.co.uk

School leaders and MAT staff may want to reserve the first day of May for what promises to be a packed event. Over 180 education suppliers will be in attendance, showing off products and services designed to support your operations, alongside presentations discussing the latest education trends and policy developments. There'll also be plenty of CPD, via an extensive series of workshops and training sessions.

13/27 JUNE 2024

Eastern/Northern Education Shows
Newmarket Racecourse/Bolton Stadium Hotel
easterneducationshow.uk/
northerneducationshow.uk

June sees a pair of events taking place at either end of the country, aimed at school leadership and senior administration staff. At the Eastern Education Show and Northern Education show, attendees will get to view a series of informative talks and take in a variety of illuminating sessions across a range of topics – from AI governance and behaviour, to inclusion and teacher retention.

4-5 JULY 2024

The 14th Festival of Education
Wellington College, Crowthorne
educationfest.co.uk

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Get Into Film



ESCAPE FROM EXTINCTION
(2020, 89 MINUTES, PG)

CURRICULUM LINKS:

Science, geography

Animal extinction is a global issue occurring on such a large scale that it can often be difficult to imagine its severity. This documentary, narrated by Helen Mirren, dives into the problem and the great efforts being taken to preserve animal species across all seven continents, such as rhinos, koalas and orangutans.

Featuring interviews with some key leaders in conservation, and including rare footage of endangered animals across land and sea, the film brings awareness to this urgent matter.

Discussion questions:

- (Before the film) What do you think are some of the main factors causing Earth's most endangered species to die out?
- Does the film consider the idea that zoos could be harmful?
- Why are keystone species so important? How does the loss of keystone species affect local ecosystems?
- What does the documentary tell us about human intervention? Is this necessary to help struggling wildlife?

Head online to intofilm.org to stream this film for free and download a film guide containing Teacher's Notes. Look out also for our resources marking Earth Day, which takes place on Monday 22nd April

Retweets

Who's been saying what on Twitter this month?

Tom Rogers @RogersHistory

Sorry, I'll keep banging this drum, teacher-voice is more important than it's ever been. Classroom teachers need a genuine platform and to be central to the education conversation.

Miss Smith @HeyMissSmith

Your reminder that EduTwitter is a tiny minority of teachers. Most of the teacher community is still on Facebook laughing at teacher dancing memes or posting pictures of elaborate tuff trays

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

TEACHER TALES

True stories from the education chalkface

Fit for Christmas

I was assisting some Y7s with their preparations for a planned circuit training demonstration at a forthcoming Y6 open evening. I explained to them in detail what the circuit training demonstration would involve, how they'd need to move around on the whistle, the physical benefits of circuit training and so forth.

Having finished, I invited questions from the class. One little boy put his hand up and asked, "Will we be using real turkeys, Miss?"

Mystified by the question, I replied, "I'm sorry, what do you mean?" His response - "For the turkey training, Miss."

Intensi-tea

I once took up a kind offer from two Sixth Form students who'd volunteered to help cater for our post-rugby match teas - due to be served to 60 rugby players and their guests - and was

introduced to a new and...interesting strength of tea.

After filling the large (45 cup) teapot with boiling water, the helpers duly busied themselves with preparing the edibles that would be served alongside the teas. I commenced pouring the tea, but quickly found that the teapot was extraordinarily weighty, and releasing only small dribbles of dark brown liquid.

Upon removing the teapot lid I discovered a solid, sodden mass, and immediately enquired as to what exactly they'd put into the pot before adding the water. "Sir, you said that we were catering for 60 people - so we put in 60 teabags."

Have a memorable true school tale or anecdote of your own? Share the details, and find more amusing stories, at schoolhumour.co.uk

A FEW MINUTES OF DESIGN

Redraw or trace the shape below.

The shape is unfinished.

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

#29 ONE OBJECT 100 WAYS

A Few Minutes of Design FINISHING WELL

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5 REASONS TO TRY... PGL UNITE!

NEW! Relationship-building adventures for secondary schools



30 SECOND BRIEFING

UNITE! adventures boost your students' connections with each other. Help your students build strong bonds and harness the power of teamwork on their next school adventure with us.

1 BUILD STRONG BONDS

PGL understands that uniting your secondary school class at the start of the academic year is crucial. UNITE! adventures are specifically designed to help students encourage and understand others, and build empathy as part of our new R.E.A.C.H. framework – which supports children's development in Relationships, Experiences, Ability, Character and Health & Wellbeing. Every moment of a UNITE! adventure presents opportunities for unlocking students' true potential. Listening, being open and sharing opinions is easy when they're working together to win at Archery Tag!

2 TAILORED FOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS

We provide a hand-picked experience, to ensure that your adventure is age-appropriate. With a dedicated PGL 'Groupie' on hand at every step, your stay with us will be personalised and empowering. UNITE! adventures place greater focus on developing existing skills, building relationships and boosting camaraderie through various tasks and challenges, with shared excitement being the essence of the programme. We can also offer activities exclusive to secondary schools, such as multi-craft watersports sessions, axe-throwing and archery tag, so your group's experience is an adrenaline-filled, relationship-building adventure.



3 SPARK BREAKTHROUGHS

Via a range of relationship-building activities organised from dawn till dusk, your students can grow their social and emotional skills. BOOST TEAMWORK by overcoming challenges and celebrating success; ENHANCE COMMUNICATION SKILLS through listening, being open and sharing opinions; BUILD RELATIONSHIPS and camaraderie through shared experiences and excitement; GROW CONFIDENCE through

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mastering new skills together; ENCOURAGE EMPATHY and understanding of others.

4 JOURNEY OF TOGETHERNESS

For Years 7-9, PGL knows it's important to start preparing students for what life brings. UNITE! is perfect for enabling students to push their limits and reach for the skies, (with a little help from their friends). UNITE! adventures create supportive spaces that provide opportunities to learn in different ways, through a variety of different experiences, broadening students' knowledge and developing their ambitions in the process. We provide the equipment, but the real champions of UNITE! are your students, when they have fun – together.

5 TEAMWORK MAKES THE DREAM WORK

Bouncing back from setbacks is easier on a resilience-building trip with your classmates. UNITE! adventures inspire connections and build empathy, while helping to regulate the social and emotional intelligence skills that are essential to cooperation. Our passionate PGL staff and ideally situated centres can help take your next learning-outside-the-classroom, relationship-building experiences to ever higher levels. Plus, our dedicated Customer Service Team will be on hand to ensure your journey with Team PGL runs smoothly.

Key Points

We can provide various options to suit all budgets – including 3 to 5 day relationship-building experiences that are perfect for the start of the autumn term

UNITE! experiences are available at 15 locations across the UK; 95% of schools in the country are located within a 2-hour drive from one of our PGL centres

Uniting classes at the start of the school year is important for creating learning environments in which students feel comfortable, included and engaged

Go beyond the textbook and join us in putting a fresh spin on how young people grow and develop – visit schoolsandgroups.pgl.co.uk/reach-unite

Practice what YOU PREACH

Kevin Rooney contemplates whether the ‘tolerant’ thing to do would be to restrict or defend the faith schools model...

“What are schools for?” my teacher friend Jenny once asked me rhetorically, before going on to answer her own question. *“Schools are about conveying a body of knowledge to the next generation. Faith isn’t knowledge. Belief isn’t knowledge. So faith schools should be banned.”*

She told me this knowing, of course, that I, her fellow teacher, am both a Catholic and a defender of Catholic schools. I found her answer reductive, unmediated and illiberal – and like any good mate, I told her so.

Education and socialisation

When thinking about the societal role performed by schools, I find it helpful to distinguish between *education* and *socialisation*. Passing on the best that has been thought and said to the next generation, Mathew Arnold-style, is noble, but schooling concerns socialisation as well.

For Catholic parents, the school is there to assist them in the ‘character formation’ of their child. A Catholic education ideally involves excellent academic education, inculcation of an intellectual curiosity and a commitment to assisting them in raising their child in the Catholic faith and its associated values.

Parents wanting this socialisation process to reflect their deeply held religious beliefs is, in my

view, entirely appropriate, which is why I support faith schools. To argue against this is to argue against the appropriateness of parents seeking to influence their own children, and to attack parental autonomy.

Unfortunately, a growing number of pressure groups, teaching union representatives and politicians seem prepared to do just that. A commonly advanced justification for such attacks is the notion that children require

famed for its non-sectarianism and moderate liberalism. The headline-grabber was a significant rise in support among its membership for a united Ireland – but in the same survey, two thirds also said that single-faith schools should be banned.

In practice, almost all schools in Northern Ireland are faith schools – and yet, 68% of those belonging to this party that prides itself on its tolerance and liberalism believe that these

class prejudice that goes largely unchallenged. Tonge went on to explain that the real source of division in NI isn’t religious schooling, but where one tends to stand on the constitutional question of whether there should be a United Kingdom or United Ireland.

Put simply, if religious schools were to suddenly vanish from NI tomorrow, the extent of division there would not decrease one iota.

“Respect for ‘diversity’ seems to rapidly fade when religious schools are raised”

‘rescuing’ from the clutches of religious indoctrination. I used to just smile wryly at comments from opponents of Catholic schools who drew silly comparisons with fantastical cults, but such comparisons are becoming increasingly common.

A curious paradox

There is a curious paradox currently at play regarding faith schools. On the one hand, respect for a plurality of beliefs and values is a hallmark of multiculturalism – but this respect for ‘diversity’ seems to rapidly fade when religious schools are raised.

Research carried out by Liverpool University on Alliance Party of Northern Ireland members last month is a case in point. The party is

schools shouldn’t be permitted. It begs the question – how should one define ‘tolerance’ and ‘liberalism’ today?

Middle class prejudice

A common criticism of Catholic schools in NI is that they promote division and sectarianism.

Such accusations may go down well at polite dinner parties, but they’re untrue. As Jon Tonge, author of the aforementioned Alliance Party research put it in a piece for *The Belfast Telegraph*, “*Blaming segregated education for the sectarianism that often prevails in Northern Ireland is convenient, but intellectually lazy.*”

I’d say it’s more than laziness; it’s a middle

Real secularism

In England, an assortment of groups spanning militant atheists, humanists, secularists and liberals continue to campaign for the closure of all faith schools in the long term, and to inhibit their school admissions policies in the shorter term. These groups claim that selection on religious grounds is unfair, and discriminates against pupils and families of no religion.

It’s worth noting, however, that Catholic schools were providing an education to children long before the state ever took an interest. Indeed, there was once a time when these schools were even admired within left wing and liberal circles.

For generations, church schools were seen as co-creators of a healthy and tolerant society. As time has gone on, however, a growing portion of the left seem increasingly eager to attack and restrict faith schools’

operational freedom. In doing so, they deny parents the right to send their kids to the school of their family's faith.

Yes, it's true, religious schools *do* discriminate in their school admissions – yet real secularism isn't defined by hostility to religion, but rather premised on keeping religious worship free from state interference.

The 'correct' values

Contingent on that freedom is the freedom of association. In other words, *the right to discriminate in your choice of associates*. For hundreds

of years, the integrity of many different religious groups has operated on this basis. Campaigners against Catholic schools will often maintain that they're not against 'religious schools' *per se*, but in favour of *fair admissions*. These campaigners are fully aware, however, that a faith school prevented from discriminating on religious grounds would no longer be a faith school.

It's worth emphasising that in the context of education, a 'discriminatory policy' is based not just on religious autonomy, but

also on *parental autonomy*. Parents make choices over how they raise their children and with whom they want their children to associate.

If parents wish to raise their children in a religious faith, should they not have the right to send their child to the Jewish School, or the Catholic school? Or have we now reached the point where both parents and religious schools can't be trusted to pass on the 'correct' values?

Conflicting interpretations

It's worth reflecting on what we think the terms 'liberalism', 'tolerance' and 'parental autonomy' ought to mean today. Do parents have the right to socialise their child in a particular faith and send them to a faith school? The liberal answer *used* to be yes, but is that still the case? Does 'tolerance' now require that we defend the right of parents to send their kids to the Catholic school or not?

With these conflicting interpretations on the table, the lines between tolerance and intolerance, liberalism and illiberalism seem to have become somewhat

blurred. The great liberal philosopher Hannah Arendt, however, couldn't have been clearer when she staked out her position on the issue:

"To force parents to send their kids to a certain school against their will means to deprive them of rights which clearly belong to them in all free societies – the private right over their children, and the social right to free association."

As both a

IN BRIEF

WHAT'S THE ISSUE?

A growing number of influential campaign groups and political representatives are mounting ever-fiercer attacks on the fundamental principles that enable the operation of faith schools.

WHAT'S BEING SAID?

Their criticisms typically centre on a professed opposition to such schools' discriminatory admissions policies and their role in perpetuating sectarian division.

WHAT'S REALLY HAPPENING?

These groups know that undermining faith schools' admission policies in this way effectively undoes the very notion of what a faith school even is – a position running counter to the support for freedom of association and religious affiliation historically valued within the liberal tradition.

THE TAKEAWAY

The thrust of the current debate demands that we re-assess what we consider the terms 'tolerance' and 'freedom' to actually mean in practice.

parent and a teacher, and as someone who believes in the value of pluralism and making space for people of all cultures and faiths in the public square, I'm with Hannah Arendt. Are you?



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Kevin Rooney is a teacher, author, and convener of the Academy of Ideas Education Forum





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Stories behind THE STATS

If we're to take meaningful action on persistent absence, we need to unpack the experiences behind the alarming numbers, writes **Freya Morrissey**

Grace, in Y9, is absent from school again. As her attendance has declined, her tutor has called home multiple times. A letter has been sent, explaining the school's absence policy and reminding her family that '*every day matters*', but these approaches don't seem to have worked. Now, a third of the way through the school year, Grace's attendance has dropped below 90%.

Mr Baxter, Grace's head of year, instead wants to try a different strategy to support her and other students on similarly worrying attendance trajectories.



He knows his school isn't alone in this challenge. He's spoken to colleagues at other

schools that have adopted an array of different approaches to supporting attendance.

He's seen tight systems of increasingly escalating letters and meetings with families; breakfasts laid on for some students at the start of the day; small 'nurture' tutor groups; and interventions aimed at building social and emotional skills.

These approaches are all designed to support students in attending school and lessons more frequently, and demonstrative of the effort school staff across the country will go to, to help their students. Yet Mr Baxter knows he can't do everything – so what should his next steps be?

ABSENCE STRATEGIES YOU CAN TRY



Get below the surface

We need to see beyond the 'symptoms' of absence and examine the possible underlying causes, so that we can diagnose more precisely the issue(s) we're trying to solve. Through checking attendance data and talking with students and families, various individual and contextual issues can be uncovered, such as:

- Illness (of the student or a relative)
- Anxiety and other mental health challenges
- Family expectations and beliefs
- Commitments outside school
- Undiagnosed or unsupported SEN, making it difficult to access lesson content
- A lack of 'connectedness' with the school

Mr Baxter may thus be able to identify factors relevant to Grace and her peers, enabling him to consider approaches better matched to his students' needs.



Mount a team effort

Thoughtful and diagnostic approaches depend on wider systems within a school working effectively. Teachers and school leaders must be able to reliably gather, report, access and analyse data, and collaborate on appropriate targeted actions. It may be helpful to consider whether:

- The school has comprehensive attendance data, or must address any uncertainties or gaps (e.g. inconsistent records for pupils attending AP)
- Robust processes are in place for staff to report on partial absences during the school day
- Qualitative data is being collected to help diagnose and understand reasons for persistent absence

These points may call for action on the part of multiple staff – such as tutors routinely phoning home after specific absence thresholds have been reached.



Learn from others

Attendance: Beyond the Percentage – This informative blogpost from Blackpool Research

School further explores the details behind headline attendance data.

bit.ly/ts133-EEF1

FFT Edu Data Lab – A study examining the likelihood of pupils who live further away from their school being absent more often, which sheds some useful light on the logistical factors that can affect attendance.

bit.ly/ts133-EEF2

Attendance Interventions rapid evidence assessment – A summary produced by the Education Endowment Foundation of existing research on interventions seeking to improve school attendance.

bit.ly/ts113-LL3



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Freya Morrissey is the EEF's specialist for learning behaviours and a secondary school leader of English and literacy; for more advice from the EEF on the topics raised in this article, visit bit.ly/ts133-EA



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David Voisin is a head of MFL

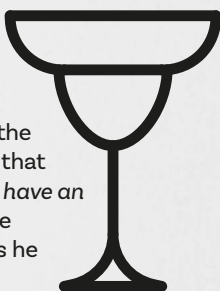
DICTIONARY DEEP DIVE

Join **David Voisin** as he continues to take a rich, and sometimes surprising journey through the points at which literacy, language and vocabulary intersect...

PARDON MY FRENCH

Have you ever belatedly realised you could have said something witty in a conversation but missed the opportunity? There's an expression that describes precisely this feeling – 'To have an *esprit d'escalier*'. It was coined by the French philosopher Denis Diderot as he left a dinner party and realised he'd missed a sagacious comeback.

The saying literally means 'spirit of the stairs', due to the way reception rooms in bourgeois 18th century France were situated on upper floors. Being at the bottom of the stairs was thus synonymous with 'having left the party'.



LANGUAGE AND LINGUISTICS

The term 'pedant' is etymologically connected to the Italian for 'teacher' – and one example of pedantry commonly uttered in classrooms is 'You said you **did not do nothing wrong**, which means you **have** done something wrong.'

This particular word arithmetic doesn't work, however, because two negatives, in fact, do not make a positive. In linguistics, this is called 'negative concord' – a device commonly used for emphasis in northern 17th century England. It's only by pure chance that the country's Capital was in the south, where 'any' was preferred to 'no' – which might explain why negative accord now tends not to appear in formal parlance.

The double negative is actually standard in French, as memorably shown in Edith Piaf's famous song 'Je ne regrette rien' – literally, 'I don't regret nothing'.

MAKE USE OF THE CONTEXT

When teaching Tier 2 vocabulary explicitly, I've always found it useful to start by exploring words 'in situ'. Presenting examples in directive context – that is to say, where contextual information is enough to illustrate the meaning of a word – is a good way of introducing new vocabulary, and can be used for reading practice followed by discussions around the new word.

The next phase would involve a more in-depth exploration of the word – using, for example, the sections of the Frayer model:

- Provide an example
- Provide a non-example
- What would be a great definition for this word?
- What are the key characteristics of the word?

These rubrics can, of course, be amended in order to shift the focus on to other lexical aspects, such as root words, words of the same lemma, grammatical variations, semantic fields and so forth.

The third phase consists of going back to the texts (presented in a different order) with gaps in lieu of the words. For differentiation, clues can be provided at the bottom to indicate different parts of the words, such as affixes, morphological elements or anagrams, for instance.

Finally, a few days later, pupils are given a multiple choice questionnaire, where the targeted words are presented with four options to choose from. When opting for synonyms rather than definitions, it's important to ensure that the words belong to the same grammatical category (e.g. 'all verbs'), so that the focus can be on semantics and receptive knowledge, and not on inflectional grammar. If the difficulty is gauged at the right level, you'll be aiming for an average accuracy of around 80%.

SAME ROOT, DIFFERENT WORDS



A **carnivorous** animal feeds on meat



Chili con **carne** literally means 'chili with meat' in Spanish



The Latin root 'carn' is also in '**carnal**' and the less glamorous '**carnage**'



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We can see how grave the teacher recruitment crisis has become by looking at the data – so what will it take for policymakers to abandon the quick fixes and finally give the profession the time, attention and respect it deserves?

Melissa Benn



With all the pre-election furore surrounding immigration, you might think the government would be clamping down on anyone from outside the UK coming to work in Britain these days.

Far from it. In some sectors, the government is desperate to recruit from abroad. The latest figures show that education, just like healthcare, is becoming increasingly reliant on recruiting teachers from around the world – particularly at secondary level.

A state of perma-crisis

According to the National Foundation for Educational Research (see bit.ly/ts133-MB1), the latest set of trainees entering the profession are, “*Dominated by international recruitment*,” amid “*limited growth in interest in teaching from anywhere else*.”

In other words, not enough qualified people living within the UK want to work in our classrooms, and too many teachers are looking for ways to get out.

There was a brief period during the pandemic when it seemed that economic insecurity would lead to a permanent rise in recruitment. Somewhat surprisingly, however, in light of the continuing economic crisis, this COVID-engendered boost hasn’t lasted.

As a result, teacher recruitment and retention rates are in a state of perma-crisis, particularly at secondary level, with acute shortages in subjects like physics and modern languages.

Unmanageable workloads

Trawl through the official reports, be they from the DfE or any of the numerous education-related quangos, and they all point to the same well-established problems – depressed pay levels, excessive workload, lack of autonomy and

notably, teacher reactions to government policy (negative, one presumes).

Figures from the last Teaching and Learning International Survey held in 2018 (see bit.ly/ts133-MB2) show that KS3 teachers in England were working 49.3 hours per week – over eight hours more than the OECD average of 41 hours per week. Full-time primary teachers in England meanwhile reported working 52.1 hours a week, exceeding more than the equivalent measure in any other participating country, with the exception of Japan.

Even back then, 53% of primary teachers and 57% of lower secondary school teachers felt their workloads were unmanageable. Comically (or perhaps tragically), the DfE has since stated that it won’t be taking part in the upcoming 2024 TALIS survey, due to the “*Considerable workload burden*” it places on government.

In fairness, several official schemes have been set up to try and deal with these problems, particularly workload. The government’s current ambition is to reduce teachers’ and leaders’ working hours by five hours a week within three years (see bit.ly/ts133-MB3). Promises have also been made with respect to teachers’ professional development offer, alongside boosts to pay,

conditions and support for ECTs.

But are these kind of short-term fixes – often the favoured approach of Ministers – going to provide real solutions? In short, no. The problems go much deeper.

Underfunded, over-controlled

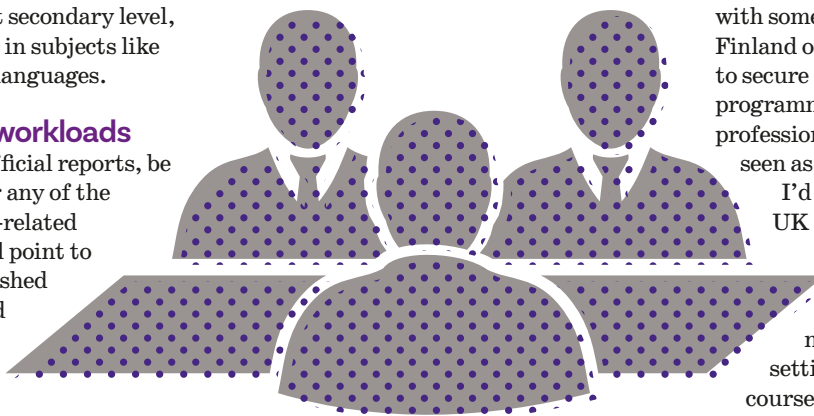
Schemes like Teach First – which was initially set up to attract clever and ambitious graduates into teaching – founder on the simple fact that a 20-something with a good degree from a prestigious university soon realises they can earn far more by pursuing a career in the financial, technology or law sectors. It’s worth noting that only 40% percent of Teach First graduates remain in the job after five years.

Pay isn’t the only issue, though, important as it is. The education sector itself is simultaneously underfunded and over-controlled, to the extent that teachers (and many school leaders) can find themselves treated as much like children as adults.

Unlike other European countries, there’s little sense in England of teaching being a high status, long-lasting vocation, on a par with the status afforded to doctors and lawyers, for example.

I’m no great fan of the notion that competition can usefully shape public sector policy, but I do look on with some envy at countries like Finland or Canada, where it’s harder to secure places on teacher education programmes, precisely because the profession in those countries is seen as having a higher status.

I’d hope that when the next UK government is voted into office, there will be a profound re-think of how we regard and reward our nearly half million teachers, setting us on a much better course over the coming decades.





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[MATHS PROBLEM]

EXPANDING PAIRS OF BRACKETS

Students are often confused about how to expand pairs of brackets in algebra, says **Colin Foster**

In this lesson, students connect expanding single brackets to expanding double brackets

THE DIFFICULTY

Which of the following is the odd one out and why?

$$3x + 6 \quad 3(x + 6) \quad 3x + 18$$

Students might give different answers. For example, $3(x + 6)$ could be the odd one out because it contains brackets. Alternatively, $3x + 18$ could be the odd one out because it contains a double-digit number (or doesn't contain a 6).

Why could $3x + 6$ be the odd one out?

It's because this expression isn't equal to the other two expressions (which are equal to each other).

$3(x + 6) = 3x + 18$ by **expanding** the brackets

$3x + 18 = 3(x + 6)$ by **factorising**.

THE SOLUTION

How would you explain **why** $3(x + 6)$ **must** be equal to $3x + 18$?

It's important to realise that this means the two expressions are equal for **every possible value** of x .

Suppose that $x = 10$. What will each of the three expressions be equal to?

Encourage students to see that $3 \times (10 + 6) = 3 \times 10 + 18$ **without working out the numbers**; otherwise, it may seem like a fluke that 3×16 happens to be equal to $30 + 18$.

One way to see this is by 'stacking' the $(10 + 6)$ s:

$$\begin{array}{r} 3 \times (10 + 6) = 10 + 6 \\ + 10 + 6 \\ + 10 + 6 \\ \hline = 30 + 18 \end{array}$$

Write this out in the same way for:

(a) $4 \times (10 + 6)$; (b) $5 \times (10 + 3)$; (c) $4 \times (5 + 2)$;

(d) $5 \times (7 - 2)$; (e) $4 \times (a + b)$; (f) $4 \times (a + 3b)$;

(g) $3(5a - 2b + 6c)$.

In (g) there will be three columns in the stack.

Now we extend this to a **pair** of brackets:

We know that:

$$\begin{array}{rcl} 3 \times (10 + 6) = & 10 + 6 & \text{and} \quad 4 \times (10 + 6) = \\ & + 10 + 6 & 10 + 6 \\ & + 10 + 6 & + 10 + 6 \\ & \hline & = 30 + 18 & + 10 + 6 \\ & & \hline & = 40 + 24 \end{array}$$

So, how can we write $3 \times (10 + 6) + 4 \times (10 + 6)$?

There are two ways to calculate it:

1. Since $30 + 40 = 70$ and $18 + 24 = 42$, the answer must be $70 + 42$.
2. But it must **also** be $7 \times (10 + 6)$.

So, we see that $(3 + 4) \times (10 + 6) = 3 \times (10 + 6) + 4 \times (10 + 6)$. "Three lots of 'ten plus six' plus four lots of 'ten plus six' is equal to 'three plus four' lots of 'ten plus six'."

This is just like $7a = 3a + 4a$.

$$\begin{aligned} \text{So } (3 + 4) \times (10 + 6) &= 3 \times (10 + 6) + 4 \times (10 + 6) \\ &= 3 \times 10 + 3 \times 6 + 4 \times 10 + 4 \times 6 \end{aligned}$$

Write out, in the same way:

(a) $(3 + 5) \times (10 + 6)$; (b) $(3 + 4) \times (10 + 3)$;

(c) $(10 + 3) \times (3 + 4)$; (d) $(3 + 10) \times (3 + 4)$;

(e) $(5 + 4) \times (5 - 3)$; (f) $(5 + 4) \times (5 - 4)$;

(g) $(3 + a)(b + c)$; (h) $(a + 2b)(c - d)$.

Checking for understanding

Make up two examples of a pair of brackets expansion; one easy and one hard for each. Include the correct expanded forms.



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



CLASSROOM LIFE

No more 'us and them'

Executive headteacher Jamie Foster reflects on how **Chase High School** succeeded in shedding a lowly local reputation and entered a new era of renewal...

Before 2017, Chase High School had never received an Ofsted rating higher than Requires Improvement or Satisfactory under any of its previous incarnations. At the time of my arrival, The school's GCSE grades were 7% gaining 5 A*s to Cs, and it been rated Inadequate.

When the school was academised and brought within the Discovery Educational Trust in 2015, I was appointed as deputy headteacher with the responsibility of overseeing behaviour, which had been a significant challenge.

Rookie errors

My first priority was to stabilise the corridors and classrooms by raising expectations, preventing combative situations from occurring in key spaces and getting to a point where we effectively owned those spaces again – the corridors, canteen and other shared areas.

This process of 'restabilising' the school didn't happen overnight. For the first 18 months or so, my focus was on making sure the school was safe, that staff could operate in the manner

they needed to and ultimately laying the groundwork for further improvements to come.

I know the stories of 'super heads' going in and revamping everything at a school within 18 months, but



"STAFF NEED TO SEE THAT THERE'S A HEART BEHIND WHAT YOU'RE TRYING TO DO – AND THAT COMES FROM YOUR VISION AND VALUES. WITHOUT THE RIGHT PROCEDURES IN PLACE, IF STAFF DON'T FEEL SUPPORTED, IF YOU'RE NOT FAIR AND CONSISTENT IN YOUR INTERACTIONS WITH STUDENTS, THEN THE TEACHING AND LEARNING JOURNEY BECOMES MUCH MORE DIFFICULT, IF NOT IMPOSSIBLE."

– JAMIE FOSTER, EXECUTIVE HEADTEACHER

that wasn't the story at Chase. We realised early on that this process had to be a long-term journey if it was to be sustainable.

The teaching staff had been at the school for some time. To work there, you evidently had to care for the kids, so we knew we had the right people already in place. As a new deputy head, however, I still made mistakes. There was an overload of initiatives, attempts at changing the culture without enough consultation, all those rookie errors – but I stayed at the school.

When you're working at a school in challenging circumstances, staff want to see that you're there for the right reasons and that you actually care, rather than this being just another stop on your personal career journey. We were operating in an area of very high deprivation, with around 50% of pupils on Pupil Premium at the time, as well as very high SEND numbers. They could see I was in the trenches with them, which built up some goodwill. And they eventually forgave the mistakes I'd made.

Aspirations, character and excellence

This meant that when I was later appointed head of the school in 2020, there was already a level of trust. It had become clear that we would need to push our improvement efforts on in a new direction, or else risk not progressing any further, so when introducing a new set of initiatives to get where we needed to be, I consulted more extensively. I was able to engage better with staff, having built up positive relationships with them over time.

One change we made was to our motto, which until then had been 'Aspirations, care and excellence'. The school was indeed very caring – it was a value firmly embedded in all staff, but that caring, pastoral side of the school had perhaps been allowed to take precedent over our teaching and learning.

We'd found ourselves at a point where it became necessary to revise this, so I opted to change the motto to 'Aspirations, character and excellence'. This formed part of a new vision and a set



"To work at Chase, you had to care for the kids – so we knew we had the right people already in place"

of values centred on raising the bar, raising expectations in the classroom and restoring pride in the school badge.

Quicker turnarounds

For a long while, Chase High School had been seen in the local community as a first choice for very few families. When I first arrived, we had year groups that weren't full and a sizeable casual admission.

To shift that reputation, we made sure our SLT was highly visible. There wasn't anything revolutionary involved – just being present at the front gate, meeting and greeting parents during drop-off, and making efforts to accommodate any parents wanting to meet with us.

We sought to enable quicker turnaround times on emails and other communications, and ensured families wouldn't just receive calls regarding incidents of poor behaviour, but also have their children's

achievements clearly communicated to them.

Once parents saw that we wanted to help, that 'us and them' attitude started to disappear. Many parents we ended up engaging with successfully previously had few, if any positive experiences of school themselves. But by seeing the school's staff more often as part of their community, with children of our own (some attending Chase), they came to recognise that they were welcome at the school and able to engage with us.

Revising expectations

Many have talked about how tough the pandemic must have been as a new school headteacher – but one advantage of that period is that we were able to 'reset' people's ideas of the kind of school we were.

As we entered lockdown, we began looking at how to organise virtual learning and everything that came with that. Like most other schools,

these were unknowns to us – but having started to drive new expectations around our teaching and learning provision, we aspired as a team to become the best virtual school in the South East of England.

We looked at what the local grammar school nearby was doing. We distributed around 500 laptops to get things up and running early on, and began offering live lessons as soon as possible. Staff surveys were sent out to parents, and we acted on their feedback as soon as we could. At the same time, we were continuing to engage with our local community, travelling to the top of high rise flats with food parcels.

All this activity helped to successfully revise local expectations of what Chase High School was all about. The pandemic, in its way, helped to further highlight the work we were doing amid very challenging conditions.

When we eventually returned to the standard school day, it felt like a new start. There was a sense among the staff of, *'This is what we do – and we're good, aren't we?'* Having shown that we could do a decent job, we had even become a first choice option for some local parents.

And in 2022, the school finally attained that Good rating for the first time in its history.

Pockets of excellence

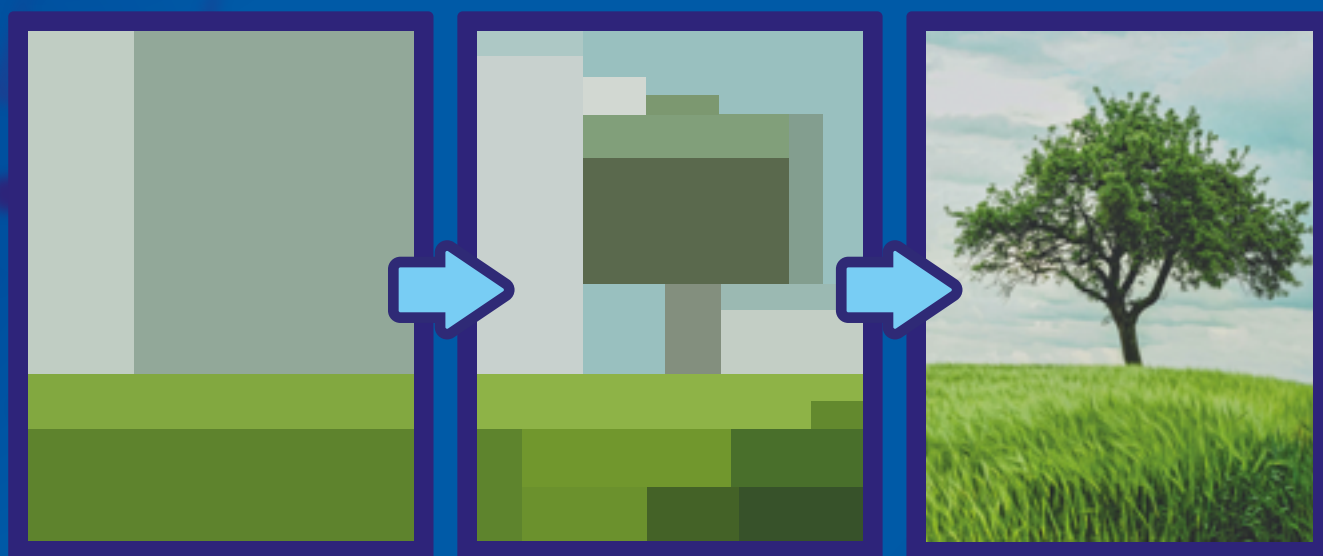
As part of our improvement journey, we wanted highlight pockets of excellence among our students and ensure the school was recognised for that excellence locally.

Under our Elite Sports Academy programme, pupils with outstanding talent or potential in sport are placed on a different tutor programme that gives them access to different trips and cultural experiences throughout the year that we pay for. It's akin to a traditional 'more able' pathway, except oriented specifically around the field of sports.

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Assertiveness and self-awareness both have their uses, in ways that can help boys and girls alike get on in life – so why do we still venerate some ‘gendered’ attributes while dismissing others?

Natasha Devon

When it comes to single-sex schooling, my stance is one that some might term cognitive dissonance, others as brand hypocrisy – but which I prefer to think of as a tension between head and heart.

Logically, I know that ‘all boys’ and ‘all girls’ schools probably shouldn’t exist. They’re archaic. They result in pupils spending their school years immersed in environments not even remotely resembling ‘real life’, even as ever-evolving understandings mean that gender is becoming an increasingly obsolete concept.

Yet despite these reasonable objections, I hate to think of girls not being afforded the same opportunities I had. I have zero complaints about my own secondary education at an all-girls comprehensive. Seriously, five stars. Would recommend.

Bulldozing the nuance

Within our school’s walls, there could be no such thing as ‘girl’ subjects and ‘boy’ subjects. Instead, we were encouraged to pursue whatever we were most passionate about. I can’t speak for everyone, but I felt safe at school. I didn’t endure the sexual harassment that we now know, thanks to movements like Everyone’s Invited, is endemic within co-ed schools.

I therefore know what Clare Wagner, head of the girls-only Henrietta Barnet grammar school in North London, meant when she said in a recent *Times* interview, “*The need for women to own their spaces and find their voices means that this pedagogical approach is perhaps particularly significant for girls.*”

She went on to qualify this with, “*We definitely recognise the need in some of our girls to develop more confidence in the way they articulate and present*

themselves. They are apt to be very polite, and to express themselves too gently, and we need to ensure that as women, they can be forthright and own the spaces they will be going into.”

With dismaying predictability, much of the ensuing broadcast media commentary bulldozed the nuance out of Clare’s words. Channel 5’s *Jeremy Vine*, for example, saw fit to ask, “*Should we teach girls to be less polite? According to a new book, girls should quit being so nice and learn to be more assertive.*”

When put as bluntly as that, the

answer is an emphatic ‘no’ from me. In fact, I’d go so far as to say this is yet another example of women and girls being asked to amend their behaviour for a problem entirely of the patriarchy’s making (see also – not wearing short skirts).

Aspirational self-awareness

This all reminded me of a conversation I once had with a female friend about imposter syndrome, and how it was one of a swathe of once-clinical diagnoses long since colloquialised and overused thanks to social media, I asked her to define it. “*You know,*” she replied, “*I ask myself ‘Should I be here?’ ‘Am I qualified for this?’ Every time I open my mouth, I think ‘Maybe I’m wrong, actually...’*”

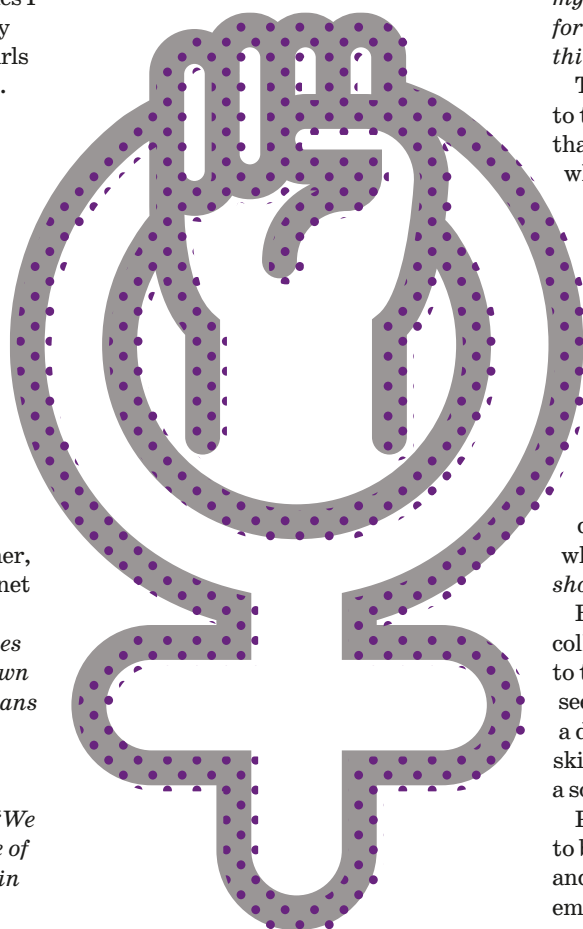
That’s not a syndrome we should seek to treat. That’s self-awareness – a trait that should be applauded in women, and which men should actively aspire to.

Imagine if Donald Trump or Vladimir Putin had this kind of ‘imposter syndrome’. How much better would the world be?

Similarly, the notion that our voice isn’t always the most important in the room; that sometimes making room for others involves shrinking a little bit *isn’t necessarily a terrible thing*. Admittedly, we live in a culture that doesn’t tend to reward individuals who exhibit such behaviour, but we *should*.

Habits and traits such as collaboration, listening well, admitting to the limitations of one’s skill set and seeking the expertise of others are done a disservice when we brand them ‘soft skills’. They’re actually the hallmarks of a sophisticated human.

Perhaps it’s time to stop asking girls to behave more like the worst of boys, and instead start expecting boys to emulate the best of girls?



Natasha Devon is a writer, broadcaster and campaigner on issues relating to education and mental health; to find out more, visit natashadevon.com or follow @NatashaDevon

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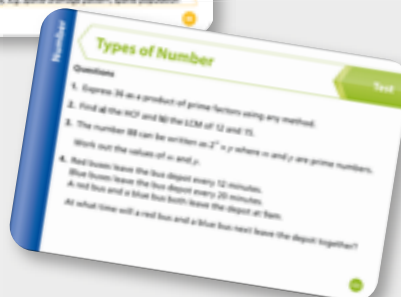
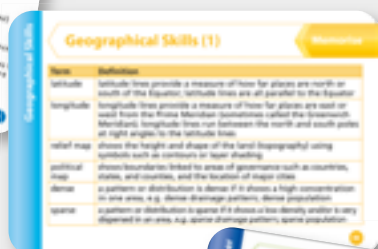
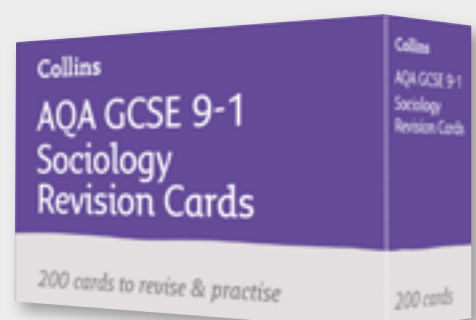
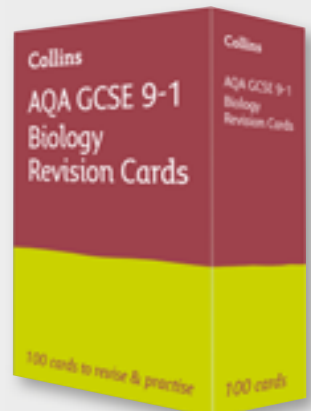
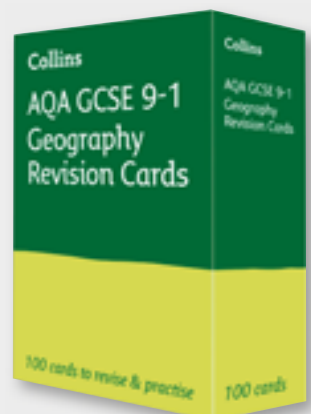
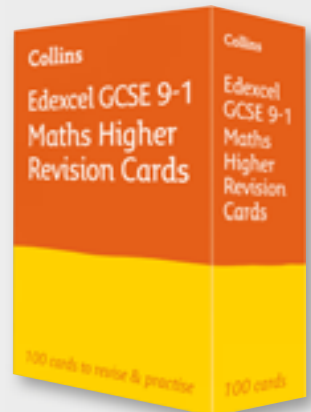
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The TS guide to ... GCSE Exams

With exam season now almost upon us, how prepared are your students for what awaits them in the exam hall – and are there any final checks you can be making?

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IN FIGURES:

HOW WELL DID THE 2022/23 COHORT DO IN THEIR EXAMS?

45.3%

Percentage of students achieving a grade 5 or above in English and maths (down 4.5 percentage points from 2021/22)

46.3%

The Average Attainment 8 score in 2023 (down 2.5 points compared to 2022)

3.94

The current KS4 disadvantage gap index – its highest level since 2011

Source: Government statistics released by the DfE and reviewed by the Office for Statistics Regulation

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REVISE, PRACTICE, EXAMINE

You and your Y11s are now counting down the weeks to exam day – so what should your preparation priorities be? **Meera Chudasama** looks at how to make the most of the time you have left...

As students embark on the final leg of their GCSE journey, our teaching practices will naturally change to support a different rhythm of learning. Students will increasingly focus on identifying gaps in their existing knowledge, which means that as teachers, we must pay careful attention to what their individual learning needs now are.

Here, I'll seek to share some effective practice that can facilitate students' revision – from exercising memory recall, to finding ways of making exam practice less repetitive and ensuring that students are clear as to what they need to do in order to attain their final goals.

Removing the scaffolds

One key change in our teaching practice during the revision season is the removal of embedded scaffolds. Taking away those firmly established scaffolds, and removing some of the chunking we do in the classroom will enable students to grow and become more independent learners.

This is an important step in their learning journey, in that it confirms their transition from looking to the teacher to deliver content, to instead relying more on themselves for what Luis C. Moll *et al.* refer to as 'Funds of knowledge' (see bit.ly/ts133-GP1).

Here, I will share some

revision activities ordered by what each sets out to do, and what the students want to achieve.

Gaps in Knowledge

I like to start with a SWOT analysis and get students identifying their strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and any threats to them achieving their GCSE goals.

These don't necessarily have to be subject specific, and can be supported by student-friendly mark schemes and course outlines, but they should

contain a range of points – whether it's a focus on what exam questions will likely come up, specific skill areas that may need addressing or methods for further improving those skills.

Another way of getting students to identify gaps in their knowledge can be through checklists, or 'pit stops' via the schemes of revision you're delivering.

Memory Recall

Embedding effective retrieval practices will help students transfer relevant content from their long term memory to their working memory. Useful strategies here can include quizzing, getting students to re-teach subtopics or even through the re-reading of class notes.

Consider the different

ways in which you can get students regularly retrieving the sorts of information exam questions will demand of them. Try modelling how you would approach meeting exam questions yourself – perhaps with a 'beat the teacher' activity, where you

directly compete with students to answer an (unseen) exam question under timed conditions.

Exploring different ways of exercising working memory with students will help to show them how much

they know, and prompt them to think about how they can best demonstrate this to the examiner.

Getting creative

Get creative with the way revision is presented, developed and exercised in the classroom. Consider the different methods by which students can revise for your course's various assessment objectives.

It may be that rote learning will work best for some students – but on the whole, it's good to encourage students to approach their revision more broadly, creatively and freely, so that they can develop stronger links between the different areas of information and assorted skills they'll need to exercise in each exam.

Some ways of getting creative with revision content might include:

- Using design software or services such as Canva to create tailor-made revision materials
- Creating visually appealing revision posters that contain summaries, keywords, quotations and other important details
- Producing flashcards labelled with key concepts, ideas and keywords
- Making 'revision cubes' to help decide between subjects and topics that need revising (see 'Free Resource' panel for a template you can use)

“Encourage students to approach their revision more broadly, creatively and freely”





Tw teachwire FREE RESOURCES

A sample student-friendly mark scheme
bit.ly/ts133-GR1

A template for making a revision cube
bit.ly/ts133-GR2

An illustrative SWOT analysis
bit.ly/ts133-GR3

These creative tasks could be undertaken independently, in pairs or in groups. Giving students the chance to exchange knowledge and advice with their peers can create powerful collaborative learning spaces.

Creative tasks such as these can, admittedly, take a little time to initially set up – but once students have the right resources to hand, and

possess a good understanding of the processes needed to achieve their end goals, creative tasks can become an enjoyable and valuable part of your exam preparations.

The revision poster and flashcards tasks can be helped along by providing students with lists of key terms, information sheets and other materials in advance. Setting students resource creation tasks where the information is ready to be summarised and synthesised can reduce time spent on procrastination. It also lets those students with gaps in their knowledge get on with the business of filling those gaps quickly, potentially with help from their peers.

Timed practice

As students get closer to their exams, focusing their revision efforts on timed practice will be essential for their success.

There are many reasons why students may not feel they can excel in the exam hall. For some, simply being sat in the exam hall will be off-putting. Others may be dreading the need for them to focus their full attention on one exam question at a time. We might not be able to make those anxieties disappear completely, but we can certainly

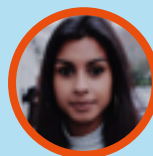
increase students' confidence in their ability to do what will be asked of them

Get students regularly practising smaller, marked exam questions as a starter. Support them in peer- or self-assessing their responses with a student-friendly mark scheme.

Another way of getting students to write lengthier exam responses can be to practice writing composite answers in pairs. Begin by pairing up students you think will work well together, then set the exam question (and if needed, model how you want the question to be answered).

The students then take it in turns to plan alternating paragraphs. Once each paragraph has been planned, have the students write paragraph-length responses using each of their partner's plans, rather than their own. Time this 'response writing' portion of the activity, and with the aid of a student-friendly mark scheme, ask each pair to consider if there's anything else that can be added to their combined written answer.

Working in pairs like this can be a good way for students to confront tricky exam questions with support from peers. The activity can also equip them with the means to assess the quality of their planning, train them in writing clear and coherent responses, and help them more accurately identify the assessment objectives of any given exam question.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Meera Chudasama is an English, media and film studies teacher with a passion for design and research, and has developed course content for the Chartered College of Teaching

STUDENT-FRIENDLY MARK SCHEMES

- ▶ Student-friendly mark schemes can support students' understanding of precisely what they need to do for exam questions.
- ▶ They can be created by breaking down a standard marking criteria and re-writing it so that each specific criterion is phrased as a straightforward question, instruction or statement.
- ▶ My own approach when doing this is to ensure students can easily identify strengths, weaknesses and any areas for improvement. I'll colour code different areas of the mark scheme according to which assessment objectives each part applies to.
- ▶ It's important to use strategies that facilitate students' revision of existing knowledge; prompt them to practice exercising this knowledge under exam conditions; and help them understand what they must do to achieve their final goals. Some of these strategies may be better suited to the earlier stages of revision, whilst others should be reserved for the final run-up to exam day.
- ▶ Remember that many students will fear the exam hall, and find exercising their existing knowledge during an exam extremely difficult. Try to therefore provide different options during your revision lessons, and present students with a range of tools that can help them become more independent learners.



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You've GOT THIS

Emma Slater looks how teachers can help students keep their exam preparations free of excess cognitive load and burnout

Exams are always a daunting prospect. Weeks of revision and working through past papers, followed by the nerves that creep in on the day mean educators must make the process as smooth as possible for their learners. The question is, how?

Cognitive load theory

Educators will be familiar with the main principles of cognitive load theory – that when dealing with the human brain's capacity to comprehend and store information, it's important to minimise excessive cognitive load wherever and whenever possible.

If learners are expected to take on an overwhelming amount of information, to the point where their mental storage capacity is exceeded, then understanding and recalling that information becomes much more challenging – if not impossible.

For those due to take their GCSEs this summer, this scenario seems hard to avoid. Many of us are all too familiar with the concept of cramming, where learners attempt to squash as much information as they can into their brains during the days – or even hours – leading up to an exam.

However, this has

been proven to merely increase stress levels, while simultaneously inducing panic and anxiety – not to mention all the other symptoms of sleepless nights that can impact upon academic performance.

Maintain continuity

Exam preparation should never start in the closing weeks of Y11. Learners require strong foundations of knowledge to build upon, and ought to be comfortable with the tools and technologies at their disposal. Nothing should feel unfamiliar.

We know that good habits and successful learning techniques formed in Y7 to Y9 can be key to success at KS4, and yet schools are often forced into making difficult decisions around resource allocation. Subject specialists, for example, tend to be utilised more for delivery of the exam curriculum, with supply teachers often deployed to teach Y7 to Y9 as and when required. Schools know this is far from ideal, but are often left with few other options.

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help, with over 350 hours of KS3 learning spread across 432 lessons. We can also provide transition assessments that mirror the SATs papers taken at the end of KS2, offering familiarity for learners and support for teachers managing the KS2-3 transition.

GCSEPod software delivers 3- to 5-minute bursts of high quality audiovisual learning, designed around the latest educational research to avoid cognitive burnout. Learners can work through the content independently at home or in a classroom setting, and will be helped to structure their independent learning in a way that suits them.

Smarter revision

Just as important as time management, however, is knowing what content to revise and when – a skill which can take some time to develop.

For the 2023/24 GCSE cohort, knowledge gaps created during the pandemic, coupled with pupils' tendency to focus their revision on areas they already know or enjoy, can result in teachers having to clearly direct revision time, and revisit certain foundation knowledge and skills more often now than prior to 2020.

Let's not forget that this cohort lost out on a month of KS3 classroom time between 2020 and 2022, right when a number of key skills would ordinarily have been embedded.

As well as helping learners to achieve one grade higher on average than non-users, GCSEPod provides accurate and actionable results data, helping to tailor revision planning for the next cohort of learners and instilling confidence ahead of exams.

A recent GCSEPod survey found that learners much preferred using the platform to revising with textbooks, with 72% saying they enjoyed working with the resources and a further 81% deeming it useful or helpful. Some learners further commended the videos available to help explain difficult topics, while others highlighted the ability to explore different methods or approaches when answering questions.

Products like GCSEPod can do some of the heavy lifting for educators – supporting targeted revision of topics and cementing knowledge acquisition, while enabling them to focus more on content delivery, developing exam skills and avoiding cognitive burnout.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Emma Slater is head of education at Access Education / GCSEPod – for more information, visit gcsepod.com/, access-education.org or follow @GCSEPod



Flip the script

Students need to enter the exam hall fully prepared with the relevant knowledge – but, asks **Adam Riches**, do you know if they're up to the task of actually writing it all down?

Of all the demands made by the GCSE language and literature exam, one of the most essential is being able to hand write legibly, at length and under tight constraints. Your students might know their texts and their quotes – but are their hand muscles fully prepared for the task that awaits them?

Being able to sustain consistent and legible handwriting for extended periods is hugely important if students are to succeed in written exams – and yet, many students can struggle with the physical action involved in writing for extended periods and lack adequate handwriting stamina, leading to illegible answers, discomfort and inefficiency.

Quite often, the fact that students' handwriting may need to be worked on and improved is missed, in favour of an unstinting focus on the content of students' answers and ability to memorise important quotes, dates and other details. Important though those are, we mustn't forget that students still need to get all that knowledge down on the page within the time they have, and in a way that someone else can easily comprehend.

Back to basics

We can, however, help learners with their writing ahead of exams, and should make this practice explicit. With the aid of targeted techniques and strategies, it's possible for us to enhance students' handwriting

stamina, while improving both the quality and legibility of the writing itself.

It's important to bear in mind that handwriting stamina isn't solely about improving a student's handwriting speed, but also encompasses factors like endurance, control and consistency. Incredibly, the majority of our students aren't likely to have had any explicit handwriting training since their days of attending primary school.

There's hardly time for it, given the volume of KS3/4 curriculum content, and as such, it's typically assumed that these taught skills have been embedded to a satisfactory level among the vast majority of students.

“Quite often, the fact that students' handwriting may need to be worked on and improved is missed”

Yet when it comes to the handwriting issues students can face, it's often necessary to go back to basics and revisit their ability to maintain a suitable writing posture, grip and pressure, while producing clear and consistent letters over an extended period.

Just like any other type of physical activity, poor handwriting stamina tends to come from a combination of physical fatigue, lack of proper technique and insufficient practice. It's a process that can be painful for students and teachers alike, but taking the time to

foreground writing techniques in lessons can have a hugely positive impact – not just on students' English scores, but across their other subjects too.

Like anything, it's not about ruling with an iron rod and getting students to do something 'just because you say so'; it's about explaining to learners the importance of good posture, clear letter formation, and clear and accurate punctuation.

So, how *can* we actually help learners improve their ability to write clearly for extended periods?

Adopt the right posture

Sitting correctly is crucial to being able to write well. Encouraging teenagers to sit

find a comfortable posture. There's nothing worse than realising your school's classroom desks are set at a completely different height to the exam desk you'll be using, just as a 2-hour exam is about to kick off. Indeed, it's enough to seriously throw some kids off.

Getting the ergonomics right – sitting in the chair sensibly but comfortably, positioning the writing paper just so – can contribute hugely to reducing the strain some students might feel and improving their endurance levels. Best of all, that's something everyone can do.

Get a grip

Getting students calm before exams can be difficult, especially when the pressure's on. A lot of the fatigue students feel when using pens can come from how tense they are – and in turn, the

with their backs straight, shoulders relaxed and feet flat on the ground isn't exactly the easiest task in the world, but those simple pointers will be key to them succeeding.

Giving learners a chance to practice their writing while sat at exam desks is a good exercise in training them to

degree to which that tension strains the muscles within their hands.

To counter this, encourage learners to avoid gripping their pens too tightly, since doing so can lead to premature fatigue. Get them to focus instead on maintaining a relaxed, yet controlled grip that will facilitate fluid writing motions. It can be helpful to have students experiment with different pens and grip combinations until they find one that feels comfortable and works well.

That said, sometimes simply reminding them about the impact of muscle fatigue before they even pick their pens up and start writing can prove to be a big help later on.

Warm-ups and stretching

Just as with any other form of intense physical activity, your muscles can benefit from being warmed up before commencing a bout of extended writing.

Show students how engaging in hand and wrist exercises can help to warm up their muscles and increase their flexibility. Simple stretches – such as wrist circles and finger extensions – will alleviate tension and prepare hands for prolonged writing tasks.

One exercise I get my students to perform is to screw up a piece of scrap paper and then unwrap it, repeating this process 10 times over (alongside robust instructions to not throw said pieces of scrap paper at the end of the exercise).

It's also important that learners are encouraged to take short breaks during prolonged writing sessions, and use these to perform some short stretches so that they can prevent stiffness and develop their handwriting endurance. We need to counter the assumption many students hold, where they think they have to be writing non-stop, when in fact they should be engaging in 'active rest' – giving their hands a short stretch break while they read the exam paper's questions and extracts.

Incremental practice

As the final exams draw closer, you can expect all subjects to dramatically up the volume of writing they expect students to produce.

Particularly in English, it's important that the duration and intensity of writing practice sessions is gradually built up over time, so that students' endurance can be progressively developed. What we mustn't do is overload learners with too much writing too quickly.

Adopt the same approach PE teachers have towards improving students' fitness. By starting with shorter writing

tasks, and then gradually extending the duration as students' stamina improves, we're much more likely to see sustainable results.

At the same time, it's important that teachers focus on maintaining quality, rather than speed when it comes to written responses. The time constraints of English exams might be tight, but it's far better to pen your points legibly than it is to scribble more words illegibly. It's a fine balance that takes time to master, but ultimately, consistent practice is what will unlock students' ability to develop and sustain handwriting stamina over time.

Building handwriting stamina will involve addressing the physical, technical and psychological aspects of writing. This can be something that students really don't want to be doing before a series of content-heavy exams, but don't overlook it.

By receiving some simple guidance on how to actually write well, while also incorporating appropriate posture, grip and pacing techniques, students can improve their endurance and maintain legible handwriting over extended periods.

This is an important consideration for not just English teachers, but subject specialists across the board. It could well be the legibility of a student's handwriting that makes the difference between them securing or missing a grade – so take the time to get your learners writing effectively and efficiently, and you'll likely find that their endurance improves significantly.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Adam Riches is a teacher, education consultant and writer

End of the ASSEMBLY LINE?

Tony Ryan reflects on whether radical reforms will be enough to save the ailing subject of design and technology from curricular extinction...

The UK was the first country in the world to make design and technology part of its national education curriculum, with a clear vision – to prepare young people to become vital and confident contributors to an increasingly technological world.

At its peak in the early 2000s, over 430,000 students studied D&T at GCSE and 30,000 at A Level. I was a young head of department at a high achieving girls' school in London at the time. Thanks to its fusion of creativity and problem-solving, many enthusiastically engaged with the subject and that passion translated into performance. Parents embraced the futuristic nature of our curriculum too, but our achievements at the school weren't that far from the norm, as the subject rapidly embedded itself within schools across the country.

Since then, those figures have dwindled to 78,000 GCSE entrants and 10,000 at A Level. In 2009, there were still 14,800 trained and qualified D&T teachers; now there are fewer than 7,000. It's estimated that the subject is approximately four years away from extinction.

Misconceptions and snobbery

In December 2023, the House of Lords' Education for 11–16 Year Olds Committee released a report (see bit.ly/ts133-DT1) examining

whether the UK education system was doing enough to equip young people with the skills needed to enter a fast-changing world of endless digital information and rapidly evolving AI technologies. Its conclusion? A firm 'no'.

The report's findings should have been a galvanising force for urgent reform, yet 2024's general election campaigns are set to be dominated by immigration, the economy and NHS reforms, with education receiving little attention. Yet it's the latter that will do most to shape the national workforce of tomorrow, and in turn determine how well the country will fare in an increasingly volatile world.

Misconceptions around the integrity of vocational courses; subject snobbery; stringent measurements of academic performance that relegate creative disciplines to the sidelines; ever-shrinking school budgets – all these have contributed to the subject's steady demise, though there's more at issue than 'just' a subject slowly dying. There are implications here for the UK's competitive positioning as a global leader in innovation.

The 'hobby subject' myth

There's a social problem – perhaps unique to this country – that deems certain

subjects, such as D&T, as being inherently inferior. The term 'vocational' is heavily loaded, often carrying with it negative connotations of 'manual', 'low-paid' and 'non-cerebral' activity and work.

Think back to last year's governmental pledge to crack down on so-called 'rip-off degrees' – courses that allegedly provide poor employment prospects for graduates. While ministers carefully avoided defining exactly what constituted

preserve of the privileged.

Persistent misconceptions have also fuelled a teacher shortage that's approaching critical levels, with headteachers – many desperately wanting to see D&T thrive in their schools – unable to find suitable staff for their departments.

Accountability – but for whom?

Headteachers have to pay close attention to those areas where they're measured, but adoption of the EBacc and Progress 8 have damaged the creative subjects. Scores

“Misconceptions have fuelled a teacher shortage that's approaching critical levels”

such 'Mickey Mouse' courses, the inference was clear: *Anything deviating from traditional academic disciplines isn't useful in today's economy.*

And yet, D&T is a great social equaliser. I speak from personal experience, as a one-time young boy from a working class background who didn't see the point of school, but did eventually see the relevance of D&T to the reality I experienced outside of school. For me, at least, It helped put elements of science, maths and art into a real-life context. We're now in danger of creative courses becoming the sole



become paramount, but where creative subjects may only count once towards the overall school achievement score – no matter how many creative subjects are offered – these receive less attention or are dropped entirely from a school's offer.

I don't believe any Minister has purposefully set out to kill creative subjects, but by ideologically fixating on a small number of traditionally academic subjects, and deeming them to be more important than those they unhelpfully label 'hobby subjects', that eventuality may come to pass as a sad by-product.

Then there's the fact that D&T provision is approximately four times as expensive than predominantly 'book-based' subjects like history. Even small D&T departments require machinery and raw materials if they're to teach the subject effectively. Much

can be done to reduce these costs, and I'd argue that we don't necessarily need to spend departmental fortunes for a highly effective D&T offer. But when taking into account the other points outlined above, the expense issue can easily become the deciding factor for an SLT.

Keeping up with the times

The final factor to consider when examining the subject's demise is our inability to keep up with the pace of change. In 2017, our subject took a huge step into the relative unknown when the syllabi, subject content and general philosophy for D&T changed, alongside the introduction of new assessment methodologies.

Teachers were expected to run with these changes, often with little to no training, but still with results-based accountability weighing heavy on their shoulders, and few managed the transition successfully. Many students, understandably, opted to

pursue alternative qualifications that entailed less core content and no written final examinations.

However, it's interesting to observe that while D&T provision in state schools is in national decline, it's arguably never been healthier in the private sector, where fee-paying parents view it as an essential part of the curriculum.

Private schools, of course, have the capacity to attract more talented teachers and employ them in departments where budgets rarely prove problematic, unencumbered by the kind of qualification restrictions that state schools have to manage. If we continue on this trajectory, without urgent intervention, D&T will soon only be offered within select schools.

What does the future hold?

The economic case for D&T to be taught in schools is clear. Government must work with industry to resolve the issues that threaten the subject's future.

The good news is that change is happening. Following an extensive national consultation process with teachers and sector leaders over the last two years, the Design and

Technology Association's 2023 'Reimagining Design & Technology' report (see bit.ly/ts133-DT2) set out a refined vision for its future.

The subject is currently bucking national trends at primary level, but it's at the critical KS3 where change is most needed. We at the Design and Technology Association are currently looking to assist teachers in changing the pedagogy at their

schools, by encouraging a greater emphasis on problem-solving and using design methodologies to tackle real-world problems.

We're also looking to promote an increased focus on the green economy, circularity and the importance of design in solving Global Sustainability Goals, and seeing that these are added to the KS1 and KS2 National Curriculum.

Businesses such as Mamas & Papas and Scalextric are among many brands that have contributed to our Inspired By Industry initiative (inspiredbyindustry.org.uk), which is developing educational materials to show how 'design thinking' is being used to conceive of products, thus enabling students to respond to real design briefs set within actual industries and workplaces.

Teachers are meanwhile receiving subsidised training on how to implement this, helping to lay the pathway for curricular activity that will rejuvenate the discipline and finally measure other impacts – including student engagement, parental perception and teacher confidence – rather than just academic progress alone.

There's still much to be done, but also good reason to be optimistic about the future of D&T. We want to continue producing the problem-solvers, innovators, creatives, designers, and thinkers of the future. Isn't that a vision that we can surely all get behind?



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Tony Ryan is chief executive officer of the Design and Technology Association; for more information, visit designandtechnology.org.uk or follow @dtassoc



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Sean Connelly,
Teacher, Hill Top School



5 TIPS FOR... Successful online provision

Academy21 offers some advice on how online learning can support schools



30 SECOND BRIEFING

Academy21 is a provider of live and interactive online teaching, working with schools and local authorities to enable quality alternative provision. This is delivered by fully qualified and experienced teaching staff who lead learners in real-time lessons.

1 DEFINE YOUR MODEL – WHO, WHERE, WHEN

As with any new initiative, consider who exactly you think it will work for. Online schooling can work for a range of students, but your needs will be unique to your context. Examples can include a **hybrid solution** delivered on-site, in a specifically staffed and focused unit; **short-term solutions** for respite away from the classroom, or to break a cycle of habits; a **part-time option**, enabling students to take subjects important for their future pathways; or a **long-term plan**, for reconnecting with learning and/or gaining transition skills and qualifications.



2 PREPARING STUDENTS AND FAMILIES

We sometimes see schools encountering challenges that stem from online alternative provision being a significant change for their students and parents. First, focus on articulating the issue you want to solve. Then, gather the members of staff you know can help make it work. Next, nail down your **vision** – how do you see it working in reality? Finally, **involve families** and meet with them to ensure they understand the challenges involved, your vision for resolving them and what you expect to happen if all goes well.

3 BUILD BUY-IN AND COMMUNICATE CLEARLY

Online is different. Families' views, informed by very local experiences during the pandemic, will be mixed. Involve your school's IT support to ensure that student access is appropriately set up, and check that all leaders and pastoral colleagues understand the plan. This will build a sense of purpose and avoid the risk of miscommunication. Many of our schools often find that parents/carers are pro-online learning, and welcome the changes in students' mindsets that a shift in the learning environment can bring about.

Academy 21

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academy21.co.uk/ap-tips

4 WHAT NEXT?

One hurdle with online alternative provision can be the question of what comes after. Should the student transition to further online learning, return to the same or a different physical setting, or enter a technical qualification? The answers to those questions will differ depending on the student and type of provision, but when next steps are ill-defined, students can struggle with motivation. By **co-creating targets** with the student in terms of their attendance, expected improvement, and attitudes to learning, you can create a sense of common purpose that will contribute to their **transition plan**. It's advisable to assign an **account leader** who can provide extra support.

5 REINTEGRATION

When it's right for the student, reintegration into school full-time is Academy21's **ultimate** goal. It's unlikely that a sudden, full return will work – instead, we recommend building up their readiness via clubs, selected subjects or social times. We'll often find that a staggered return over a few weeks, with the student continuing their online learning at school, is most effective.

Key Points

Academy21's provision is 100% live, consisting of interactive and highly engaging classes delivered by our team of fully qualified and experienced teachers

Our provision is delivered in partnership with schools in order to provide a solution that works best for your young people, and prepares them for successful outcomes

We are quality assured by numerous processes, and we can be found on more than 50 Local Authority alternative provision frameworks and directories

Our provision is varied, with academic and wellbeing support for Y7 to Y11 available for different durations across a range of subjects

Give them confidence, **resilience** and life skills



Award-winning **outdoor
adventure residentials**
for all ages

36%
increase in
resilience

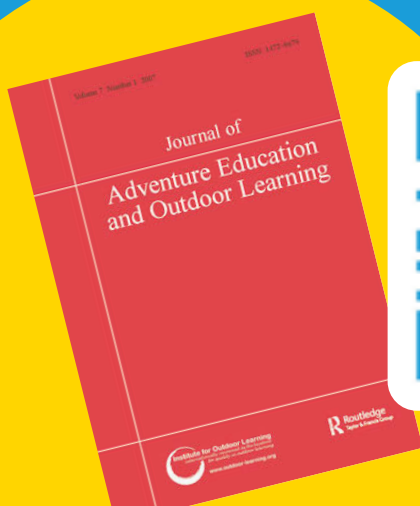
Impact Analysis
2023



Read our latest research in
**The Journal of Adventure
Education & and Outdoor
Learning**, an official, peer-
reviewed publication of the
Institute for Outdoor Learning.

**‘Building resilience and well-
being for post-covid adolescents
through outdoor adventure’**

By Dr John Allan, Head of Impact
and Learning at Inspiring Learning



3 things we've learnt about ...

TEACHERS' VIEWS ON PAY

Tensions between the profession and government over pay peaked with last year's strike action – so how do teachers feel about their salaries now?

1 The impact of strikes

Teacher satisfaction with pay has been decreasing since Teacher Tapp first started asking about it in 2018. Back then, 62% of teachers said they were at least 'moderately satisfied' with their pay; by 2022, that figure had fallen to 48%. Of course, these headline numbers mask noticeable differences between teachers of varying seniorities, with the lower 50% of jobbing secondary classroom teachers being satisfied with their pay in 2018, falling yet further to 40% in 2022.

2023 saw the largest round of teacher strike action in years. An offer of a 6.5% pay increase was eventually accepted – but did that change how teachers view their pay? December 2023 at least marked the first time that teachers were more satisfied with their pay compared to the year before, with 46% of classroom teachers and 54% of teachers overall reporting being moderately satisfied with their pay – a 5 percentage point improvement.

2 Teacher top-ups

And yet, 40% of teachers said they were still not satisfied with the amount they are currently paid. One in five teachers state that they and their households are 'scraping by' – a proportion that's been steadily increasing over the past few years. As a result, teachers quite often top up their pay by taking on additional education-related jobs, or even looking to work outside education, as 20% apparently do. Typically, those seeking such earning opportunities tend to be less experienced teachers and those who feel less financially secure.

There's good reason to believe that giving classroom teachers greater financial security will improve retention. Even with other workload pressures still in place, over 40% of classroom teachers say they'd stay if they could be assured of financial security for doing so. Also worth noting are the 33% of more experienced teachers who have taken pay cuts to improve their wellbeing.

3 Money isn't everything

Last year's strikes were about more than pay alone. Many across the profession have observed that workload and conditions were also key drivers behind the strikes, with workload reduction – particularly in terms of hours worked – being one of the most common requests among teachers.

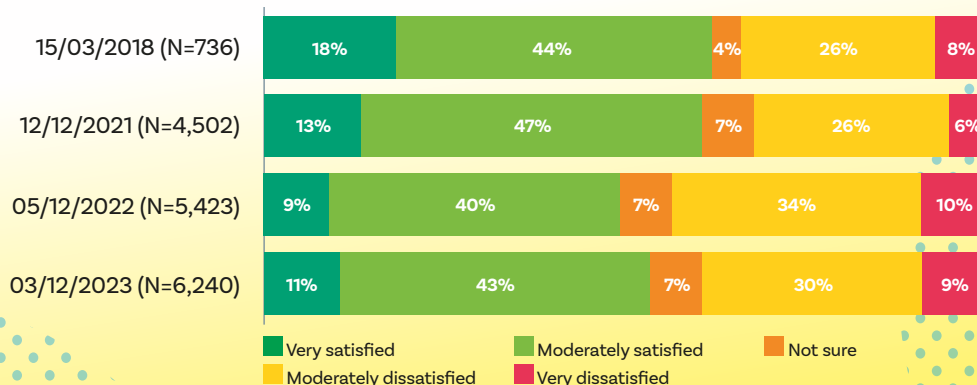
As part of the latest deal, some commitments to address the workload issue were made – but these haven't always been met positively.

Just 9% of senior leaders say they've found the DfE's Workload Reduction Toolkit (ts133-TT1) to be useful, while a third hadn't even heard of it. Nor had half of school leaders heard of the Education Staff Wellbeing Charter (bit.ly/ts133-TT2) – and of those who had, just 8% found it useful.

Even school-level initiatives can go unnoticed. In 2023, 50% of teachers said nothing had been done over the preceding 12 months to reduce workload in their school, while only 8% of heads said the same.

HOW SATISFIED ARE YOU WITH WHAT YOU EARN AS A TEACHER?

Teacher responses vary from 736 to 6,240 depending on date asked (results weighted to reflect national teacher and school demographics)



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



“

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ASDAN courses inspire confidence and equip learners with a range of personal, social and employability skills. They enable learners to take on challenges and realise goals in their learning, work and life.

Together we can
engage, elevate
and empower
young people

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Find a course to suit you:

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Event DETAILS

#SAASHOW 2024
Plan. Procure. Prosper.

Event date & location
1st May 2024 | ExCeL London

When is the event?
1st May 2024

How to register?
Visit our website:
schoolsandacademiesshow.co.uk

Interview with Sir Mo Farah The Starting Blocks: The Value of Education in My Journey to Olympic Gold

Jon Severs
Editor
TES

Sir Mo Farah
Olympic Gold Medallist



THE SCHOOLS & ACADEMIES SHOW 2024: Mapping the future of your school

#SAASHOW, known as the Schools & Academies Show returns to London with an exciting new chapter!

As the education sector gears up to embrace new challenges in 2024, the Schools & Academies Show is set to make its highly anticipated return to ExCeL London on the 1st of May, presenting not just one, but three co-located events. This event provides a pivotal platform where the education community can collaboratively prepare for the dynamic changes ahead.

Introducing EdTech Innovate, The School Estates Summit, and The SEND Conference. Each co-located event opens doors to fresh opportunities, enabling visitors to connect and collaborate in a larger exhibition space with leading education suppliers. These suppliers empower school leaders to enhance school performance and elevate

outcomes for all pupils.

The #SAAShow team has been working hard to bring together the sector's most decorated and influential speakers to share their knowledge, expertise and best-practice guidance on how schools, academies and MATs can overcome some of the most pressing challenges facing the sector.

Each speaker, dedicated to their respective craft across the education sector, will lead a keynote session, live debate/discussion or tailored workshop, ensuring visitors feel empowered, inspired and ready to implement key techniques, guidance and resources that are at the forefront of their institution.

With a keen focus on the evolving educational landscape – and issues spanning staff recruitment

and retention, budget balancing, stakeholder engagement and more – we've diligently worked to ensure our show covers the most pressing issues currently facing schools.

Don't miss out on the chance to join us for what promises to be our most impactful show yet. Register FREE* today to join thousands of school and MAT leaders who are looking to learn and find the best solutions to better their teaching and learning outcomes. Be part of this transformative experience shaping the future of education!

For more information and registration details, visit schoolsandacademiesshow.co.uk

*Please note, registration is FREE for schools, MATs, academies, colleges, universities, charities, not-for-profits, local and central government and the wider public sector

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Schools

Company: The Access Group

Contact: Rich Newsome, Access Education

Stand: E15



Q TELL US MORE ABOUT YOUR COMPANY

We provide a comprehensive platform of interconnected tools for the education sector. Our customers enjoy effortless operations management, engaging curriculum content and robust people and parent engagement solutions – all in one place. Over 9,000 learning institutions and 37 LAs across the UK have chosen Access for their educational software needs.

Q WHAT WILL BE YOUR KEY MESSAGE TO SAAS VISITORS AND PARTICIPANTS?

We're committed to helping schools achieve more, and the SAAS event is no exception. We'll be eager to assist your school in reaching even greater success. Test your luck with

our 'Wheel of Fortune' game and receive free goodies. Don't miss out on a complimentary drink at our VIP stand at 1pm, and we've also got some great offers – including our 'Buy now, pay later' initiative and free STEM impact program.

Q WHAT DO YOU LIKE SO MUCH ABOUT THE SAAS?

The SAAS event offers education leaders the opportunity to stay at the forefront of the education sector – whether through exploring cutting-edge technology, or gaining CPD on policy, practice, and pedagogy. In-person events like this provide an excellent platform to connect with like-minded individuals who share a passion for education.



Company: YPO

Contact: Ashleigh Cartwright, Head of Trading

Stand: F21



Q TELL US MORE ABOUT YOUR COMPANY

We're 100% publicly owned by 13 LAs, which means the profits we make are returned to our customers, delivering even better value for money. We have a large choice available from leading UK suppliers, so we can provide you with everything you could need to successfully run your organisation.

Q WHAT WILL BE YOUR KEY MESSAGE TO SAAS VISITORS AND PARTICIPANTS?

Our range includes over 20,000 products and 100 frameworks – so whether it's pens and paper, computers, furniture, or even things like electricity, food and insurance, we can help you get the best deals around for your Trust.

Q WHAT DO YOU LIKE SO MUCH ABOUT THE SAAS?

We love coming to the Schools and Academies Show to talk to the sector and find out how we can best serve it. It's great to hear about everyone's stories and experiences, as well as the hard work that goes into helping children get the best out of their education.

Q WHAT'S YOUR LASTING IMPRESSION OF PAST SAAS EVENTS IN YEARS GONE BY?

Since attending the Schools and Academies shows previously, we have been able to build great relationships with customers and new partnerships. YPO is always eager to come back and continue the growth of these.

teach SECONDARY RECOMMENDS

1 NEXT LEVEL STAFFING

BlueSky Education is an online people development platform that helps thousands of schools and trusts worldwide implement supportive appraisal processes, build a culture of continuous professional development and drive strategic improvement. Find out more at **stand D16**, or visit blueskyeducation.co.uk



2 AFFORDABLE QUALITY

YPO boasts 50 years of unrivalled experience in education, offering unbeatable value for money on essential classroom supplies and procurement contracts. As a 100% publicly owned business, we guarantee quality and affordability. Find us at **stand F21** or online at ypo.co.uk/education



3 ENGAGEMENT BOOST

Classrooms buzzing. Pupils engaged. Teachers with real-time insights at their fingertips, empowered to give every child personalised support. Learning by Questions is helping secondary maths and science classes achieve 35% increases in ARE in 6 weeks. To discover how, stop by **stand F36** or visit lbq.org





Off the Shelves

Brilliant titles for you and your students to explore



Handwritten – Remarkable People on the Page

(Lesley Smith, Bodleyan, £35)

There's something quite special about seeing – and where possible, touching – historical artefacts, in that doing so can bring subjects to life in ways that merely talking about them can't. In *Handwritten* we get to see handwritten manuscripts by monarchs, such as Henry VIII, poets, including Donne, novelists (Austen), scientists (Lovelace and Babbage) and many others. The detailed photographs are fascinating, complemented by learned exposition concerning the people and issues involved – such as the revelation that Tolkien first conceived of the idea for *The Hobbit* while marking examination papers! The book's breadth, in terms of both the fields from which its subjects are drawn and the people themselves, would make it a good addition to your school's library, or potentially a useful central resource for teachers to borrow and draw from. Highly recommended.

Reviewed by Terry Freedman
(see bit.ly/Eclecticism for more details)

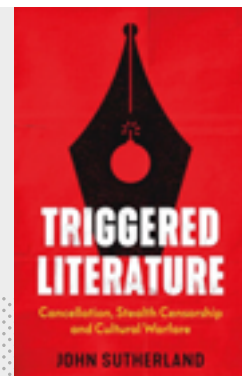


Tips for teachers: 400+ ideas to improve your teaching

(Craig Barton, John Catt, £21)

Don't this book's size (nearly 600 pages) put you off. While it's undeniably comprehensive, covering 12 main areas that include 'Planning', 'Assessment' and 'Modelling', it's very well structured and laid out. Diagrams at the start of each chapter illustrate clearly what will be covered, alongside numerous bulleted lists and some smart uses of colour, making the material easy to navigate. The lack of an index is made up for by a detailed table of contents, and there are indeed some excellent tips to be had within, drawn from Barton's own podcast interviews and some well-known names. The latter can sometimes be a mixed bag, though, offering one or two suggestions that seem outright bizarre – but approach it as a critical reader, and you'll find plenty here for both new teachers and old hands alike. Recommended.

Reviewed by Terry Freedman



Triggered Literature

(John Sutherland, Biteback, £18.99)

At a time when even *Noddy* books have been declared 'problematic' due to their use of archaic terms such as 'swot' (since changed to 'bookworm'), some of us might feel the temptation to unleash our inner 'Disgusted of Tunbridge Wells' in response. With *Triggered Literature*, Sutherland performs the valuable service of collating numerous examples of literary trigger warnings – only without any *Daily Mail*-esque rants or condemnation, opting instead to deploy wry humour in considering the questions said trigger warnings raise. Are trigger warnings valuable for prompting readers to think carefully before engaging with books? Perhaps. Or should we instead adopt Kafka's view that books ought to 'shake us awake'? In any case, *Triggered Literature* certainly has the potential to provide some lively fodder for classroom discussions in English, citizenship and politics classes.

Reviewed by Terry Freedman

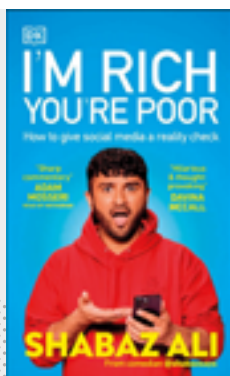
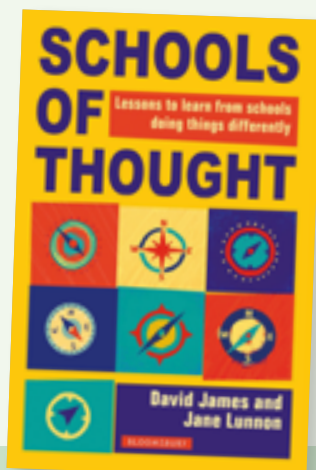
ON THE RADAR

Schools of Thought – Lessons to Learn from Schools Doing Things Differently
(David James and Jane Lunnnon, Bloomsbury, £20)

Clichéd as it sounds, sometimes there really is something to be said for ‘thinking outside the box’ – which this sweeping survey of how a wide variety of schools plough their own distinctive furrows offers in spades.

Organised into seven distinct chapters with overarching themes (among them, ‘Faith schools’, ‘Single-sex schooling’ and ‘Use of technology in schools’) James and Lunnnon shine a spotlight on precisely what it is that a series of schools – both in the UK and abroad – do that sets them apart. Rather than editorialising or commenting upon those details, however, the authors largely let the schools speak for themselves, expressing in their own words the different singular paths they’ve embarked upon and why.

More than anything, the book serves as a welcome corrective to ideological dogmatism – even to the point of having guest contributors pen ‘Another view’ passages at the end of each chapter critiquing the very premise under discussion (such as the chief executive of Humanists UK taking issue with faith schools and a professor of neuroscience cautioning against single-sex schooling).

***I'm Rich, You're Poor***
(Shabaz Ali, Troubador Publishing, £9.99)

Online comedy fans may be familiar with Shabaz Ali (@ShabazSays) – a teacher turned successful TikToker with a neat line in videos impishly mocking the self-important, po-faced and monied social media influencer set. Subtitled ‘How to Give Social Media a Reality Check’, this book sees Ali expand at length on the concerns and observations that underpin his comedic impulses, and call for more honest, less ruthlessly aspirational online spaces. His intended readership seems to stretch from the students in hock to their online heroes, to the eye-rolling teachers who can relate to Ali’s adult bewilderment at the esteem in which YouTubers are held. Those seeking an angry denunciation of the broader social media complex won’t find it here, but in his exhortations for readers get more eccentric, whimsical and just plain weird in their uploads, he’s at least advancing a creative avenue for defusing some lifestyle influencers’ pernicious allure – and that counts for something.

Stress to Calm in 7 Minutes for Teachers

(Beverley Densham and Janey Lee Grace, McNidder & Grace, £9.99)

As the demands of the teaching profession become ever more intense, many practitioners have started calling on the likes of mindfulness meditation techniques, positive affirmations, journaling and other wellbeing strategies to help ease the pressure. If you’re a harried teacher interested in exploring such things, this short guide is a great introduction. Working from their own research into teachers’ professional lives, the authors have sought to produce a friendly and approachable overview of common, yet effective wellbeing techniques that’s written with the daily priorities and time pressures of teachers very much in mind. The strategies and activities presented within are designed so that they can be put into practice by the uninitiated quickly and easily, so you’ll soon discover whether they’re right for you – and if they are, the difference they could potentially make to your practice, performance and personal life will surely be worth the price of entry.



Meet the author

JANEY LEE GRACE

**What first alerted you and Beverley Densham to the need for a stress management guide specifically aimed at teachers?**

Both of us have been made aware of just how stressful the teaching profession is, and have always wanted to help teachers and schools with managing their wellbeing, mental health and stress levels.

As a coach, I’ve worked with several clients who were teachers, who told me that alcohol misuse in a big problem in their profession. Bev has encountered teachers in the course of her Mindfulness Pilates sessions who seemed incredibly stressed. It appeared that many were feeling overwhelmed and on the edge of burnout – something that was later borne out in the research Bev and I did.

What did that research involve?

We pitched a survey to teachers and education staff, asking them about their wellbeing, stress levels and specifically about how their working life contributed to that stress. We also asked them what support was available to them within the workplace, and whether they felt it adequate.

It was good to get a cross section of teachers and ex-teachers, responding from different types of educational establishments. We then changed their names for confidentiality, and shared a short portion of their responses at the beginning of the book.

Would you say there are any stressors or mental health challenges unique to schools, compared with other workplaces?

Teachers’ heavy workloads, constant paperwork and need to keep up with ever-changing policies is often made worse by being constantly observed. One teacher told us her stress was “Mainly down to having to focus on data collection/reviews, report writing, scheduled observations, dealing with county inspectors, and Ofsted, and the huge responsibility of dealing with safeguarding issues.” Several teachers said they felt constantly on edge, ‘waiting for the call’ from Ofsted.

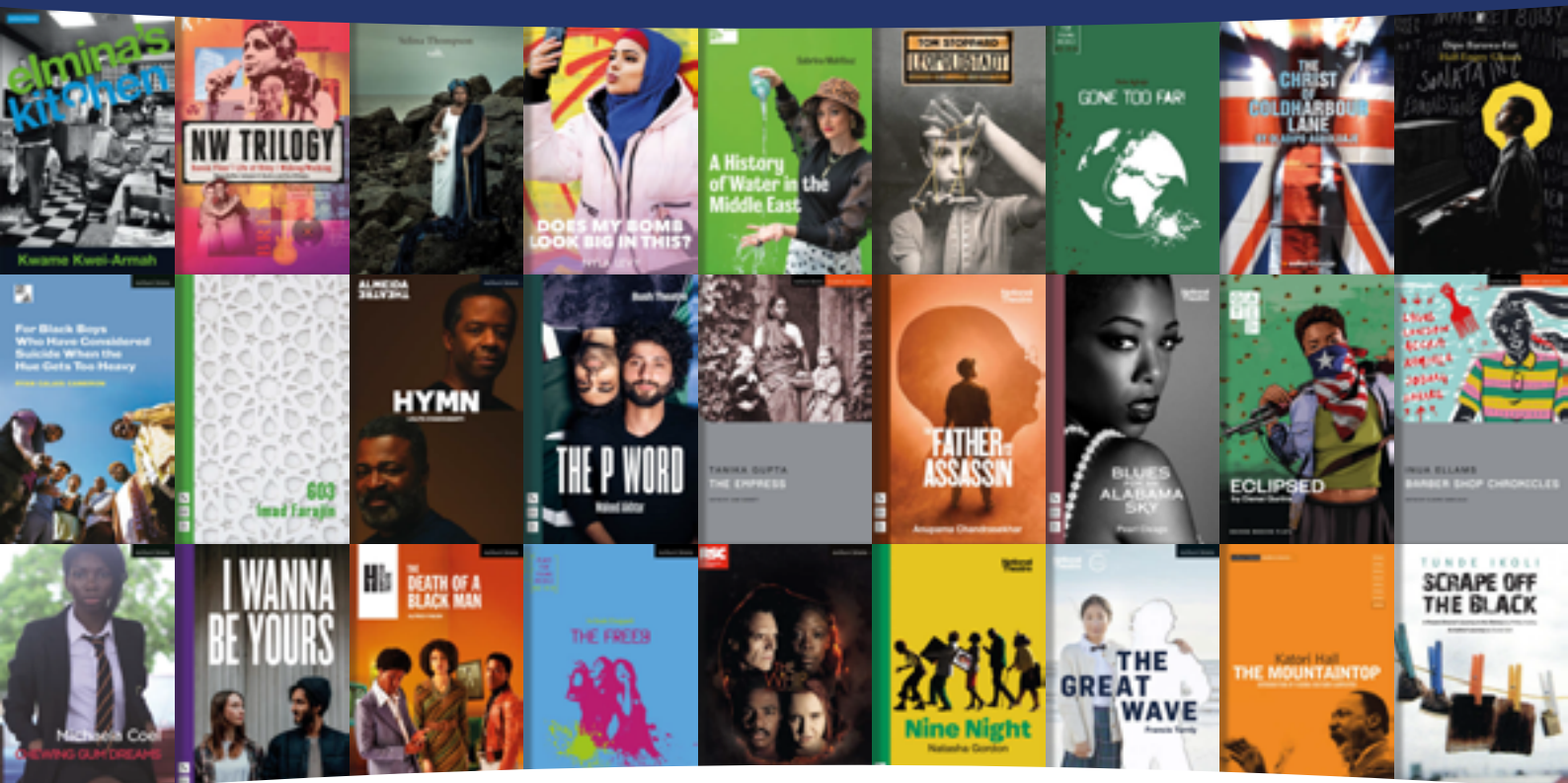
Are there any general habits you’d recommend to help teachers manage the stresses that come with the job?

It sounds obvious, but look at getting enough sleep, Good nutrition also makes a difference – if that means meal prepping on a Sunday afternoon for the week ahead, it’s worth it. Maybe set your alarm 10 minutes earlier and use those moments to go within yourself, by considering what outcomes you’d like from the day and how you want to feel.

Janey Lee Grace is an author, broadcaster and presenter of the podcast ‘Alcohol-Free Life’ – for more details, visit thesoberclub.com

The (*Incomplete*) Lit in Colour Play List

Plays written by writers of colour for
11-18 year-olds to study and perform



Can you recommend a play by a writer of colour? *Yes, we can*

This was a question asked by a teacher at a webinar looking for plays written by writers of colour that are suitable to teach in the classroom. It became the start of Bloomsbury's Partnership in the Lit in Colour campaign - placing the spotlight on plays and drama, and supporting schools to make the teaching and learning of English Literature and Drama more inclusive.

Bloomsbury's first (*Incomplete*) Lit in Colour Play List features an initial 57 plays written by playwrights of colour from the Methuen Drama portfolio and fellow play publishers, for students to discover, study and perform in the classroom.

With an overview of each play's plot and themes as well as links to additional teaching resources, this Play List is the perfect resource for teachers looking to introduce more diverse plays into their classrooms.



Never AGAIN?

Ellis Brooks and **Hans Svennevig** explain why, contrary to what you might think, the classroom is an ideal venue for discussing the complexities of nuclear disarmament

When is a good time to teach nuclear disarmament in the classroom? You might be surprised to see it phrased as that, rather than something more anodyne like ‘*explore the topic of nuclear weapons*’ – but disarmament isn’t a controversial topic. It’s an agreed international goal.

The Non-Proliferation Treaty of 1968 committed nuclear armed states, including the UK, to disarmament in good faith. The more exigent Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons came into force in 2021, but there’s still political disagreement around the pace. Should UK disarmament align with the 92 signatory states of the nuclear ban, stay in the disarmament slow lane or favour the ‘forever armed’ lane?

Given the humanitarian consequences of nuclear war, it’s not surprising that 68% of people in Britain believe the use of nuclear weapons is unacceptable in any circumstances, and that 79% think the UK should at least commit to a ‘no first strike’ policy. Just as climate and sustainability education means addressing the human impact of climate breakdown, so it is that

we need to talk about nuclear disarmament education.

We’re on the clock

In recent years, teachers may have increasingly found themselves scrambling for content on nuclear weapons after some president, prime minister or supreme leader somewhere rattled their nuclear sabre. ‘*Is World War III coming?*’ is a terrible question to be asked by young people.

Physics students will graze the topic of nuclear weapons at GCSE. Some students may go deeper via an A level study of the Cold War. A thematic RE unit may look at war and conflict, but all this is haphazard.

Some schools will dedicate time to peace education from providers such as CND Peace Education (cnduk.org/education), and its scrupulous focus on critical thinking. For most young people, though, we’re leaving much of the nuclear weapons debate to popular culture via film and TV, or even

social media.

A survey produced last year by the Nuclear Education Trust (nucleareducationtrust.org) sheds some light on the state of nuclear disarmament education (NDE). Teachers and the wider public alike were in favour of more information, debate and education on the topic, with 93% of teachers surveyed disagreeing or strongly disagreeing that NDE is ‘too political’ to be taught in schools. A launch event for the report in Parliament even saw consensus between those politicians and educators attending that NDE should be taught in more classrooms.

What do we teach?

There are powerful stories to tell. The work of atomic scientists like Albert Einstein, Lise Meitner or Joseph Rotblat, who resisted nuclear weapons. Then there are the *Hibakusha* (survivors of the nuclear attacks on Hiroshima and Nagasaki), some of whom became passionate campaigners for a nuclear ban. The women of Greenham Common.

As with other topics, your students will need to apply intellectual rigour, emotionally engage and practise ethical reflection. We can unpack the physical,

biological and humanitarian impacts of nuclear weapons, with teachers drawing on resources from, among others, The Peace Education Network and their Teach Peace packs.

These materials can then be taught through subjects like Citizenship education, with specialist teachers able to bring a range of viewpoints to bear on a sensitive issue. Support for this can be provided by organisations such as the Association for Citizenship Teaching. Better still, NDE can be developed thematically throughout the curriculum.

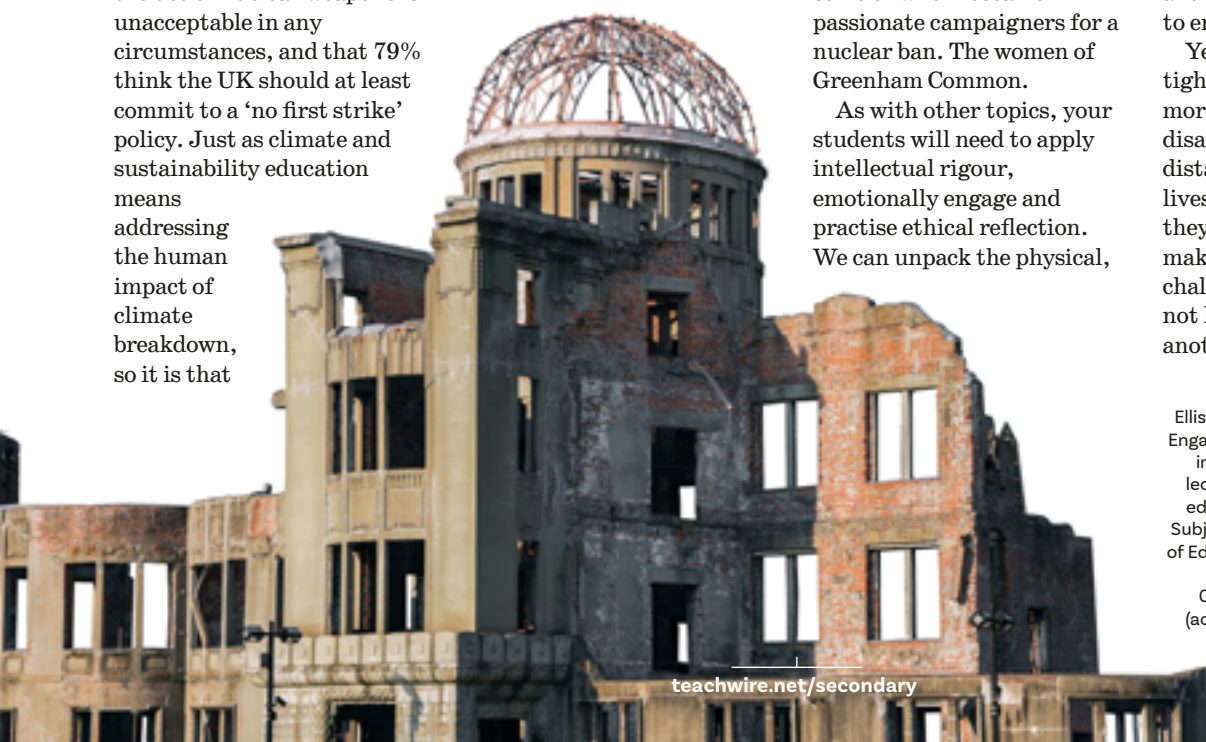
Why education?

Nuclear disarmament is everyone’s responsibility – which means we *all* need to be educated, not just scientists and a few politicians. Just as a democratic movement has had to press continually for climate justice to be integrated into education, we also need an active and informed population to engage.

Yes, the curriculum is tight, teachers have ever more duties and nuclear disarmament may seem distant from young people’s lives – but very soon, it’s they who will be the decision-makers in a hugely challenging world. Let’s not leave them yet another problem.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Ellis Brooks is Peace Education and Engagement Coordinator at Quakers in Britain; Hans Svennevig is a lecturer (teaching) in Citizenship education and PGCE Citizenship Subject Leader at IOE, UCL’s Faculty of Education and Society; this article was originally published on 08/02/24 as an IOE blogpost (accessible via bit.ly/ts133-nde1)



Q&A

See the data exams won't tell you

A timely initiative aimed at helping schools measure important aspects of students' personal development



30 SECOND BRIEFING

Schools are about much more than exams, but getting reliable data to measure their wider impact is difficult. The NCES provides schools with bespoke reports analysing student outcomes against a range of factors, including toleration and active citizenship, helping staff to evaluate their provision.

What is the NCES?

The National Citizenship Education Study (NCES) was established by the Association for Citizenship Teaching (ACT) and Middlesex University as a national research study on the impact of citizenship education in schools. Based on a comprehensive review of over 130 research articles, we have devised a survey designed to track a range of measures – including inputs relating to citizenship teaching methods and school ethos, as well as personal development outcomes, such as toleration, knowledge about (and attitudes towards) democracy, intentions to participate in different forms of active citizenship and feelings of personal efficacy.

How will it benefit my school/provision?

Schools can undertake the survey with one or more whole year groups, enabling the research team to analyse your data for differences between students, focusing on gender, ethnicity, religion and socio-economic factors. We'll then provide your school with a confidential report, enabling you to identify how your school is doing overall, and whether there might be any significant gaps between students. Some teachers have already been using this information to evaluate the quality of their provision and undertake appropriate development planning.



Contact:

teachingcitizenship.org.uk/national-citizenship-education-study
ACTresearch@teachingcitizenship.org.uk

What do the project's initial results indicate?

The data from all participating schools is added (via an entirely anonymised format) to a central database, which helps us look for evidence of what works. Our first year results indicate that a school's ethos is one of the biggest predictors of positive outcomes, though the range of teaching and learning approaches used is also an important factor. Our research team regularly publishes briefings and case studies to help teachers plan for improvement.

What are the next stages of the project?

The survey has been extensively piloted and trialled, and is now



ABOUT LEE:
 Dr Lee Jerome is Professor in Education (Citizenship and Children's Rights) at Middlesex University

available to any secondary school interested in participating. We can sign up individual schools or clusters/MATs and generate school-level and cluster-level reports. Across MATS, these reports will help colleagues identify strengths and weaknesses between schools, while also helping staff to identify good practice to share with colleagues.

How do I get involved?

Contact the research team and ask about the 'NCES Student Evaluation'; following which we'll send you an overview and an ethics pack. Once your headteacher has agreed to the ethics procedures, we'll provide a PowerPoint presentation for introducing the survey, as well as a link enabling students to complete the survey online during the summer term. You'll then receive your school's report by the start of next September. There's also an online survey for teachers that will provide instant feedback on your school's provision.

What's the difference?

- + The survey enables schools to engage in data-led evaluation and development planning
- + Our reports provide insights into different groups of students to help with equalities monitoring
- + Your school results also feed into a larger study looking for evidence about what works

Polyglot PROWESS

Forget 'Désolé, je ne parle qu'anglais', urges **Hannah Day** – here's why learning additional languages can be even more valuable than originally thought...

Since the study of languages at GCSE became optional in 2004, entries have seen a steady decline. Yet with new research showing how the benefits of acquiring a second tongue can reach into unexpected areas, perhaps now is the time for schools to make studying MFL a more compelling choice.

What follows are several areas of research which seem to suggest that the comparative lack of familiarity with a language not learnt at birth allows for lower levels of emotional attachment and more reasoned assessment of situations as a result.

Needless to say, the ability to reflect calmly and with clarity across a range of subjects and situations has to be a benefit to all of our students – whatever they go on to become.

Improve your moral reasoning

Research Link:
bit.ly/ts128-SL1

You're standing on a footbridge. Below are a group of people walking along a train track. You see a train and realise it will hit them, causing loss of life. The only way to stop it is to push a large man off the footbridge, in front of the train. That way, only one person dies, rather than the group. What do you do?

If presented with the above scenario in your native tongue, chances are you'll do nothing. When tackling the same quandary in their second language, as many as 50% more chose to

take one person's life to save the others.

The thought of killing someone, even if it's to save many others, is simply too upsetting for many to fathom – but when weighing up the same considerations in another language, we're able to distance ourselves more from the related emotions and thus make the more logical choice.

Match with: Philosophy and ethics

Career pathway: Politics, policy, charity sector, law, medicine, journalism, teaching, social work and community work

Make better investments

Research Link:
bit.ly/ts128-SL2

People hate to lose, and never more so than when it comes to money. Let's say I offer to give you £1 – or alternatively, you let me have that £1, in return for a 50% chance to win £2.50. What would you do?

If I asked you in

your native language, you'd be more likely to take the £1 and run. This is known as *myopic loss aversion*. Yet researchers have found that if I were to present the same offer in a second language, you'd be more likely to take the risk in return for a possible higher reward.

Further research suggests that using a second language makes it easier for people to abandon failing endeavours and walk away from losses before they grow bigger. By observing information through the frame of a language not embedded in us since birth, it would seem we allow our emotions more space, guiding us towards more logical and rational behaviours. Yes, it hurts to accept a loss – but it's better to walk away before the consequences grow yet more dire.

Match with: Economics and politics

Career pathway: Business, investments, banking, government, policy development, consultancy, law

Process difficult memories

Research link:
bit.ly/ts128-SL3

When talking in our first language, we understand and recognise the strengths and nuances of the words we use. Can you remember, as a child, hearing a swear word for the first time? Or being caught uttering one? Chances are, that moment has left an emotional residue.

Words in a language we learn later in life don't carry quite the same sting or emotional weight. This can allow us to recall difficult experiences without the same levels of emotional distress.

Nor is it just emotions that can distort our recall of past events. Our own memories can trick us, implant false memories and confuse our recollections. Yet it seems that when we recall events using a second language, we tend to be more careful and deliberate with our thinking. While navigating the correct meaning of words we might not be entirely familiar with, we'll be similarly careful to organize our memories too.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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

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Support the SAFEGUARDERS

Sarah Cook outlines the pressing need for better supervision of designated safeguarding leads within secondary settings....

Designated safeguarding leads were already under pressure before the pandemic. In the years since then, those stresses have really started to show.

At Judicium Education, we've heard from a number of DSLs who tell us that the quantity of daily reports they respond to has almost doubled since the pandemic. Moreover, these are safeguarding issues that appear to be increasingly serious and complex.

When we've asked DSLs to compare the demands of their role today with how it was before the pandemic, they've told us that there are now more issues surrounding mental health, self-harm and overdosing, and that there's been a big rise in incidents of domestic disturbance and substance misuse.

'Personally exposed'

Individual DSLs can't be expected to absorb this kind of pressure without someone having their back – and yet, supervision of their roles isn't as widely available or consistent as it is for many other child-facing

professionals, such as health visitors and social workers.

Judicium's own recent straw poll to assess the level of supervision DSLs receive backed up our concerns. While 90% felt that supervision for DSLs was essential, just 1 in 10 were currently receiving such supervision themselves. 70% believed this form of supervision ought to become a statutory requirement.

6 out of 10 said they found the DSL role personally rewarding – yet only 40% intended to stay in the role for at least the next five years, with half remarking that the job left them feeling 'personally exposed'.

Open culture

According to one DSL, *"The headteacher and trustees don't seem to recognise the work and emotions that go into the role, which for me is where the biggest gap in support is. I'm lucky to have a brilliant deputy DSL, and we support each other – but sometimes, you just need*

someone who is completely detached from it all to listen."

Safeguarding supervision should promote an open culture of learning and development, giving DSLs protected time in which to reflect on their practice, make decisions, assess risk and ultimately improve the quality of their practice.

Improved supervision should also let DSLs explore and better recognise the emotional impact of their work, and help them feel better supported in securing the best possible outcomes.

Knowledge exchange

The government's own statutory guidance on multi-agency working to protect children's welfare (see bit.ly/ts133-DSL1) states that DSLs and headteachers should have opportunities to, "Engage in peer learning and knowledge exchange... and group supervision."

The 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' guidance (bit.ly/ts117-kcsie), meanwhile states that DSLs *"Should be given the additional time, funding, training, resources and support they need to carry out the role effectively."*

Their additional responsibilities include providing advice and support to other staff."

More recently, the DfE's 'Learning for the future' analysis of serious case reviews from 2017 to 2019 (bit.ly/ts133-DSL2) stresses the importance of safeguarding professionals

having access to effective supervision.

The way forward

The quality of supervision received and who delivers it matters. I've received and delivered such supervision myself, and believe the process is far more effective when provided by an external trained practitioner.

With supervision delivered internally, numerous other factors can be at play – not least the existing working relationship between supervisor and supervisee. Boundaries can become blurred, with sessions taking on an element of 'line management'. Individuals may subconsciously look to protect and reassure one another. Interactions may be coloured by frustrations or organisational politics.

Using external, trained professionals who possess knowledge and experience of both the DSL role and the setting is the way forward. This arrangement allows both parties to approach sessions with no other agenda besides that of wanting to fully engage in open and genuinely honest professional reflection.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Sarah Cook is a former head of safeguarding at an academy trust with 13 years of experience in safeguarding issues, and now a safeguarding consultant at Judicium Education; for more information, visit judiciumeducation.co.uk or follow @JudiciumSG



Smoke WITHOUT FIRE?

Daniel Harvey examines the spread of vaping in school – how often it happens, why it happens and how it might be tackled...

Last month we found out that the government apparently recognises the malign impact mobile phones can have on a school's culture and standards of behaviour, and has felt moved to produce some new guidelines for schools to refer to.

Now, I don't know about you, but nearly every school I'm personally familiar with, primary or secondary, already worked out its position on mobile phones some time ago, and has long since settled on its favoured course of action, for good or bad.

In conversations I've had with colleagues at other schools, our more pressing challenges are rather harder to resolve – including the rising rates of truancy, and the growing issue of vape use on school premises. These two problems can sometimes even combine into one large, overarching problem that requires a carefully considered, clear and consistent response on the part of staff.

The bells, The bells!

To get a better handle on precisely when and where vaping was happening in our school, we, like many others, opted to install a vape monitoring and alarm system. According to the blurb, we'd plumped for *'The most affordable vape detection'*, which *'installs*

with just a click' and *'knows when a student vapes!'*

Such devices work by constantly monitoring the air composition of certain key locations – which in most cases will mean the student toilets – and will send automatic 'smart alerts' when they register the presence of certain gases at specific concentrations.

All well and good – except that by the time the alert has

“Vapes are simply too easy for many young people to get hold of”

been sent and someone is at the scene, the perpetrators will have long since vanished, leaving behind that telltale faint, fruity-smelling vapour (if you're lucky) in their wake.

This has become a regular event for certain schools, with staff frequently called upon to ensure students are in lessons. And it's time consuming.

“What – me, sir...?”

This theatre continues with the stony-faced denials served up by students as they seek to dodge blame – even as they're caught red-handed with an alarm beeping above their heads.

I'd venture that most students who are out of lessons truancy will be vaping, and congregating mainly in the toilets, which are presently the only

locations where we have vape sensors installed to serve as both deterrents and detection devices.

You can see why some schools are so keen to limit students' access to toilets during lessons, despite the cries of *'You can't do that!'* from those either unaware of the issue, or who want to downplay its seriousness.

Last year, we had to contend with a small group of Y9 boys who thought themselves very smart by concealing their vapes in the toilet paper dispensers found in the cubicles. These, it transpired, were communal vapes that were rarely, if indeed ever cleaned. Yuck!

“I want my vapes back!”

That subheader was a direct quote I heard from a parent when I informed them that their child had been both truancy and handing out vapes to other students as though they were manning a Pick 'n' Mix counter. I should, though, quote them in full: *“I want my vapes back, because it cost me a lot of money to buy my child those vapes. So I want them back now!”*

Fortunately, most of the parents and carers we find ourselves having to contact for vape-related issues are very supportive, alarmed that their child has managed to get hold of vapes and will actively attempt to deal with

the matter at home. They're concerned, rightly, at what's actually in them, and are as frustrated as we are as to why certain shops seem to not care who buys them.

We can and do use our police contacts to identify any local shops linked to our students' access to vapes – the proprietors of which sometimes don't seem to think they're doing anything wrong – but it's a losing battle.

That said, we have encountered some parents and carers who don't see access to vaping as a problem, and are even surprised by the position we've taken as a school – despite us clearly stating our reasons for prohibiting vaping in multiple parent meetings, events and communications.

One of the biggest problems we therefore face is that vapes are simply too easy for many young people to get hold of.

What's the harm?

When quizzing students regarding a breach of our vapes policy, I'll sometimes be asked, *“Why are*

they called vapes, sir?"

The veteran science teacher in me is amused by this, since referring to a cloud of unknown gases, fruit smells or potentially something more serious as

'vapour' is so old-fashioned. I don't doubt that vape companies will respond with something along the lines of, *'Actually, those clouds aren't gases – just very fine liquid droplets'*, but let's be clear – vaping is a *terrible* idea. The only thing going for it is that it's a slightly less terrible idea than smoking cigarettes.

So what exactly is in a vape cloud? Students are always shocked when I tell them about the 7,000 chemical combinations in tobacco smoke and what they're used for (including hydrogen cyanide, lead, arsenic and ammonia, to name just a few). Where vapes are concerned, however, the data available

can only suggest some emerging patterns.

The US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has identified links between lung injuries and vaping, and continues to monitor what the data seems to be suggesting (see bit.ly/ts133-V1). We also know that some vapes contain the highly addictive substance nicotine. The NHS has meanwhile recorded 233 hospital admissions between 2020 and 2023 where vaping was given as the primary cause, and reported a further 941 cases where vaping was identified as either the primary or secondary cause of ill health during the same time frame.

What's in a vape?

Data is continuing to emerge around the longer-term health implications of vaping more generally, and the characteristics of 'vaping vapour' more specifically. We're aware that said vapour ends up coating the lung tissue, which has prompted a number of leading health research organisations to highlight the very real risks associated with something young people presently see as largely safe and risk-free.

In terms of reasons for their broad appeal, we need only look at the packaging and design of vaping products to see that they're squarely aimed at young people – to say nothing of the numerous vaping brands that deploy cannabis leaf imagery (which, depending on their origin, may or may not actually contain THC within their vape liquid).

Most serious of all, some schools have already had to contend with students suddenly falling ill as a direct result of vaping in school. The trouble is,

with vaping products typically having little in the way of ingredients or formulation contents on the label, no one actually knows what it is that's making a person sick – though there have been several cases of vapes being laced with the drug spice, resulting in subsequent hospitalisations (see bbc.in/3SPUPDf).

So what can schools do?

Schools need to work out their own policies towards vaping and consider how those policies can be implemented consistently, while being supportive of student health and clearly understood by all stakeholders in transparent language.

Staff must decide how they're going to monitor hotspots, and how staff capacity will be used to monitor and disrupt the type of behaviours that accompany vaping, such as repeat truancy.

They should also work out how to engage students in a better understanding of what vapes are, how they work and what they do via informative assemblies, personal development and outreach work – the latter of which ought to provide students with essential information in a way they can easily comprehend and relate to.

But before I can get to any of that, you'll have to excuse me. Our vape sensor has just gone off, so it looks like someone will be needing to check those toilets again...



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

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“Being a virtual conference, all sessions are recorded.

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FOCUS ON: PHYSICAL EDUCATION

From novel approaches to inclusion, to a recent revolution in how the subject is taught, we examine the ways in which PE has become a subject at the pedagogical cutting edge

What lessons can other subjects learn from the recent evolution of PE teaching?

THE AGENDA:

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...long live adaptive teaching? Phil Mathe explains why there's a better way to ensure that every student gets something out of your PE lessons

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Zeph Bennett charts how the nature of the PE teacher's role has changed dramatically, alongside the evolving philosophy of the subject itself



Differentiation IS DEAD...

...long live adaptive teaching? **Phil Mathe** explains why there's a better way to ensure that every student gets something out of your PE lessons

I have a habit of telling things as they are. Of being blunt and direct. And when it comes to differentiation, I'm particularly narrow-minded. I don't like the term, and don't believe we should still talk about it – or do it.

It should have gone the way of learning styles, whole language approaches or brain gym. Here, I will try to explain to you all why differentiation should go the way of the Dodo.

Captains and novices

No one teaching PE would deny that it's crucial to implement strategies that ensure all of our pupils

benefit from their lessons, regardless of their individual abilities. Just as no one would take issue with the idea that interactions between students of different proficiency levels can significantly impact upon their subsequent learning and progress.

More so than most subjects, PE is liable to see students of very different abilities directly interacting, and potentially affecting each others' learning and advancement in the process. How can PE teachers ensure that everyone gets something out of their lessons – from the school captains resentful at the less capable getting in

their way, to the reluctant novices put off by the intimidating capabilities of their more sport-minded peers?

The answer is that we need to come up with effective, dynamic and exciting ways of solving the issues that differing ability levels can pose. We must find a place where all our pupils can thrive and flourish in our lessons, regardless of capability or motivation.

Resource-intensive

The concept of differentiation in education was first popularised in the 1990s by Carol Ann Tomlinson, who had introduced it as a way to address students' diverse learning needs by adjusting instruction, content, and assessment to accommodate this variability.

Her work has had a significant impact on teaching practice worldwide. Indeed, the teaching world owes

Tomlinson a debt of gratitude for promoting individualised focus within teaching and learning. And yet, the world always moves on, and today we now recognise both the benefits of the differentiated approach and its limitations.

One particular challenge is the time- and resource-intensive nature of effectively implemented differentiation – particularly in large groups with limited support, such as those you'll regularly find within PE spaces. Teachers will also always face some practical constraints when altering their methods, modes of instruction, course content and assessment processes to cater directly to individual pupils – not least potential disparities in provision between different groups and individuals.

Furthermore, differentiation can (inadvertently) lead to the reinforcement of fixed mindsets within pupils, and a certain (often misleading) self-perception of their indicative ability level. All this can then result in differentiation becoming oversimplified or tokenistic, rather than the thoughtful, meaningful adaptation Tomlinson originally championed.

So, if differentiation has had its day, what should we turn to for the kind of individually-focused provision that will help us fully realise our pupils' learning opportunities and true potential?



Dynamic adjustments

Adaptive teaching has emerged in recent years in response to advancements in educational research, and a growing understanding of the potential to enhance instruction through ever-changing educational strategies, reacting to pupils' individual needs at any given moment.

Various researchers, educators and academics have contributed to developing and discussing adaptive teaching practices over time, establishing the place in the framework of educational pedagogy that it holds today.

Differentiation involves tailoring instruction, content and assessment to accommodate individual students' diverse learning needs and preferences within a teaching space. Adaptive teaching encourages us to

be differentiated through a variety of methods. We could group the pupils by ability within a class, so that students are working towards specific goals set for each group's ability. The less confident could be tasked with dribbling in straight lines, while the more confident and capable can practice changing directions or pace.

Alternatively, you could differentiate by task, where a wide variety of outcomes are set for different pupils, depending on their ability or confidence. You could then change the equipment to offer additional support or scaffolding to pupils for whom the task is more challenging – or, you could add or reduce pressure to provide a higher or lower level of challenge.

Yes, you can differentiate in many ways within just this

let's look again at the same lesson – only this time, through a different lens.

We set out with one overarching objective for all of our pupils (without prejudging them) and give them all the benefit of the doubt. As the lesson progresses, we establish data in the form of observation and questioning to identify where additional challenge or support is needed – and we then provide it.

In many ways, this will look familiar – inasmuch as we're changing the pressure, the equipment and objectives. What we're actually doing, however, is allowing the progress of the lesson to determine the next progression.

We're still adapting our teaching to allow learning to happen in every pupil, but also encouraging a sense of success and progress towards a more common goal. This willingness to identify and adapt is surely a more fair and inclusive approach, compared to simply deciding what our pupils can do before we even prove it to ourselves – or them.

Worth and value

Ultimately, we're all striving for a few key things in our PE provision. We're looking for inclusion, a sense of worth and value within our pupils. We're striving to imbue our lessons with a sense of support and security, and looking out for opportunities to praise and recognise success in every child.

Adaptive teaching gives us all that, and so much more. It reduces planning pressure. It helps us develop uniqueness in our teaching. It builds creativity, and in turn, engagement.

It helps us build relationships with pupils based on praise and success and, most importantly, puts our pupils – not our planning – at the front and centre of everything that we do.

5 STEPS TO ADAPTIVE TEACHING

1. Know your outcomes

Be clear as to what your overriding objectives for all pupils are. Think about how you'll support each child so that they can get as much success from your lesson as possible.

2. Know your barriers

Reflect on what might prevent your pupils from reaching their objectives, and what adaptations you could make to support their progression.

3. Identify stepping stones

What steps towards overall success can you highlight and praise when pupils achieve them? This will support a success-driven atmosphere in your classes.

4. Reflect, always

Use a few spare moments after each lesson to reflect on how the lesson went, the individual and organisational successes you saw, what worked and what didn't. Use this reflection to shape your next engagements with that class.

5. Don't try to be perfect

Adaptive teaching is a skill that we're all still learning. Be kind to yourself and don't expect perfection. Develop a toolbox as you progress, and don't worry if things don't always work. The fact that you're trying shows how important your pupils' success is to you.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Phil Mathe is a PE teacher, researcher, speaker and author of the book *Happiness Factories: A success-driven approach to holistic Physical Education* (John Catt, £17); follow him at @PhilMathe79_PE

“We assume we know what our pupils will need before we even see it in practice”

adjust our instruction and provision dynamically, in response to students' progress within individual teaching moments.

The emphasis is on providing personalised learning experiences, and maintaining a comprehensive set of strategies we can implement 'in the moment' – both to drive learning progression, and to promote a more positive, success-driven environment where student progression is appropriately supported at an individual level.

Differentiation in action

Let me provide a practical example of each, all within the same learning context, so that you can hopefully appreciate the difference.

A basketball lesson focused on, say, basic dribbling could

lesson – but each method will ultimately be designed and set within the lesson plan before any teaching commences.

A different lens

On the surface, at least, there doesn't seem to be much wrong with this. If we're honest, this is the way we've approached our PE for years. But when you stop to really think about what we're doing, the issues become glaringly apparent.

Differentiation is 'static teaching' – assuming we know what our pupils will need before we even see it in practice. Yes, we all know our classes, and what they are or aren't capable of – but this pre-planned and regimented approach allows little flexibility to adapt in response to things we see happening in front of us. So



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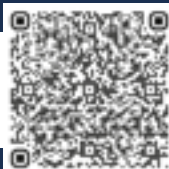
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After hours exercise

Alex Metcalfe looks back on how he and his colleagues overhauled the extracurricular sport provision at Ysgol Eirias in Colwyn Bay – and made a positive difference to absence rates in the process...

Even before the pandemic, technology had already been having a massive impact on attendance at our school's programme of extracurricular activities. Pupils would tell us they'd rather be at home playing on their Xboxes – but there's no doubt that the pandemic had a huge and lasting effect on engagement with our extracurricular activities, as well as school attendance more generally.

We had been offering the same extracurricular sporting activities for some time, and getting consistently low numbers, to the point that we'd resorted to asking those pupils who did come to bring a friend with them next time. Nothing we did seemed to make much difference – so we asked students what they wanted to see from the PE department's extracurricular provision.

Hard work and dedication

Some requested that we offer more football. A couple of students suggested we start organising games of dodgeball and other less traditional activities.

In our PE department, besides myself and my three roles of assistant headteacher, head of year and PE teacher, we have a head of PE, another head of learning and two assistant heads of learning who are also involved with the school's pastoral team. Every member of staff in the department therefore has some additional



responsibility within the school – while now also running one or two extracurricular sessions throughout the week.

Dedicating more staff time and resourcing to our extracurricular offer has been necessary, but not always easy. Extracurricular supervision at Ysgol Eirias is largely voluntary, and I'm conscious of colleagues' heavy workloads. Any successes we've had in making the school's extracurricular provision work is largely down to their hard work and dedication.

Getting the word out

Consequently, some of our extracurricular PE activities are supervised by staff from other departments. A colleague who organises our school's involvement in the Duke of Edinburgh scheme also plays football outside of school and therefore supervises some of our football sessions. Our extracurricular supervisors also include a Welsh teacher who helps us out, as well as a couple of internal cover supervisors who I line manage.

We even have two sporty

ex-pupils who returned to work with us during their gap year, and have really helped to develop our offering for the better.

Having dedicated more time and resourcing to our extracurricular offer, we've sought to promote it as best as we can. I oversee a weekly bulletin that goes out to parents each Sunday, which now contains our extracurricular timetable. The same timetable is also featured on our website, and appears in a separate bulletin we distribute to pupils via their form tutors.

Thanks to these combined efforts, we've started to see increases in the number of those attending, to the extent that we're pretty much back to what were 'normal' levels prior to COVID.

Turning careers around

We know that some of our extracurricular sessions have been particularly helpful for pupils who would otherwise have had issues with coming to school. There's a pupil in my year group, for example, who is really into rugby. From the trends observable in his registration data,

we've seen for ourselves how much his school attendance has improved when competitive fixtures against other schools are scheduled.

We've recently introduced a new administrative system for our extracurricular sessions, where learners scan a QR code, enter their dinner card number and then select which activities they'd like to attend. This information is automatically pulled through to a spreadsheet, which can tell us how many extracurricular sessions they've attended previously and for which sports.

This same data is also linked to our SIMS, making it possible for us to identify who among our session attendees is on free school meals – while also making it easier to spot any no-shows, and carry out targeted interventions using cross-referenced data.

For some pupils, the extracurricular provision we now offer has really turned their school careers around – helping them build their relationships with certain members of staff, and subsequently buy into what their standard lessons during the school day are giving them.

I'm a firm believer that sport can teach you every lesson in life – learning how to lose, how to win, and about the camaraderie that comes from being in a team.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Alex Metcalfe is an assistant headteacher, head of year and PE teacher at Ysgol Eirias – a secondary and sixth form school in Colwyn Bay, Wales

What is PE for?

Zeph Bennett charts how the nature of the PE teacher's role has changed dramatically, alongside the evolving philosophy of the subject itself...

The teaching of physical education in schools is unlike that of any other subject on the National Curriculum. Allow me to explain.

Once you're qualified to teach, let's say, geography, you'll enter the teaching profession as an ECT deemed ready to navigate the various disciplines within the geography curriculum. You'll be appointed to your first role under the assumption that any subject knowledge you've yet to cover can be acquired through further study in order to get up to speed.

Now, let's turn to the trainee PE teacher. Once qualified, they'll be tasked with having to deliver lesson content spanning a wide gamut of activities – from day one – that vary hugely in their technical and physical demands. And that's with the added difficulty that teachers can't simply read up on a particular practical sport, and then try to demonstrate the technical aspects of that sport without practice.

Practice-free proficiency?

Some of the activities a PE teacher has to cover are so physically complex that possessing some level of prior knowledge or coaching experience is all but mandatory before being able to teach said activity with any degree of proficiency.

Take hockey. Some would say that the game shares a few similarities with football, in that both involve moving around a pitch, playing in positions, set plays, taking corners and so

forth. What those of us who teach it (or at least try to) quickly realise is that teaching hockey *well* requires the kind of technical skills and knowledge you can only pick up through prior experience of playing or coaching the sport. 28 years on, and I'm still not an 'expert' in hockey myself.

When I began my teaching journey at Brentford in the mid 90s, I was expected to have some coaching qualifications under my belt – which, on reflection, is

“Having those coaching qualifications was suddenly no longer as important”

presumably why I got the interview. Once in post, I was then expected to undertake further training in sports I wasn't yet proficient in within my NQT year.

The main one for me at the time was gymnastics. My university once hosted a visit by the legendary gymnastics coach Val Sabin, who imparted some top tips and flogged us some brilliant manuals containing many diagrams of stickmen doing somersaults. Beyond that, my gymnastics knowledge was rudimentary, to say the least.

It was also expected of us PE teachers that we would use our in-service time to gain some coaching badges through the visits frequently made by national governing bodies, at which groups of teachers would be trained up at a time.

A conceptual transformation

Fast forward to the 2020s, and the teaching of PE has since undergone a conceptual transformation. PE is no longer taught through the guise of specific sporting activities, but is often now instead taught through specific themes – such as personal development, health and wellbeing – alongside performance pathways for more talented students.

What this has done is shift the focus away from domain-specific sporting activities that require different technical approaches to their delivery, and towards transferable skills that are applicable across a number of different sporting activities.

A good example of this are the passing and catching techniques used across cricket, rugby, basketball and netball. We might be using different equipment for each, but the core teaching techniques we're drawing on will be consistent throughout those different lessons.

However, having those coaching qualifications in different sporting disciplines was suddenly no longer as important. Instead, the national governing body courses that teachers undertake now tend to focus more on small games and specific activities that will help teachers develop related skills they can then transfer to multiple sporting domains.

Timetable squeezes

The upshot of this is that schools are no longer building schemes of work based around one or more distinct activities. Why keep

an extensive amount of gymnasium equipment around if your department is now only focusing on lower body strength or flexibility as part of a personal development pathway?

I recently carried out a survey of over 600 teachers and leaders, in which I asked how many of their schools still taught traditional gymnastics.

Only 62% still did.

This movement away from traditional sporting activities isn't just confined to the balance beam and vault. Hockey and cricket are also suffering from timetable squeezes. Curricular developments aside, the widespread adoption of 4G astroturf has seen schools increasingly abandon hockey in favour of other invasion-style games such as lacrosse and Gaelic football.

Cricket, meanwhile, is an expensive sport to operate on school grounds, what with the often poor drainage of school playing fields – though the emergence of indoor cricket leagues in recent years has at least provided some welcome news to contrast against the sport's otherwise falling participation rates.

Experimental pathways

Efforts at keeping PE relevant in 2024 and using the full breadth of the National Curriculum has seen more schools adopting the Concept Curriculum approach. This seeks to present students with a greater variety of activities – particularly at KS4, where core PE remains an entitlement of every student.

The process of creating opportunities for students to take part in meaningful and enjoyable physical activity has resulted in PE departments experimenting with the pathways they develop to maintain interest and, importantly, participation rates.

Post-COVID, PE teachers have struggled to deal with students unwilling to take part in, or even get changed for PE lessons. ‘Non-doers’ have long been a perennial problem for all PE teachers, albeit at a smaller scale. Since 2021, however, departments have been reporting a significant uptick

in non-doers and the number of students unwilling to borrow kits for participation purposes.

A previous survey of PE departments I undertook back in 2022 showed that 87% of those responding had seen increases in their proportion of PE non-participants. The Concept Curriculum might have the potential to throw such schools a participation lifeline.

Lifelong learners

The rather formulaic approach to games and sporting skills I was asked to deliver back in the 1990s worked for some, but also served to put off generations of students who didn’t want to compete, or had little interest in traditional sporting activities.

Today, schools opting to develop a PE Concept Curriculum aren’t just utilising the full breadth of the National Curriculum descriptors, but also moulding an experience that will suit a much wider variety of learners with varying degrees of motor cognitive abilities. This can have the effect of both improving participation rates and creating lifelong learners in health and wellbeing – which should surely be the ultimate goals of any PE teacher.

A qualified PE teacher today might not need the coaching badges that were once so central to schools’ selection criteria – but they

NON-DOERS CAN DO IT TOO

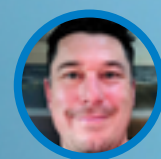
Jen Angove, a head of department in Greater Manchester, observed falling participation numbers in girls’ PE as an opportunity to repack the curriculum in a more appealing way.

This new curriculum offered persistent non-doers a chance to take part in low intensity activities that didn’t feel like PE at all. The activities that made it to the pathway included a 3km wellbeing walk, and a girls only gym session where students were encouraged to build their own programme.

Encouraging students to see ‘physical activity’ as an opportunity to improve their health and wellbeing is ultimately a goal for every PE teacher. Developing students’ appetite for looking after their own physical wellbeing – be that through walking, running or playing competitive sport – is one of the most important roles PE can play within the education system.

Even if that means regular non-doers participating in low intensity exercises, like walking whilst still in their school uniform...

do need to be creative and flexible, and link motor skills across different sporting activities in ways that deliver enriching experiences for students that are fit for 2024.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Zeph Bennett is a PE teacher and school achievement leader with 25 years’ teaching experience; follow him on X via @pegeekscorner

What's New?

Our pick of the latest solutions and innovations for secondary education

1 Act early

If you're looking for an effective early intervention or respite solution for any of your students, online alternative provision could be just what you need. It can be difficult to re-engage students who have been disengaged long-term, which is why it's important to act early.

Academy21 can offer respite for secondary students of all ages. By addressing challenges early on, pupils can make progress with their learning, improve their confidence and self-esteem, and ultimately achieve their full potential.

If you're interested in learning more about how Academy21's online alternative provision can benefit your students, don't hesitate to get in touch – visit academy21.co.uk/alternative-provision or email contact@academy21.co.uk.



4

Spark curiosity

If you're looking to build interest and confidence in STEM, check out We The Curious, reopening this summer following a fire in 2022.

This science centre on Bristol's harbourside is brimming with interactive exhibits that explore illusions, sound, space, animation, food and much more. Students can enjoy awe-inspiring trips to the stars in the 3D Planetarium, and spend time reflecting on some of life's big questions in the unique exhibition, 'Project What If'.

School groups can combine a visit to the exhibition floors with a selection of practical, curriculum-linked workshops on topics ranging from climate change and earthquakes, to forensics and psychology. For more information, visit wethecurious.org or contact education@wethecurious.org.



5

Empower with Oracy

Ready to level up your students' oracy? The English-Speaking Union is a charity with a long heritage of oracy expertise, research, competitions and coaching. Today, you can join us at a competition, or bring the ESU into your classroom with a Discover Your Voice workshop. We'll work with you to customise the workshop to your needs, goals and students, ensuring they have an enriching and meaningful experience.

Whether you're interested in a one-off workshop for a targeted group of students, or a series of workshops for a whole cohort, take something off your 'to do' list and enquire now at education@esu.org.

2 Societal good

High-quality citizenship education develops the knowledge and skills pupils will need to play a full part in society, as active and responsible citizens. Pupils learn about vital topics such as democracy, human rights, media literacy, and finance.

At the Association for



Citizenship Teaching (ACT), we understand the challenge this poses to schools, in terms of finding curriculum time, resourcing lessons and navigating controversial topics. An ACT membership gives your school the tools and assurance needed to teach citizenship effectively, and ensures we're on hand to help through our supportive community, training and resources. For more details, visit teachingcitizenship.org.uk.

3 21st century visuals

The HUE HD Pro is an affordable, multipurpose plug & play visualiser for the 21st century classroom. Flexible and easy to use, it enables teachers to capture images and videos, annotate, livestream and share documents, experiments and techniques with students in the classroom and online. Priced at £49.95 + VAT, for a limited time only, all purchases will include a FREE case.

HUE Animation Studio is a movie-making starter kit that includes stop motion and time-lapse software for Windows and macOS, a HUE HD camera and a 64-page, full colour instruction book. Designed for students aged 7 and up and priced at £41.63 + VAT, the kit fosters creativity, collaboration and critical thinking skills. Find out more at huehd.com/contact.





6

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7

CPD from the Science Museum Group

The Science Museum Group (SMG) Academy leads CPD training courses for teachers both online and in-person, to support them in their professional development. All courses are shaped and informed by evidence from extensive academic research, covering topics that range from encouraging classroom discussion to leading your own Exploration and Discovery Club.

The courses provide great opportunities for developing your skills, networking with teachers and obtaining new learning resources for use in the classroom. In-person courses are delivered from the Group's world-leading museums in London, Manchester, and York, with all courses offered free of charge to UK-based teachers, thanks to funding from SMG Academy partners. Browse the courses and book your place at learning.sciencemuseumgroup.org.uk/academy.



8

Transform with creativity

9 out of 10 teachers say that Artsmark's world-leading training boosts teachers' skills and confidence. Music, performing arts and other creative activities are vital in schools. Artsmark transforms

whole schools and their local communities with creativity.

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9



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Founded in 1944, Denford has manufactured the machines on which teachers inspire and students learn for eight decades. Specialising in the production of CNC (Computer Numerical Controlled) routers, lathes, and milling machines, over the last eighty years we have established a reputation as a leading supplier to education, providing machines to some of the world's most renowned schools, colleges, and universities.

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10



Copyright done correctly

Gain confidence in navigating the complexities of copyright with a FREE 30-minute Copyright Essentials Training Course from the Copyright Licensing Agency, which is designed with educators in mind, and will enhance understanding of copyright principles and best practices.

This comprehensive resource covers key terms and concepts, and can help you to make more informed copyright decisions over the course of your daily activities. Built around interactive lessons and real-life examples, upon completion you'll be well-prepared to manage content re-use in the classroom.

Those signing up will also receive a CPD certificate upon completion, to help their professional development and gain peace of mind. Don't let copyright complexities hold you back – find out more at cla.co.uk/education

How can AI help teachers today?

Professor Geoff Baker and **Craig Lomas** explain how artificial intelligence can be used to alleviate the workload of teachers and support them in their professional development

“Forget robot teachers, adaptive intelligent tutors and smart essay marking software. These aren’t ‘the future’ of artificial intelligence in education, but merely a step along the way.”
 – Rose Luckin, UCL professor and co-founder of the Institute for Ethical AI in Education

You don’t have to search far before stumbling across a blog or article offering tips and advice for overworked teachers lacking even the time to finish the now cold beverages they thought would get them through the morning.

The emergence of artificial intelligence in recent years, however, has introduced a new element to these discussions; one that might finally make good on that well-worn expression, ‘*Work smarter, not harder*’, and finally offer a way out of the time dilemma.

Changing the discussion

Research indicates that many professional development programmes are actually ineffective in supporting changes in teachers’ practices and student learning. Multiple reviews conducted by the DfE (most recently in 2023 – see bit.ly/ts133-AI1) have found that one of the biggest barriers to professional progression cited by teachers continues to be their

workload, with teachers simply lacking the time needed to invest and properly engage in professional development. It might not be the only such barrier, but it

precious time – from the creation of schemes of work and teaching resources, to essential data analysis, marking and feedback.

The potential applications

“By utilising ChatGPT, we can create bespoke learning pathways in real time”

remains the key reason as to why many teachers fail to invest in their practice in any meaningful way.

Yet AI may be about to change the direction of this discussion for good. The hype around AI, and its transformative potential within education is still hotly debated, but it’s now become clear that existing AI technology can make a dramatic difference to teachers’ working lives.

Take ChatGPT – a large language model that can perform an inordinate number of tasks in a matter of minutes, when given appropriate prompts. The use of ChatGPT for educational purposes, and the ethical considerations that entails, is perhaps a topic for another discussion – but one thing we can say for certain is that it can complete all manner of tasks that might otherwise take away teachers’

CPD sessions, as well the traditional ‘training model’ approach to whole school delivery identified in 2005 by Aileen Kennedy of the University of Glasgow’s School of Education (see bit.ly/ts133-AI2).

This typically sees all staff congregate in their school’s main hall or theatre, before proceeding to be talked at for the next 60 minutes by an outside ‘expert’. While some schools have evolved their practice in this regard, other haven’t, or perhaps don’t even view such approaches as problematic.

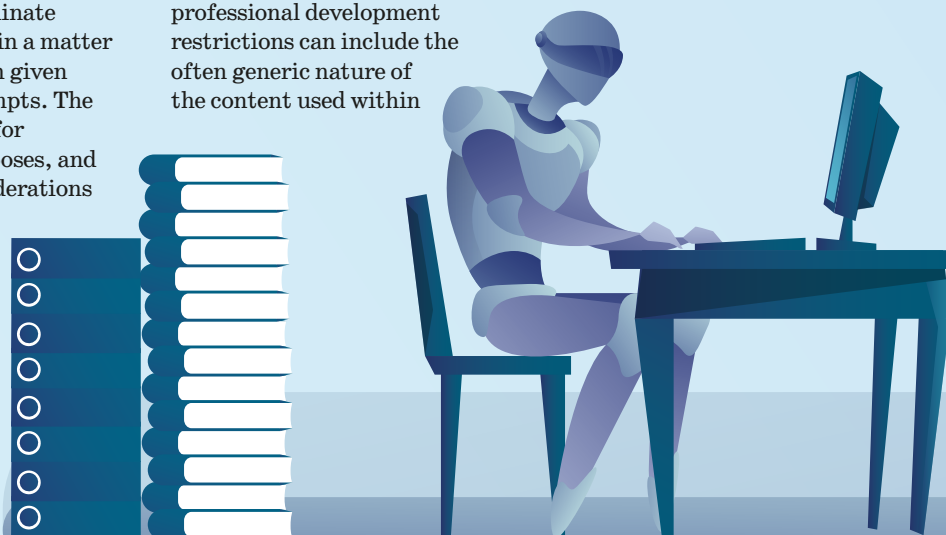
Through AI software, again utilising ChatGPT, the first of these issues can be addressed. Generic content in professional development sessions, whilst unavoidable in some cases, is usually equivalent to delivering the same content in the same manner to all the students you teach, with little to no

of this software are almost endless. With suitable training on how to interact with it, and provide adequate detail in the prompts, ChatGPT can free up teacher time to be spent in ways that have far more impact.

So, if AI can give the gift of time, what else can it do?

Direct CPD

AI software can also be used to supplement and enhance professional development programmes in a more direct way. Besides workload, other professional development restrictions can include the often generic nature of the content used within



consideration for differing levels of ability or need. We don't do it in our lessons, so why is it seen as appropriate for teacher training?

Variations in needs

Unfortunately, we don't always practice what we preach, and approaches to professional development don't always draw on and reflect our collective knowledge base around the fundamentals of learning.

Take, for instance, a session on questioning. It could be argued that this is a universal skill that every education professional ought to develop further, but at the same time, there are numerous complexities involved, different layers to questions and types of questioning.

A teacher's prior experience, abilities, confidence around implementation and subject specialism will all factor into their specific training needs. Whilst we may all need to develop aspects of questioning, there will likely be variations in those needs.

Facilitation, not revolution

By utilising ChatGPT, we can create bespoke learning pathways in real time. Teachers can input their own existing experience levels,

specific needs, and desired outcomes, whereupon ChatGPT can generate tailored development plans or learning pathways that include a structured plan of action, wider reading recommendations and specific strategies (often based on up-to-date research-based pedagogy), along with modelled examples.

Admittedly, not all the resulting suggestions may be of practical use, but ChatGPT can at least consistently create that often elusive starting point for professional development. It can prevent the dreaded temptation to procrastinate because you simply don't know where to begin. It can provide a starting framework, within which you can then develop and start to evolve your professional development.

Beyond those valuable starting points and guiding frameworks for professional development, ChatGPT can also be used as a research tool, saving teachers precious time by summarising articles, chapters or even whole books prior to reading them, to help you determine their relevance (or otherwise) to your particular avenue of research.

Moreover, it can generate recommended reading lists based on specific areas of need. ChatGPT can also help you develop initial hypotheses and enquiry questions, along with appropriate methodologies, to help begin the process. In the panel on the right you'll find five practical uses of ChatGPT, along with some suggested command prompts, which you can use to further explore the potential AI has to support teacher workload.

Ultimately, we know that it's the quality of teaching that makes the biggest difference to children's learning, and to school improvement as a whole – for which a sustained and carefully considered professional development plan is essential.

So, will AI revolutionise education, as the hype cycle seems to insist? We're yet to find out for sure, but there's perhaps another, perhaps more important question that we should be asking: *can AI make teachers' lives easier by assisting with key elements of teacher practice?* And the answer to that question is yes. Absolutely.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Geoff Baker is a Professor of Education and Craig Lomas a Senior Lecturer in Education, both at the University of Bolton, and both former senior secondary school leaders

AT YOUR SERVICE

Five practical tasks that ChatGPT can perform, along with some example command prompts...

1 LESSON PREPARATION AND ADMINISTRATION

You can create more time for yourself by enlisting the help of ChatGPT for tasks such as lesson plans, creating resources, marking work and analysing data.

Example prompt: *Plan a 60 minute lesson on glaciation for a Year 7 mixed ability class*

2 THE GENERATION OF SPECIFIC LEARNING PATHWAYS

Counter the tendency towards 'one size fits all' teacher training by focusing your professional development on specific areas of need.

Example prompt: *I am an ECT struggling with management of low level behavioural issues. Can you suggest some strategies to move forward?*

3 STREAMLINING RESEARCH

Use ChatGPT to summarise articles before reading them, so that you can acquire better insights into whether or not they're relevant to the field you're researching.

Example prompt: *Summarise Luckin, Rose (2020) 'AI in education will help us understand how we think'*

4 HELPING YOU READ MORE WIDELY

ChatGPT can be used to recommend wider reading around a particular area of need, or just broad topics that you happen to be interested in.

Example prompt: *Suggest key texts on AI and education*

5 CRITIQUING YOUR TEACHING

Another possible use for ChatGPT is to gauge the likely effectiveness of your lesson planning; you can then use its findings to help you better reflect on your practice.

Example prompt: *I plan to do a group task with a mixed ability Year 8 class. What might the limitations of this approach be?*



Lift the mood

We all know the latter part of Y11 is a serious business – but that shouldn't prevent us from letting students blow off some steam and have fun in class every once in a while, **writes Ama Dickson...**

It's that time of the academic year when the pressure is on – nearing 'crunch time' exam season for KS4 students. Yet in among all those hours spent partaking in interventions, practising exam-style questions and closing gaps in knowledge, might it be time to consider just how much pressure our Y11 students are under, and find ways of alleviating this without completely taking our foot off the pedal?

It's a point in the year when pressures are mounting on both students and teachers alike. It feels as though every activity has to be carefully targeted to our classes, every topic delicately hand-picked with the aim of closing gaps and helping our students achieve their full potential.

Above all, it feels as though there's no space for our students to ever *enjoy* their revision.

Positive experiences

Upon reflection, incorporating elements of fun into KS4 lessons, via activities with a greater emphasis on enjoyment and engagement, could itself actually serve a serious purpose in relation to revision, retrieval practice and the like.

Integrating games, competitions, songs or quizzes for retrieval practice purposes can increase students' motivation and engagement and enhance their critical thinking and collaborative skills. The language and communication techniques used in the course of such activities could additionally develop

students' ability to express themselves, in turn highlighting misconceptions that can then be addressed and corrected.

As teachers, our general aim is for students to enjoy their lessons and associate their learning with positive experiences. So why should

“Incorporating elements of fun into KS4 lessons could actually serve a serious purpose”

revision lessons be any different? With so many advantages to be had from introducing fun activities into KS4 lessons, why are teachers sometimes so apprehensive at the prospect of doing so?

Spiralling behaviour

For some, there can be concerns that incorporating elements of fun into KS4 lessons may lead to spiralling behaviour issues. That's understandable, given that even minor changes to established routines and lesson structures can sometimes cause students to temporarily 'forget' about behaviour expectations.

There can also be the fear that placing greater emphasis on 'enjoyment' could convey the sense that you're somehow not taking the lesson seriously, thus resulting in students learning nothing from it.

For others, there can be issues surrounding the need for time to plan and prepare such resources. We teachers know how limited we are for time, which can make the process of creating engaging,

yet also fun classroom tasks nigh on impossible.

Then, of course, there are all those other lessons on the timetable that need to be planned, the other resources you've got to prepare, the marking you need to stay in top of. It's hardly surprising when *'Create a fun revision*

resource' slips ever lower down the daily priority list.

A further area of concern surrounding 'fun' revision activities is the additional costs they can entail. Supplies for classroom activities can be expensive, and as budgets get ever tighter, that may be an investment that not every department lead is willing to make.

So with all that in mind, here are some fun – and moreover *free* – classroom activities that you may want to try implementing in your KS4 lessons...

Why not try...

Million Pound Drop

Using the famous TV game show as inspiration, students work in groups to answer multiple choice questions targeted towards high frequency topics, or misconceptions and other areas of weakness within the class.

Group sizes can be tailored towards how many students there are in the class. If there are any concerns around behaviour, have students remain in their

seating plans and ensure minimal changes are made to your usual lesson structure.

Around the room

Change the layout of your classroom so that the tables are pushed back against the walls (assuming the room has four). Place an exam question on each table. Students work in pairs, under timed conditions, to complete each exam question on an answer sheet. Provide enough time for students to answer each exam question, and when half of their time is up, allow them to review some hints on the reverse of the question paper to help them reach a solution.

This is an enjoyable activity that requires no supply purchases – just a helping hand able to move some furniture! Front-loading the activity with behaviour expectations, whilst ensuring your instructions are clear, will help remind students that their exams *are* fast approaching, and that this is an opportunity for them to engage with their peers while

strengthening their retrieval practice.

(It's also beneficial for teachers, since the questions chosen can be targeted towards the needs of specific classes.)

'Roll the dice' retrieval

Students work in groups of three or four, with each group member using a differently coloured pen. Each group will require one A3 sheet containing a series of questions laid out in a grid and two dice. Students write their names on the A3 sheet

in their chosen colour.

The members in each group then take it turns to roll the dice. The numbers on the dice determine the row and column of the grid they're using, and hence the corresponding question. Students answer their assigned 'grid question', before the next person in the group then has their go. At the end, the students check their answers to see how many they got correct.

This activity allows for questions to be differentiated to suit different members of each group. With all members using differently coloured pens, teachers can easily identify those students needing additional support and guide them to the correct answers.

Rap revision

Students are allowed to use an AI tool to help them create a song that includes some form of mathematics content, or perhaps addresses a specific topic. As the students draw on their creativity to devise fun and catchy songs about unlikely topics, the teacher can

provide as much, or as little support as needed – such as giving students a list of keywords to include in their songs. Let the students choose which genre or style they want to use – if rap isn't their thing, maybe rock or pop will be.

Taboo

Students are divided into teams. One team member stands at the front, with their back facing the board. A word is then shown on the board, alongside a series of words in red that students are barred from using as clues.


This can help to improve students' use of tier 2 and tier 3 vocabulary, articulating what they know and recalling definitions whilst collaborating with peers on a common goal!

Pictionary

Students are divided into teams, which are then assigned a key term that they have to collectively draw and communicate to the rest of the class. This lets students showcase what they know about a particular topic, be it a quadratic graph, an index number or different parts of a circle.

The Alphabet Game

Students choose a letter, and then try to verbally describe a topic or term beginning with that letter as best as they can. This game encourages students to think more broadly about the different areas of their maths knowledge – as opposed to working towards what's usually either a



tw teachwire
FREE RESOURCES

'Around the room' question sheets
bit.ly/ts133-MA1

—

'Million Pound Drop' presentation allowing game to be played in real time
bit.ly/ts133-MA2

—

'Rap Revision' poster and QR code
bit.ly/ts133-MA3

—

Taboo/Pictionary/Alphabet game rules presentation
bit.ly/ts133-MA4

—

'Roll the Dice Retrieval' rules presentation and grid template
bit.ly/ts133-MA5

'right' or 'wrong' answer. Open-ended activities like these can encourage participation by making students feel more comfortable with contributing.

So long your activities are front-loaded with certain behaviour expectations and explicitly clear instructions, class disruption can be kept to a minimum. The ready availability of document templates, worksheets and other supporting resources online mean that teachers can save themselves some planning time – and hopefully allow their students to have some fun whilst learning!



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Ama Dickson is a maths teacher and regular contributor to Collins' series of maths revision guides; she regularly posts maths instruction videos to TikTok as @mathscrunch

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2 NATIONAL NETWORK COLLABORATION

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4 HIGH SATISFACTION RATES

EDT's NPQs have consistently achieved high satisfaction rates, with 99% of Leadership NPQ and 98% of Specialist NPQ participants expressing satisfaction with their courses. Aamir Kohli, Director of Languages at Trafalgar School, recently completed EDT's NPQ for Senior Leadership: "I have found the programme very effective and engaging. The team behind this is



Contact:
NPQSupport@edt.org
edt.org/NPQs

phenomenal. They all have many years of experience, and they are with you every step of the way with guidance and support."

5 YOU CAN DO MULTIPLE NPQS

Teachers are lifelong learners – so why stop at just one NPQ? If you've already taken advantage of scholarship funding and completed an NPQ, you're still eligible to receive funding for another course. If, for example, you studied for a Specialist NPQ previously, but have recently realised that your ambition lies in senior leadership, you can apply for funding to complete one of EDT's Leadership NPQs. Make sure you seize your opportunity to access high-quality CPD a second time!

Key Points

EDT works with a national network of collaborators to ensure that its NPQs are always relevant, infused with expertise and evidence-informed

EDT's NPQs are built around a teacher's timetable – accessible anywhere, at any time and designed for immediate impact in your current role

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History beyond THE CLASSROOM

Patrick O'Shaughnessy details how extracurricular activities can work in tandem with the history curriculum to take your students' research skills and thought processes to new heights...

It will come as very little surprise to anyone reading this that teaching and history are the *raison d'être* for history teachers. It's in the name, after all!

The history curriculum, taught during regular timetabled lessons each week, is the primary vehicle through which history teachers deliver this and seek to inspire, enthuse and transmit their passion for the past. The curriculum is the spine of a school.

Schools are very busy places and the people within them – both teachers and students – spend the majority of their time in timetabled lessons, working through the stipulated curricula. As Matthew Evans put it in a 2020 essay for *The researchED Guide to Leadership*, “*The school year, the timetable and curricula place learning within temporal boundaries.*”

Links between strands

However, extracurricular activities offer history teachers and students genuine opportunities to engage with and explore the history beyond the boundaries of the core curriculum, outside of timetabled lessons. These can take many different forms, including trips, projects, clubs, specific activities and much, much more besides.

In short, extracurricular history activities offer students and teachers the chance to further connect

with, and immerse themselves in history-related learning, while promoting history as a subject and the history department within the school context.

This is the mindset and approach our history department has taken when planning such extracurricular opportunities. As a history department, we decided that we wanted to offer a programme of extracurricular activities to our students that allowed them to take their studies

sometimes working remotely, we wanted to offer structured opportunities for our post-16 historians (both A level and IB) that would see them select an appropriate historical topic of their choice (with the support and guidance of a history teacher), research said topic and then deliver a presentation on it at our dedicated History Symposium – an event recorded and later streamed via the school's social media channels to showcase their work.

“The possibilities for extracurricular involvement in history are huge”

beyond the history curriculum studied in lessons.

We wanted to ensure that the relationship between the two strands – the core history curriculum and co-curricular – was clearly outlined, so that students could understand the inherent links between them if they made the decision to engage with our portfolio of history extracurricular opportunities.

Added incentives

We began planning our initial extracurricular initiative during the logistical complexities of the pandemic, with all the difficulties that this entailed.

With teachers and students in school, and while

in an approximately even split between individuals and small groups.

A tonic to the tyranny

One key observation from the initial iteration of our sixth form History Symposium was the way in which it facilitated wider student historical reading and engagement with historical research, ranging from the academic to popular interpretations of history.

With the guidance of a history teacher as their mentor, students were able to conduct their

own academic research, citing a broad range of historical works, which helped to frame their thinking. This had the added benefit of a reciprocal and formative dialogue between students and history teachers.

The research process gave our students the scope and

This provided an added incentive and benefit for the students to take part, in addition to the history-specific learning, since the symposium (viewable via bit.ly/ts133-H1) could be used to celebrate their achievements beyond the classroom, as well as contribute towards university applications and their growing digital portfolios.

Supplementing this was a formal letter of recognition for each student from the school in a digital format, to further buttress those students' digital portfolios. The choice of whether to work independently or as part of a small team was up to the student volunteers to decide, eventually resulting

latitude to immerse themselves in their historical research and discuss this, often at length, with their assigned mentors. For any history teacher that has ever felt compelled to cut through curriculum content owing to lesson or time constraints, sidestepping or truncating these elucidating discussions, this experience can provide a pleasant tonic to the tyranny of the school bell.

The impact of the History Symposium over the two years that we have held it has grown significantly within our school context. We have experienced sizeable growth in student participation from year one to year two, in addition to the vast majority of students reflecting favourably on the outcome of the final recorded product, the showcasing of their work via the internet and the formal letter of recognition.

For many of our students, participation in our History Symposium has served as a springboard

for entry into external essay prizes, such as the Robson History Prize offered by Trinity College, Cambridge. Once our symposium had been completed and filmed, we were able to transition our extracurricular offering and extend help, support and assistance to those formulating essay submissions to this prize and others.

Avoiding oversimplification

Our extracurricular offering for KS3 students has meanwhile taken the format of a 'Virtual Legacy Wall'. All students in Y7 to Y9 are invited to research an individual, event or organisation that has had a positive impact on history, and to prepare and record a short presentation on their topic of choice.

Similar to the sixth form symposium, the final edited recording was made available online to showcase their work (see bit.ly/ts133-H2), and formal letters celebrating and recognising student participation were issued to

contribute to their digital portfolios.

The student participation process is a similar model to that outlined previously – students are invited to participate in this extracurricular activity, and then offered the support and guidance of a history teacher as a mentor.

The underpinning approaches taken here are tailored to our disciplinary focus on historical significance within the KS3 curriculum and the various debates surrounding this, building on the work of our core curriculum to avoid any oversimplification of its meaning and application.

Endless possibilities

In this way, our young historians already had an emerging appreciation of the complexities surrounding historical significance before embarking on this extracurricular endeavour, giving them food for thought to discuss with their mentors during those invaluable 'tangent' conversations. The success and popularity of this extracurricular activity has meant that in future years we will be extending the opportunity to participate to our GCSE historians.

As a history department, we hope that we have collectively laid a platform for the sustained future growth of, and increased engagement with extracurricular involvement. The rationale for, and format of our co-curricular offering is likely to evolve as our journey continues.

The possibilities for extracurricular involvement in history are huge: book clubs, re-enactments, listening to and creating podcasts, local history projects and debates, to name but a few. We look forward to what the future has in store as we continue to develop this aspect of our school provision.

FIVE REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- Why are we offering this extracurricular opportunity?
- How does this extracurricular opportunity synchronise with, and develop the current provision of the history department specifically, and the wider school more generally? Is it sustainable?
- What and where is the actual history driving the extracurricular opportunity?
- Have the students, staff and school community been given a genuine voice in sculpting the extracurricular provision?
- The outcomes of the extracurricular activity and the ongoing reflection process will be pivotal in driving forward the extracurricular opportunity, both dynamically as it emerges and retrospectively for future iterations. Regular reviews are a positive!



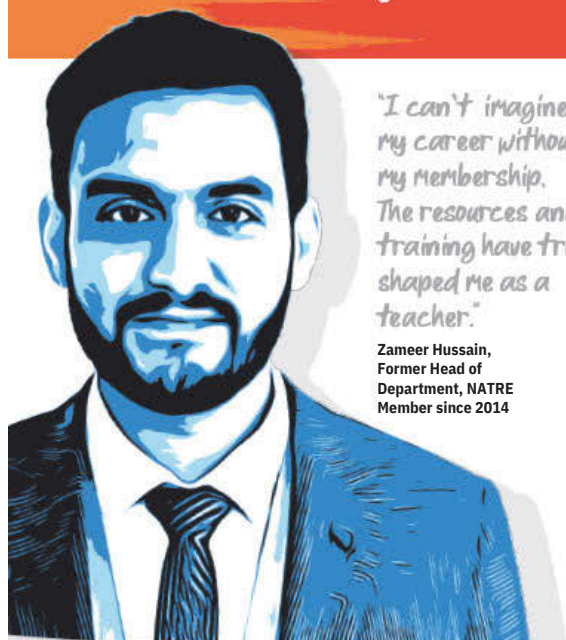
ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Patrick O'Shaughnessy is a head of humanities, author, public speaker and educational consultant; this article is adapted from an essay titled *Going the Extra Mile*, originally published in the book *What Is History Teaching, Now?* edited by Alex Fairlamb and Rachel Ball (£19, John Catt)

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- + Why student learning is the number one priority - no matter what
- + Revision cards done right
- + The profound impact suspensions can have on academic outcomes
- + Why passwords could be to blame for your lack of parental interactions
- + Devise an effective 'Preparation for Adulthood' programme
- + Help your students form better daily habits

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Thinking about...

HIGH ACHIEVERS

As educators, it's our responsibility to ensure that every student reaches their full potential – including those high achievers who consistently excel in their studies.

To support these individuals, we often need to go beyond conventional teaching methods and embrace strategies that both challenge and inspire them.

1 ADAPT YOUR TEACHING

To cater to the unique needs of your high achievers, it's important to differentiate and adapt your teaching methods. Tailoring the pace and activities to suit their abilities will ensure that these students are consistently challenged. This might involve providing advanced materials or individualised assignments.

2 SET INDEPENDENT PROJECTS OR TASKS

Empower high achievers by encouraging them to pursue independent research or projects aligned with their interests. Granting them the freedom to delve into topics beyond the standard curriculum will not only fuel their passion, but also further cultivate their problem-solving and critical thinking skills.

3 FACILITATE MENTORING

Developing social, emotional, and leadership skills is crucial for high achievers' growth. Assigning them the role of mentoring their peers will provide them with opportunities to guide and support others, while strengthening their own knowledge and sharpening their interpersonal abilities.

4 PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES FOR FURTHER STUDIES

For those craving additional challenges, offering specialised courses or extra GCSEs can satiate their thirst for knowledge. Regular meetings with available teachers during lunchtimes or after school will allow high achievers to pursue in-depth learning and explore areas of interest beyond what the standard curriculum provides.

5 ORGANISE ASPIRATIONAL ACADEMIC VISITS

Expose high achievers to the broader world of academia by organising visits to universities and arranging taster days. These experiences instil a sense of ambition and help all students – not just high achievers – visualise their future educational pathways.

6 PROVIDE A MENTOR

Regular mentor meetings with a dedicated teacher can provide high achievers with important feedback on their progress. These sessions enable teachers to identify strengths and areas for improvement, and tailor future learning goals that align with the student's aspirations.

In our aim to elevate education, it's important that we nurture and support the growth of high achieving students. Adapting teaching styles, while also facilitating mentoring opportunities, further studies and aspirational visits, provides a dual benefit for both high achievers and their classmates, providing the best possible environment for these individuals to thrive.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Ryan Lockett is a former secondary school head of year and now director of studies at the online tutoring company, TLC LIVE; for more information, visit tlclive.com

CLOSE-UP ON... PERFORMANCE REVIEWS



Schools are rapidly moving away from one-off annual performance reviews linked to data-informed objectives, and towards a much more supportive and developmental approach. This prompts the question – what can be done to give teachers more ownership of their professional development, and become more actively involved in how it's planned?

Maintaining an ongoing dialogue throughout the year between a teacher and an assigned reviewer is one option that will likely result in a positive change to how teachers view their CPD – so how can you get the most out of it?

1 TAILOR CPD TO BOTH TEACHERS AND THE WIDER SCHOOL

Teachers should begin by thinking about their existing experience, knowledge and needs. Are there any current or persistent challenges they wish to address? Anything that impacts upon their work on a daily basis? How might overcoming these challenges connect to their

longer term career objectives?

Teachers should carefully consider how their personal objectives align to whole school plans. Ideally, professional development will connect teachers' individual professional needs with wider school priorities, making this an important point to raise in discussions with their reviewer.

2 ENSURE OBJECTIVES ARE CLEAR

Much has been written on how to set particular development objectives. The acronym 'SMART' largely captures the best advice, in that these objectives should be Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-focussed. In this way, professional development objectives can be presented with greater clarity and clearer success criteria, making them easier to review at a later stage.

3 SET ACHIEVABLE GOALS

Good CPD should reflect

the different ways in which we grow and develop professionally on a day by day basis. Teachers should set aside time for regular check-ins with their reviewer throughout the year. Break up long-term goals – which can seem daunting – into smaller, more incremental milestones that are achievable and valuable in and of themselves.

4 UNDERSTAND THE IMPACT

Teachers should look to capture evidence of their professional learning and reflect on how it has impacted upon their teaching practice. A teacher should regularly review their development objectives and progress towards attaining them – just as they would with a student in their class. Be aware that 'professional development' doesn't necessarily always equate to formal qualifications or external training; it could just as easily involve reading articles, having discussions with colleagues or observing lessons.

DO THIS

PRIORITISE LEARNING

Prioritise student learning over all other factors (bar health and safety). Eke out every second of every minute of every hour of every lesson to ensure students are learning. Simultaneously, guard against any distractions to the learning process – be it off-task chatting, or indiscreet adults popping by your classroom for one reason or another.

If you're consistent and unrelenting in doing this, you can shape your classroom's culture and norms. *Your* unrelenting focus will become *the students'* unrelenting focus. *Your* high expectations will become *theirs*. *Your* way of doing things will become co-opted by *them*. At the same time, they'll start making rapid progress, resulting in a win-win for both learning and behaviour management.

Consequently, your students will buy into you as their teacher, trust you as their teacher and feel contained by you as their teacher. That doesn't mean you can't also have a bit of fun, a joke, a laugh. All of that is fine, but never at the expense of the learning – only ever as an aid to it.

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

DENISE INWOOD IS FOUNDER AND CEO OF BLUESKY EDUCATION – AN ONLINE PLATFORM USED BY TEACHERS IN MORE THAN 40 COUNTRIES WORLDWIDE, TO ENABLE THEM TO SUPPORT THEIR PROFESSIONAL LEARNING AND OBJECTIVES AND LINK THEM TO A SCHOOL'S STRATEGIC GOALS; FIND OUT MORE AT BLUESKYEDUCATION.CO.UK

61%

The percentage of the overall secondary teacher recruitment target for 2024/25 met thus far (based on applications made up to February 2024)

Source: Teacher Labour Market in England Annual Report 2024 produced by the National Foundation for Educational Research

If you and your colleagues are becoming frustrated at parents' failure to fully engage with your school's online information and learning platforms, one education charity's recent experiences may point the way towards an effective – albeit rather radical – solution.

The organisation Learning with Parents works alongside primary schools to tackle educational inequality by encouraging parents to take a more active role in their children's learning – particularly among families contending with social or financial deprivation and other such barriers.

It recently took the step of trying to boost its platform's logins by abandoning compulsory parent accounts and passwords in favour of sending out personalised links.

The result was a boost in take-up rates of around 3,800%. Granted, this may have been a case of a national organisation managing to engage more effectively with the families of primary age children – but there may be some instructive lessons there for secondary SLTs and admin teams.

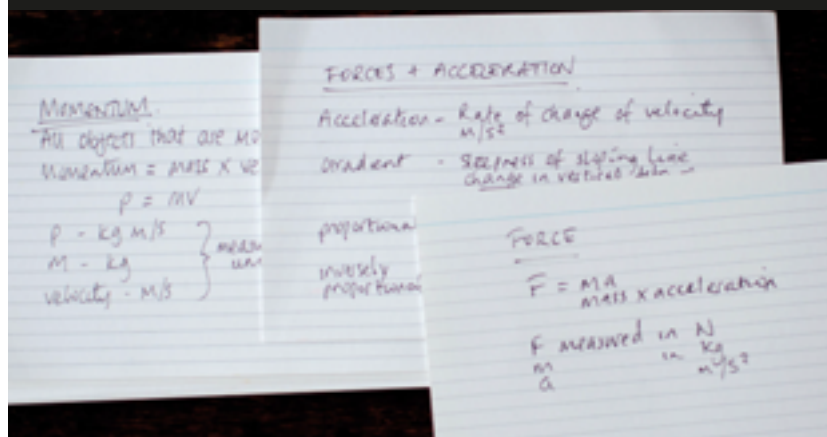
As Learning with Parents' CTO, Peyman Owladi, recalls, "First, we mapped out how parents use the platform to understand where friction occurred in their journey.

Through extensive user testing and feedback, we simplified flows to be intuitive.

Now, parents simply click a personalised link and instantly start engaging with their child. By dramatically reducing the barriers to engagement, these magic links empower more families to enjoy impactful learning together."

YOUR GUIDE TO...

REVISION CARDS



There's nothing more disheartening for teachers than seeing stacks of impeccably neat, yet ultimately irrelevant revision cards.

To be clear, *effective* revision cards can serve as powerful aids in consolidating knowledge, enhancing retention and facilitating efficient study practices – but they need to be done right.

Each individual revision card should always focus on a single concept, fact or question/answer pair, so as to ensure clarity and prevent cognitive overload. Encourage students to avoid overcrowding their cards with excessive amounts of information, and instead get them striving to be as succinct as possible in how they present their key points.

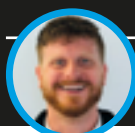
Moreover, revision cards should be *active learning aids*, not just reformatted regurgitations of existing notes. Teach your learners how to create cards that could potentially be used by non-specialists (parents, carers, siblings) to help them revise. The use of simple exercises, such as 'fill in the blank' activities, concept mapping or closed-ended questions, will allow for self-assessment while also providing rich opportunities for peer-assisted learning and better parental engagement.

Encouraging users to actively participate in the learning

process fosters deeper comprehension and retention of the material. Keeping revision materials aligned with what's been learnt is important, though – there's no point in learning new case studies that haven't been covered in class, just because they're included in the textbook.

Encourage students to ensure that the content of their revision cards is contextually relevant to the subject matter, or the learning objectives for that particular topic or exam. Also, bear in mind that both the content and design of revision cards need to suit an individual student's specific needs. Encourage users to personalise their cards, as this will foster a sense of ownership over the content. More importantly, it helps avoid the trap of cards becoming simply a generic regurgitation of information.

Having a stack of effective revision cards to hand is one thing, but learners do need to actually use them properly – not just awkwardly shuffle them when 'revising'. Get your classes to devise systematic review schedules, which will see them revisit and revise the content of their revision cards regularly. Spaced repetition techniques – where cards are reviewed at increasing intervals over time – can optimise long-term retention and help tackle forgetfulness.



ADAM RICHES IS A TEACHER, EDUCATION CONSULTANT AND WRITER

57%

of teachers report that their classrooms are too hot in summer, due to poor ventilation

Source: Teacher Tapp survey of 8,505 teachers commissioned by ASCL

Need to know

Schools' use of suspensions and exclusions is a contentious topic at the best of times. Now, a newly published report by the Education Policy Institute is set to complicate the issue even further, with its finding that pupils with just one suspension to their name are, on average, academically 12 months behind their non-suspended peers and aren't achieving standard passes in GCSE English and maths.

The outfit's 'Outcomes for young people who experience multiple suspensions' report also points to teacher survey data indicating that many teachers don't feel equipped to support students with additional needs in their classrooms. Another observation that may chime with the experiences of many SENCos is that pupils suspended on 10 or more occasions were three times as likely to be identified as having SEND, compared to students only suspended once.

Recommendations put forward within the report include having schools proactively identify any students at risk of suspension and immediately plan early intervention steps; ensuring that school staff receive some measure of training in mental health awareness; and closer collaboration between the DfE and Ofsted to make sure that any suspended students retain some form of access to high quality education.

The EPI's full 'Outcomes for young people who experience multiple suspensions' report can be downloaded via bit.ly/ts133-LL1



THE LOWDOWN ON... PREPARATION FOR ADULTHOOD

Learners in schools or colleges experience change every day. Some learners will need a great deal of support and preparation if they're to effectively manage change, and can be potentially derailed by even the smallest unexpected event.

For the most part, however, small 'micro' changes – like transitions between teaching staff, moving to different locations around the school and switching between activities – can be completed without a great deal of upset. But what happens when larger 'macro' changes are required?

Macro changes will take place at various stages throughout a child's education. They can include moves between year groups, phases and settings, and can be infinitely more stressful than any micro change. And while it's the case that all learners will benefit from having a positive experience of such transitions, learners with SEND will often find macro changes much more challenging to deal with than their peers, and hence require extra support.

STAGE BY STAGE

At each stage of this journey, educators should therefore provide learners with opportunities to develop the skills essential for the next. Of course, the ultimate 'next stage' will mean stepping into the world beyond the school gates, and completing the transition from school education into higher education or work.

Ensuring smooth transitions out of school is an essential part of preparing students for the demands of the professional world, and the many new experiences and expectations they'll be faced with.

Establishing a comprehensive Preparation for Adulthood (PfA) programme, which encourages consideration and conversations around work for all learners from the earliest years, is therefore essential. To be successful, however, a PfA programme needs to be embedded into the curriculum well before it becomes a requirement in Y9.

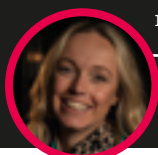
If they're not planning to study at university, then once a young person has determined their chosen pathway – be it volunteering, an apprenticeship, traineeship or employment – more tailored strategies can be developed to reflect their specific needs.

PREPARATION TASKS

It might be useful to try the below activities before learners with SEND move to a work setting, so that you can help them enter the workplace with the skills, confidence, and adaptability they'll need to be successful.

- Work with employers to create 'transition packs' containing information about how they structure their days, break and lunch arrangements, the workplace environment and their behavioural expectations.
- Familiarise students with what their new travel arrangements will involve, including photos and maps.
- Make prompt cards or checklists to help students remember new names and new routines more easily.
- Organise additional visits to better familiarise the young person with the work environment and the people they'll be working alongside.
- Identify a named individual that young people and their families can contact for help in relation to their employment, if needed.
- Work with external agencies to ensure the working environment will be safe and accessible, and that any specialist equipment the young person may need is in place.

Empowering and enabling learners as they move towards life beyond the classroom is vital. How we deliver this support is one of the key themes we will explore through our Universal SEND Services Programme, which is funded by the DfE until 2025. To find out more and access free SEND CPD today, visit bit.ly/ts133-LL2



AMANDA WRIGHT IS HEAD OF WHOLE SCHOOL SEND, HAVING JOINED IN 2018 AS A REGIONAL SEND LEADER; PRIOR TO THIS, SHE WORKED IN MAINSTREAM EDUCATION FOR 20 YEARS AND HAS EXTENSIVE EXPERIENCE AS A SENCO AND SENIOR LEADER



On the radar *IT intelligence*

Is your school's educational technology policy as ambitious as it could be, given the available resources, hardware and staff knowledge? That's what the National Association for Education Technology (NAACE) is hoping to find out, with its launch this month of a survey initiative, 'Edtech: where are we now?'

Over the next nine months, schools are being invited to weigh in on their experiences of using technology for educational purposes with the aid of the following six benchmarking elements devised for NAACE's edtech review framework:

- Leadership/management
- Teaching and learning with technology
- Assessment of digital capability
- Digital safeguarding
- Professional development
- Resources and technology

As NAACE vice chair Ed Fairfield (pictured above on the left, alongside NAACE member Dave Whyley) explains, *"Our vision is to build an accurate assessment of the achievements, challenges, digital divides and edtech opportunities facing UK schools today. There simply isn't enough*

data on how ready our schools are to excel using technology, and what steps we need to take to enable improvement. We're looking to change that."

NAACE hopes that the introduction of this new research study will help to create the first data sample of its kind anywhere in the world, thus enabling schools to make better and more informed edtech purchasing and allocation decisions in future.

Schools interested in finding out more about the initiative and taking part should visit naace-research-hub.co.uk

TRENDING

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

ONLINE ASSURANCE

The DfE's new accreditation scheme for online education providers is now up and running, with the aim of reassuring schools, families and public bodies that those overseeing distance learning and AP services meet certain quality thresholds. The first online AP provider to be accredited under the scheme is Academy21, which offers online education distinguished by live instruction and adaptive teaching intended to develop relationships and build students' confidence. academy21.co.uk

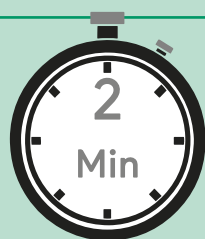
TFL TIMELINE

Urban historians may like to know that over 2,000 historical documents and images belonging to Transport for London - including illustrations, oral eyewitness accounts and maps dating back to the London Underground's creation in 1863 - can now be freely accessed through Google's Arts and Culture media platform. google/tfl-archives

1-MINUTE STUDENT CPD

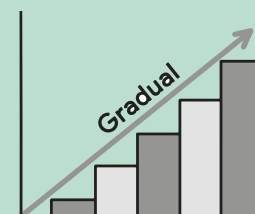
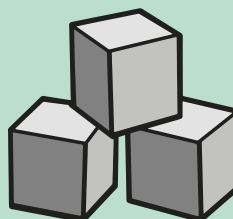
5 SMART HABIT-FORMING TIPS

SOME QUICK TIPS FOR HELPING STUDENTS DEVELOP BETTER DAILY ROUTINES...



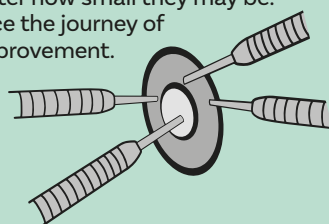
- 3 2-MINUTE RULE:**
If a habit takes less than 2 minutes, do it immediately. It will become a gateway to forming bigger habits.

- 1 BUILDING BLOCKS:**
Habits are the building blocks of our lives. Change one or two habits at a time, slowly building change into your daily routine.



- 2 SMALL ACTIONS:**
Making small changes (micro habits) to your daily routine will, over time, lead to gradual improvements in your overall lifestyle.

- 4 PERSISTENCE OVER PERFECTION:**
It's not about perfection, it's about persistence. Celebrate your wins, no matter how small they may be. Embrace the journey of self-improvement.



- 5 SMALL CHANGES:**
Daily habit changes - 'routine adjustments', as it were - will lead to bigger changes over time. The goal is achieved by taking one step at a time.

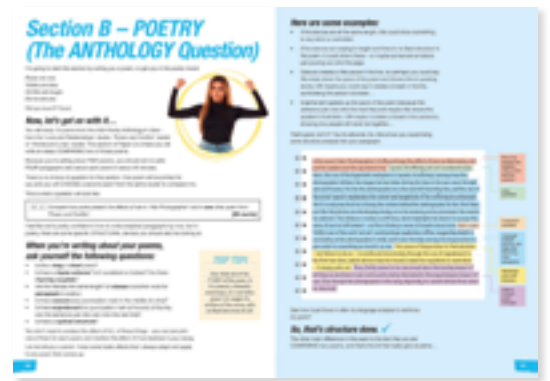
ZEPH BENNETT IS A PE TEACHER AND SCHOOL ACHIEVEMENT LEADER WITH 25 YEARS' TEACHING EXPERIENCE; YOU CAN FIND MORE OF HIS EDUCATIONAL ILLUSTRATIONS BY FOLLOWING @PEGEEKSCORNER

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ENGLISH

Glow Up Your Grades

A revision guide that empowers young people and transforms lives



AT A GLANCE

- A highly accessible English GCSE revision guide that supports every student with an accompanying YouTube series
- Based on the AQA English exams
- Works to encourage academic self-belief and motivation
- An exam preparation resource that emphasises wellbeing and positivity

REVIEW BY JOHN DABELL



Publishers have to work hard these days to make their GCSE revision guides stand out, and finding new ways of engaging students in their final exam preparations remains a huge challenge.

One way of doing that is to secure the services of an influential voice – which is precisely what Collins has done by enlisting experienced English teacher, presenter and examiner Mehreen Baig. Her video series ‘Glow Up Your Grades’ was first launched in 2023, and one year on, Collins now brings us her *Glow Up Your Grades* revision guide for English students.

From Shakespeare to creative writing, from language devices to poetry, it covers all the ground you’d expect, with Baig applying lessons learnt during her time spent as both a teacher and an examiner in showing students how to navigate their English exams and ultimately ace them.

This resource’s stand-out strength is the highly engaging way in which its advice is communicated. It’s written in a no-nonsense manner, with a tone that’s simultaneously informative and supportive. The content comprises a host of slick tricks, top tips and handy formulas, presented in an informal and chatty voice that makes it feel as though Baig is right there beside you.

The book’s solid advice is interspersed throughout with various photographs and reassuring comments, making it feel at times like the reader is receiving help from a trusted tutor, rather than trudging through a solo slog.

In terms of the book’s structure, Baig carefully guides students through the English language and literature exam papers with straightforward advice and suggestions for things to keep in mind – ranging from potential traps that students could fall into, to methods for refining answers and ‘What I would say’ strategies. Accompanying these are handy annotations of key terms and quotations, alongside multiple templates, revision challenges, concise summaries and other helpful elements.

The guide’s peppy style is a good match for the energy on display in Baig’s revision videos, which readers are signposted to via a series of QR codes. These are similarly well-crafted, showcasing Baig’s impressive communication and presentational skills in a format that students will find both easy to digest and highly memorable.

All the formalities and technicalities students will need to know for the exam are there, but smartly presented in a very relaxed, ‘can-do’ kind of way that sidesteps the dryness (and, let’s be honest, tediousness) of so many other revision resources.

All told, *Glow Up Your Grades* is a revision guide that’s bursting with spark and personality. I’ve little doubt that students will love both the book itself and Baig’s overall teaching style. All we need now is for the rest of the curriculum to receive the same impressive treatment...

teach SECONDARY

VERDICT

- ✓ A one-of-a-kind study guide that can really help to inspire exam confidence
- ✓ Written and narrated by a naturally charismatic teacher
- ✓ Teaches students everything they need to pass their exams with confidence and style
- ✓ Succeeds in making the revision process fun and relatable

PICK UP IF...

...you’re looking for an informal, yet sincere and captivating revision resource with gold standard content that will help students park their worries, boost their study skills and give their grades a striking makeover.

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AT A GLANCE

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- On-screen annotation functionality
- Suitable for teaching any age group

REVIEWED BY: MIKE DAVIES



You know what it's like – you want to demonstrate an important learning point, model a technique in real time or simply share an interesting document with your class. You could get them to all to squeeze in close and peer over each other's shoulders – but then you hate to think what those two are doing at the back...

Yes, there are smart boards, overhead projectors (remember those?) and so on, but they can be a bit cumbersome and overly rigid – which is why I'm so taken with the HUE HD Pro document camera.

Out of the box, the camera unit feels intriguing and satisfying – solid, but not clunky, and with a certain colourful charm. The camera's flexible neck performs exactly as intended, making it easy to position the lens for optimum effect – in contrast to similar devices we've all used before that tiresomely spring back *just* a little after you've moved them, and refuse to stay put. The option to plug it into its sturdy base or directly into your computer's USB port is another nice feature.

What really struck me, however, was how easy it was to use. I'll freely confess to having some old duffer-ish tendencies, and even I found it remarkably straightforward, having got it up and running in very little time. Once you've

downloaded the accompanying software it really is a case of Plug & Play – a real boon for professionals who have better things to do with their time.

Before long, there it was – a lovely crisp image of my notepad, over which I proceeded to record narration for a short test video. The sound quality from the in-built mic was reassuringly crisp, and I liked the way I was able take snapshots and annotate images precisely and professionally, with very little fuss and palaver. I barely even needed to refer to the easy to follow user guide, thanks to how familiar and intuitive the on-screen tools were.

As is often the case, it's the little touches that make a big difference. The manual focusing ring works nicely in tandem with the flexible neck to ensure image clarity, be it of a whole page or when moving in for a detailed close-up. I especially like the way you can add more light to your work with a gentle tap at the back of the HUE HD Pro's 'head'.

What's more, the whole package – camera, base and connecting cable – is compact enough to fit into the beautifully designed hard carry case. The experience of using it has set my mind racing at the thought of what I could do with the automated image capture if I were still a

classroom practitioner, whether set to take snapshots at regular time intervals, or in response to movement.

A document camera that allowed me to happily picture myself back in the classroom? Now that is impressive...

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VERDICT

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

John Lawson is a former secondary teacher, now serving as a foundation governor while running a tutoring service, and author of the book **The Successful (Less Stressful) Student** (Outskirts Press, £11.95); find out more at prep4successnow.wordpress.com or follow @johninpompano



THE LAST WORD

"It hurts most those it touches the least"



As any educator worth their salt knows, the one area you can never compromise on is classroom behaviour, writes John Lawson...

There's a sign in the reception area of my local GP, unequivocally stating that *'Verbal and physical abuse of any kind will not be tolerated, and will be strenuously prosecuted.'* These days, similar such messages can often be found displayed in shops, restaurants, pubs and offices.

Zero tolerance messages are (rightly) implied in the codes of conduct found at most schools. Yet it seems that many underperforming schools still continue ignore that wise truism, *'Get behaviour right, and everything else falls into place'*. If we can't discipline our Y7s now, it will be almost impossible to do so when they're Y11s.

Many talented teachers leave the profession because the frequent abuse they receive isn't adequately addressed. After all, for how long can anyone be expected to have their self-esteem and the worth of their subject(s) abused on a near daily basis?

Order over chaos

For many years, I've advocated for 'zero tolerance, no excuses' behavioural policies, precisely because I care about young people's future and general happiness. Discipline hurts most those whom it touches the least.

We debilitate children when we fail to adequately prepare them for an adult world that routinely demands accountability, a consistent quality of work and responsible behaviour. Every child deserves the chance to discover and develop the gifts and talents unique to them – but that can't happen unless purposeful order, rather than chaos, reigns supreme.

Ask most teenagers to define what 'freedom' means, and they'll often parrot back some vague definition of 'licence'. Freedom, to them, means *'Nobody can stop me from doing what I want, innit?'* No, it isn't.

Social freedom places humane restrictions on my own liberties, lest I take liberties with the wellbeing of others. Freedom more generally grants us the rights and incumbent responsibilities to do what decent people ought to do.

This definition of freedom and a charter of rights should be in students' daily journals, as a way of ensuring that misunderstandings can be reevaluated when resolving disciplinary disputes. When we stop accepting the unacceptable, redouble our efforts to safeguard our rules and insist that respect is a two-way street, it's a win-win situation for everyone.

Behaviour over curriculum

Last year, I wrote to a local school principal whose students are responsible for regularly creating public disturbances, including numerous instances of loutish teens brandishing obscenities far too loudly and proudly.

Ofted describes the school as a 'good provider' – though of what, is unclear. Since the principal didn't respond, I'd like to share here some strategies pursued by a visionary headteacher who mentored me while transforming a massive sink school into a centre of excellence.

First, work diligently with KS3 students from day one of Y7. Document and resolve *all* inexcusable incidents reported by teachers, and make sure those teachers are trained to prioritise behaviour over the curriculum. Lost learning time can be quickly recovered once students have learned to behave respectfully.

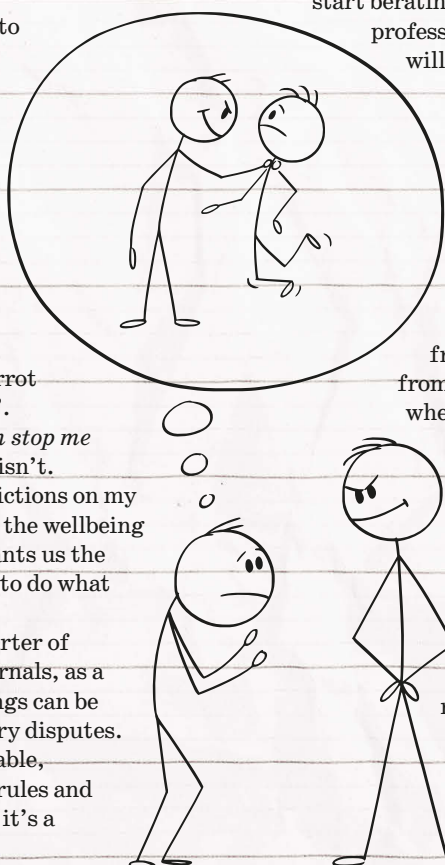
Then, ensure that every teacher is able to discern the key differences between *discipline* and *punishment*. I'd say that over 60% of the new teachers I mentor can't. Why is that? A similar proportion will further admit to shouting at students when they get frustrated. That rarely helps, as once teachers start berating their students, the focus shifts to their (un) professional conduct, with the risk that miscreants will escape correction.

Reciprocated responsibilities

After-school detentions should serve as opportunities for experienced teachers to educate detainees about their behaviour and the long-term consequences of being uneducated. Students (and teachers) should be required to apologise for any wrongdoings. We should swiftly exclude abusive students from classrooms, but be slow to exclude them from school. Most schools will need inclusive spaces where issues can be addressed compassionately.

There are, however, some problems that lie beyond any apparent resolution. In every social group, through the generations, there'll always be that small minority of rebels that you'll need to identify early on. When the LA forbids last resort exclusions, while reminding you that every child is entitled to an education, politely remind *them* that rights without reciprocated responsibilities can't be honoured.

Even Don Bosco, an innovative and saintly educator canonised for his devout services to education, found it impossible to educate that 5% of boys who were fiercely determined to be left behind. *Memento sis homo.*



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