

EDTECH  
GUIDANCE  
SPECIAL

VISIT [TEACHWIRE.NET/SECONDARY](https://teachwire.net/secondary)

# teach SECONDARY

Independent advice from the UK's top education experts



**LADY  
MARIÈME  
JAMME**

*"We've taught 25,000 girls how to code"*

## BLENDED LEARNING

**TAKE YOURS TO  
THE NEXT LEVEL**

*PE for  
kids who  
hate sport*

**How to crack  
CURRICULUM  
SEQUENCING**

**DAVID  
DIDAU:**

**"EXAMS ARE THE  
LEAST WORST  
OPTION"**

## GET YOUR OSCAR

**Why every teacher needs great acting skills**

ISSUE 10.1 | £3.99



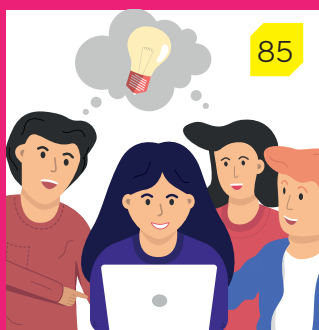
9 772049 278016



83



86



85

## *Learning Lab:*

- Manage school parents' fears and concerns
- Help your students become better critics
- Master the art of collaborative learning

# Make results happen

Become an examiner



With exams delayed this year, we need many more examiners to get the job done.

If you're a teacher or qualified to teach, apply online and join the team. NQTs, PGCE students and retired teachers also qualify.

[aqa.org.uk/apply](https://aqa.org.uk/apply)

**AQA**   
Realising potential



## FROM THE EDITOR

### “Welcome...”



So, we now know that the government intends to put a ‘package of exceptional measures’ in place for those students taking their exams next summer. Grades will be more generous, some topic areas will be confirmed ahead of time and all students will receive a grade, even if illness forces them to miss taking a paper.

While doing the media rounds on the morning said measures were announced, however, it was put to Education Secretary Gavin Williamson that this type of ‘across the board’ easing of certain exam pressures may well be consistently applied, but likely won’t have consistent impact. At issue are the yawning inequalities that have been harshly exposed in the post COVID age. At the most basic level, students able to attend school throughout the last term will get to benefit in exactly the same way as others – in an area with higher infection rates, for example – who may have needed to stay away for health reasons. And that’s before one even considers the numerous other advantages some students enjoy compared to others, be it a home environment that’s conducive to learning, or extra tutoring outside of school.

David Didau points out (p19), there comes a point where we have to reconcile ourselves to a certain level of inevitable unfairness, albeit while attempting to make things as fair as we realistically can. A truly level playing field seems all but impossible – what impact the government’s efforts at slightly levelling it will have remains to be seen.

In the meantime, schools everywhere have done their best to set up and refine their blended learning provision – an area we explore this issue (p31) by looking at the skills needed to really make it a success, and the ways in which it’s rapidly transforming the structure of the school day as we know it.

At the same time, schools are continuing the enormously difficult process of helping some catch up on lost learning, and providing support to students with an array of individual needs and circumstances, be it a particular environment at home (p72) or a form of disability, such as Deafness (p68).

The Education Secretary didn’t have a neat answer to those interviewers asking him to justify the way in which lifting all boats will still leave some higher than others. Aside from continuing to debate whether there should be any exams at all – Wales thinks not, of course – we’re not sure we’d have a neat answer either.

Until next issue,

**Callum Fauser**  
callum.fauser@theteachco.com

## On board this issue:



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



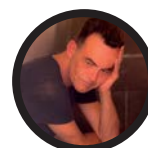
Colin Foster is a Reader in Mathematics Education at the Mathematics Education Centre, Loughborough University



Matthew Hallam is an English/literacy SLE and senior examiner



Helen Spiers is head of counselling at Mable Therapy



Phil Beadle is a teacher, author, broadcaster, speaker, and journalist

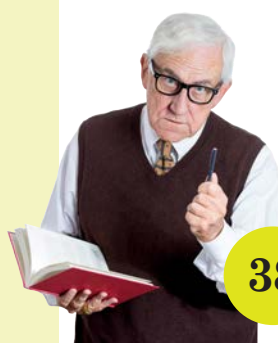


Hannah Day is a head of visual arts, media and film

## KEEP IN TOUCH!

Sign up for the weekly TS newsletter at [teachwire.net/newsletter](https://teachwire.net/newsletter)

## Essential reading:



### What's in a phrase?

Unpacking the meaning of ‘the best which has been thought and said’

38

### In this together

Has COVID-19 led to a reduction of school bullying?

42



### Dare you to turn the page...

Why horror is the perfect literary genre for reluctant readers

52





## School of Thought

### 18 MELISSA BENN

As COVID-19 starkly exposes the shortcomings of centrally-run public healthcare provision, could we soon see a rethink of our overly centralised education system?

### 19 DAVID DIDAU

The question of what exam arrangements should be in place for 2021 remains a vexing one – the best we can do is ensure we go with the least worst option

## Regulars

### 11 MAKING SENSE OF ... PROBABILITY

In this new series, Colin Foster explores some common problem areas in maths, what makes them difficult and how teachers can tackle them, beginning with – probability

### 13 VOCAB CLINIC

Alex Quigley's strategies to support word-poor learners

### 41 CLASSROOM VOICE

A lot may have changed in 2020, observes Matt Hallam, but students still require the same level of literacy feedback

### 46 OFF THE SHELVES

New titles for you and your students

### 90 THE LAST WORD

John Lawson ponders what criteria we should use to gauge how successful educators are

## Features

### 16 IS SILENCE REALLY 'VIOLENCE'?

Jacob Reynolds sets out why the refusal of some protest movements to countenance inaction or a reluctance to comment is at odds with the process of meaningful reflection that helps us all learn

### 21 TREADING THE BOARDS

Sheila Chawla of The National Theatre shares some performing techniques and strategies that can help you better command a classroom

### 23 3 THINGS WE'VE LEARNT ABOUT ... CHANGING SCHOOL ROUTINES

Laura McInerney finds out how teachers feel about this year's changes to certain areas of school life previously considered all but immovable

### 24 "OUR COMMUNITY IS TIGHTER THAN MOST"

Barry Sandow reflects on how ACS International School Cobham managed the challenges of a global pandemic while providing education to a student body made up of 70 different nationalities

### 38 "THE BEST WHICH HAS BEEN THOUGHT AND SAID"

Phil Beadle charts the long journey of an oft cited – and misquoted – Victorian-era phrase that's come to typify a certain set of attitudes towards modern education

### 40 SHAKESPEARE IN QUOTES

Helen Mears examines how the words and thoughts of another Shakespearean character betray their true motivations

### 42 WHY SCHOOLS NEED TO BE LIFEBOATS

Counselling specialist Helen Spiers considers the changing nature of school bullying in the wake of COVID-19

### 44 PE FOR ALL

Zeph Bennett presents some ideas for ensuring that all students, not just the sporting fanatics, get something tangible out of their PE lessons

### 48 WHY TEACH THIS AND WHY NOW?

Kat Howard and Claire Hill discuss the importance of careful sequencing when it comes to curriculum design

### 52 DO YOU LIKE SCARY STORIES?

Cynthia Murphy tells us why the horror genre is perfect for engaging reluctant readers

### 55 MAKE MFL MEANINGFUL

Steve Smith offers some suggestions for keeping KS3 students engaged during speaking and listening tasks

### 57 TS SPECIAL – CATCH-UP INTERVENTIONS

What schools can do to get students with SEND back on track, strategies for supporting Deaf learners and how to address the very different learning environments families have at home

### 71 TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION UPDATE

Lady Marième Jamme's mission to educate the coders of tomorrow, the changing role of technology in art lessons and why a true 21st century education will involve personalised learning

## Focus on blended learning

### 30 ONLINE FIRST

Remote learning expert Nik Peachy shares his insights into the skills and attitudes teachers can develop in order to make the very best use of their blended learning provision

### 32 A BREAK FROM THE OLD ROUTINES

Gordon Cairns looks at how putting in place effective blended learning may entail upending many previously fixed parts of the school day

### 34 "WE LEARNED AS WE WENT ALONG"

Chris Vallance looks back on his school's experience of contending with the complexities of prolonged student absence, and how his colleagues developed their confidence in teaching online

## Learning Lab

### 83 BE INSPIRED

In this issue's collection of CPD tips and ideas, find out how you can – put parents at ease, have productive class discussions around social media, harness the power of collaborative learning and improve students' responses to literature



Group editor: Joe Carter

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

Head of commercial solutions: Richard Stebbing

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

Deputy advertising manager: Louis Stephenson, louis.stephenson@theteachco.com, 01206 5054777

Account manager: Demi Maynard, demi.maynard@theteachco.com, 01206 505962

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

Art editor: Rick Allen

Designers: Hannah Kemp and Ben Kemp

Photography: CLiQQ Photography cliqq.co.uk

Accounts: 01206 505995

Design & reprographics: Ace Pre-Press 01206 508608

Customer services: aceville@dtmedia.co.uk, 0800 904 7000

Publisher: Helen Tudor

Published by: Maze Media (2000) Ltd, 25 Phoenix Court, Hawkins Rd, Colchester, Essex, CO2 8JY. Tel: 01206 505900



# Mocks Service

## Mocks have never been so important!

Our new service provides you with paper or onscreen exams and can be marked by our expert examiners. With results available via ResultsPlus, you can identify your students' strengths or areas for improvement and plan revision and intervention.

- ✓ Ease the burden of preparing and marking GCSE and A level mock exams.
- ✓ Create a realistic exam experience for your students and build confidence with examiner-marked papers.
- ✓ Use the examiner-marked papers to compare teacher marking and support CPD.

*"we signed-up to see where our students are and to inform our own marking, as A level English Language is new to us this year"*

**Chloe Testa**, Head of English,  
The Hollyfield School & Sixth Form

We'll provide guidance to support you every step of the way, from submitting your student entries to analysing mocks results. We also have lots of high-quality free intervention and revision support, plus resources\*, to help you get your students back on track before final exams in the summer.

Submit student entries by 25th January for spring term 2 mocks!  
Find out more: [qualifications.pearson.com/mocksserviceTS](https://qualifications.pearson.com/mocksserviceTS)



# The newsletter

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

## The UNINFORMED teacher's guide to...

### TWITCH

Watching other people play computer games might seem an odd way to spend your time but this, in a nutshell, is exactly what Twitch - the live streaming platform set up by Amazon - is all about. At any time, day or night, you can log on and choose to follow one of thousands of people sat at their desks in front of a web cam, often for a 10-12 hour stretch, as they play Fortnite, Call of Duty, or whatever other online battleground is flavour of the month.

Viewers join a chat channel to converse with fellow enthusiasts and their host, though the topics are rarely edifying. It is, however, a fascinating study in linguistics: Poggers (meaning good), Sadge (meaning sad), KEKW (indicating hilarity) are all part of the Twitch lexicon currently making a bid for the OED.

Filming yourself playing video games might not sound a very glamorous lifestyle, but for those at the top of this bedroom-based business the rewards are considerable. You might have caught wind of the name Ninja, aka Richard Tyler Blevins, whose Twitch fame has helped him amass a net worth of \$15m. Now where did we put that web cam!?



### DO SAY

Did you see Shroud last night?  
Poggers!

### DON'T SAY

You can't make money playing games.

## BEAT THE BUDGET



### What are we talking about?

Free Science Museum CPD

### What is the targeted age range?

11-16

### What's on offer?

All new free online training courses to ignite curiosity in STEM subjects - based in research and part of the museum's Academy learning programme.

### How might teachers use the resource?

By taking part in activities and discussions, teachers will pick up creative and practical ideas to use in the classroom, all of which focus on five key elements - hook, inform, enable, extend and reflect.



There are new maths resources too, including how to use bubbles to explore geometry.

### Where are they available?

learning.sciencemuseumgroup.org.uk

### DON'T QUOTE ME...

"I just think we have the very best people in this country and we've got the best medical regulators. Much better than the French have, much better than the Belgians have, much better than the Americans have"

Education Secretary, Gavin Williamson, interviewed on LBC

## Think of a number...

### 41,472

The number of people starting teacher training in 2020/21 – up 23% on last year

Source: gov.uk

1500 Schools that are at particular risk of great financial hardship due to COVID-19 (which are disproportionately likely to be deprived).

Source: NFER

£643m The SEND funding gap, after 90 councils overspent on their budgets for teaching children with special education needs and disabilities.

Source: Special Needs Jungle

### ONE FOR THE WALL

"Every artist was at first an amateur."

Ralph Waldo Emerson





## Six months behind

Just before Christmas, Ofsted published its third and final report on the effects of COVID-19 on children and young people. During around 2000 visits, it was found that over half of schools had sent pupils in bubbles home to self-isolate at some point during the term, resulting in students losing more learning, following on from the lock down earlier in the year. It's thought that many children are at least six months behind where they should be.

Where students have been sent home in bubbles, many schools have been making real progress with their learning provision, which often includes live or pre-recorded online lessons. It has, however, been more difficult to support students who are self-isolating individually, with these pupils often missing out on the content being taught to their peers.

In school, the curriculum has been adapted, with many KS3 students, for example, doing less practical work since leaders have prioritised KS4 and KS5 when it comes to the use of resources such as science, art and music rooms. Some secondaries have also placed an additional emphasis on PSHE - using tutor time for additional work on mental health and wellbeing, for example. With remote learning becoming commonplace, schools have been focusing on how to improve their online delivery, with leaders often talking about the need to work on one particular aspect of their provision - with assessment being the main area cited as being under scrutiny.

### SAVE THE DATE

## KEYNOTES AND CORRESPONDENCE

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

### THE HEADLINE:



### Ofsted's 2021 return will happen in phases, with no graded inspections planned before the summer term

**WHO?** Amanda Spielman, Majesty's Chief Inspector

**WHAT?** Inspection return plans

**WHEN?** 3rd December 2020

The usual level of scrutiny within the education and care system has been absent since last March, so it's important that it returns next year as we all hope for a greater level of normality. But we understand the pressure that everyone in education and social care is working under and we want to return to our usual work in a measured, sensitive and practical way.

We will not re-introduce graded inspections to schools and colleges before April. During the spring term, we will use supportive monitoring inspections to help those that most need it, focused on how well pupils and students are learning. Routine inspections in early years and social care are also planned for the summer term, but regulatory work will continue in the interim.

Our role is to offer the greatest assurance we can to parents and the public about the quality of education and care arrangements for children and learners. These plans will help us support the providers who are facing the greatest challenges during these difficult times. They will ensure that inspection is fair, safe and valuable, while remaining true to our core purpose and principles.



### THE HEADLINE:

### School budgets hit hard by the cost of COVID-19

**WHO?** Paul Whiteman, general secretary of the NAHT

**WHAT?** Comment on the NFER pandemic report

**WHEN?** 4th December 2020

School budgets were set before the pandemic hit and were already incredibly tight. The mandatory unanticipated costs schools are now facing due to Covid-19, that have so far gone unreimbursed by the government, mean that money could be taken away from children's education and wellbeing and some schools could be pushed over the edge financially.

Our research shows that in just the first few weeks of term schools spent on average more than £8,000 pounds each on the safety measures demanded by the government. With restrictions set to continue until March next year, costs are spiralling.

There is still no additional money to help schools pay for essentials like sanitiser, masks, soap and other cleaning products.

6-9 JANUARY ASE Annual Conference Online | 24-25 JANUARY Inclusion & Wellbeing MENA 2021 Online  
| 18-19 Youth Sport Trust 2021 Conference

### 6-9 JANUARY

ASE Annual Conference  
Online  
[www.ase.org.uk](http://www.ase.org.uk)

Over 150 hours of CPD will be available at this year's online event, with up to six simultaneous sessions per time slot each day. Leading experts from across the field will be presenting, including Professor Andrew Pollard of the Oxford Vaccine Group, and there's a huge selection of workshops for secondary teachers. Look out for sessions on the science of climate change and why students struggle with balancing equations.

### 24-25 JANUARY

Inclusion & Wellbeing MENA 2021  
Online  
[my.optimus-education.com](http://my.optimus-education.com)

Responding to the KHDA initiative that all schools be fully inclusive by 2020, and with the global pandemic having a widespread effect on wellbeing, this event provides a mix of interactive and on-demand sessions that give schools the resources to support their students while also looking after staff. The ultimate aim being to create a whole-school culture with wellbeing at its heart.

### 18-19 MARCH

Youth Sport Trust 2021 Conference  
[youthsporttrust.org](http://youthsporttrust.org)

The Youth Sport Trust's annual conference will look at how PE, school sport and physical activity can play a leading role in creating a more supportive environment, which leads to better educational outcomes and prepares students for the challenges of the future. Keynotes and lively breakout sessions will also explore staff wellbeing, and how this in turn can enable adults to give their best to the students in their care.





# FREE SCHOOLS' BROADCASTS

EVERY FRIDAY AT 11AM  
8 JANUARY – 5 FEBRUARY

Register now at  
[rsc.org.uk/schoolsbroadcast](http://rsc.org.uk/schoolsbroadcast)

# MICHAEL MORPURGO'S TALES FROM SHAKESPEARE

The work of the RSC Education Department is generously supported by Paul Hamlyn Foundation, Adobe, The Clore Duffield Foundation, The 29th May 1961 Charitable Trust, GRoW @ Annenberg, Samsung, The Polonsky Foundation, The Schroder Foundation, The Wyfold Charitable Trust, Stratford Town Trust, The Goldsmiths' Company Charity, The John S Cohen Foundation, Teale Charitable Trust, The Grimmitt Trust, George Fentham Birmingham Charity, The Misses Barrie Charitable Trust and TAK Advisory Limited.



Supported using public funding by  
**ARTS COUNCIL  
ENGLAND**



# MATHS CORNER

Intriguing problems to inspire curiosity

Think of two numbers  
[nrich.maths.org/  
 thinkoftwonumbers](http://nrich.maths.org/thinkoftwonumbers)

Here is an alternative and more unusual version of the "Think of a Number" trick, which you may have heard of before.

Think of two whole numbers under 10.

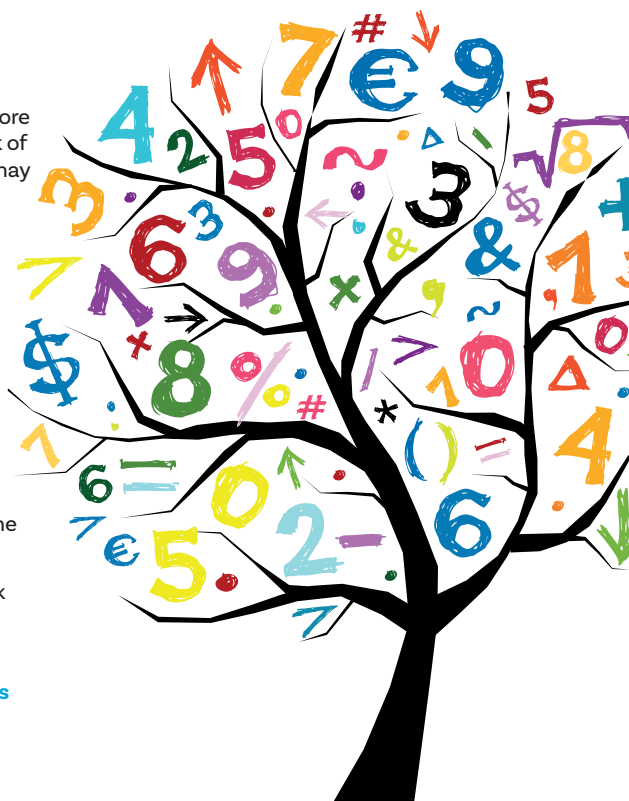
Take one of them and add 1. Multiply by 5. Add 1 again. Double your answer. Subtract 1.

Add your second number. Add 2. Double again. Subtract 8.

Halve this number and tell me your answer.

From your answer, I can work out both your numbers very quickly. How?

Choose some different pairs of numbers and repeat the process. Can you figure out how the trick works?



NRICH provides thousands of free online mathematics resources covering all stages of secondary school education – completely free and available to all. You can access the secondary curriculum map and check the latest Live Problems at [nrichmaths.org/9451](http://nrichmaths.org/9451) – the NRICH team looks forward to receiving your students' solutions and publishing some of the best ones on the website!

## A FEW MINUTES OF DESIGN

### #12 ONE OBJECT, 100 WAYS

Draw as many uses as you can think of for the object on this card.

What qualities, or properties, does the object have? How else could these properties be used?

You can multiply the basic unit, add materials, cut the object, or reshape it.

You just need to make good use of the shape, size and properties of the material.

A Few Minutes of Design ONE OBJECT 100 WAYS



## Get Into Film



THE PERSONAL HISTORY OF DAVID COPPERFIELD (2019, PG, 119 MINS)

### CURRICULUM LINKS:

English literature, film studies

Set in Victorian England, but told with a modern sensibility, this version of Charles Dickens' much-loved novel chronicles the title character's journey from childhood into adulthood.

After he's sent to work in a bottle factory by his mother's new husband, the miserly and abusive Mr Murdstone, young David discovers his love for language and resolves to become a writer. Escaping into the wider world, he meets a host of peculiar and wonderful characters.

This kind-hearted story highlights the importance of community in a young person's life, and the possibilities that arise when creativity is encouraged to flourish.

### Discussion questions:

- How would you describe the character of David Copperfield? What distinguishes him from other people in the story?
- What's the effect of the film's unique style, merging a story set in Victorian England with modern forms of storytelling?
- Charles Dickens wrote a lot of stories about poverty and wealth – how are these two aspects of society represented in this film? How are these aspects explored amongst the characters, and what does that tell us about Victorian society?

Head online to [intofilm.org](http://intofilm.org) to discover more inspiring films and associated information



### Retweets

Who's been saying what on Twitter this month?

**Ros McMullen** @RosMcM

My first reaction to the exams announcement ... whenever there is a universal measure, the most advantaged gain the most advantage from it.

**Tom Rogers** @RogersHistory

I hope teachers are near the top of the vaccine list, they should be! Can't think of many jobs with this much human contact with 'carriers' involved.

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

# NEW FROM BLOOMSBURY EDUCATION

Inspirational titles for teaching

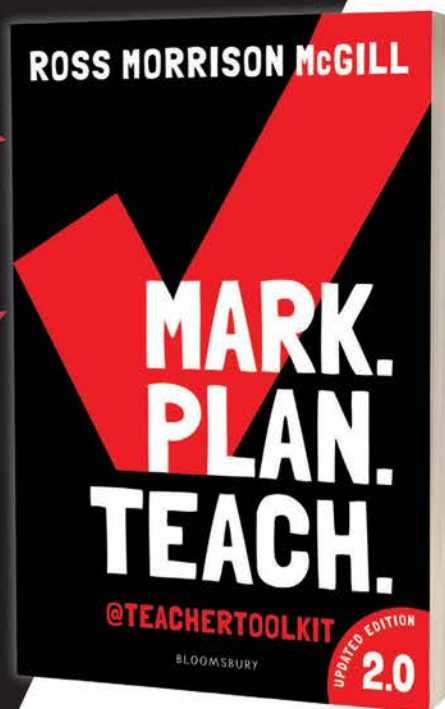
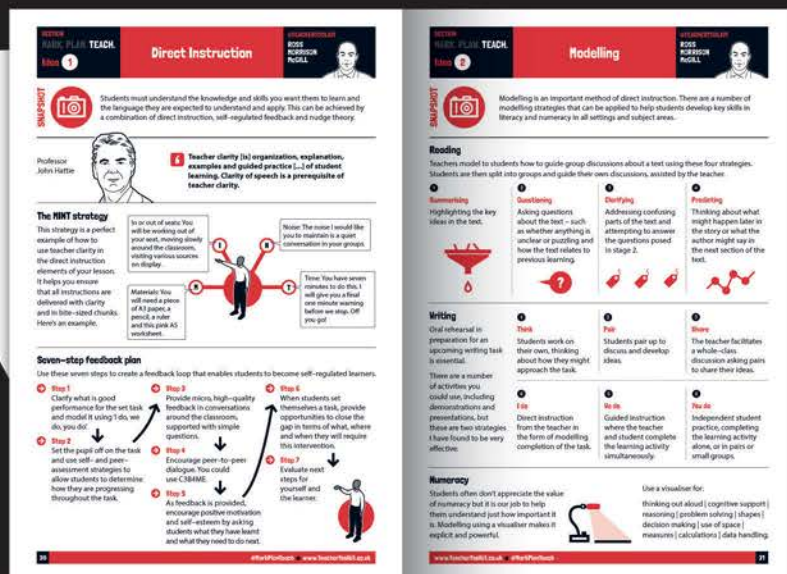
## Mark. Plan. Teach. 2.0

A new, fully updated edition of Ross Morrison McGill's bestselling *Mark. Plan. Teach.*

*Mark. Plan. Teach. 2.0* is packed with ideas to help teachers refine the key elements of their profession: marking work, planning lessons and teaching students.

New foreword by Professor Andy Hargreaves

Brand new content in line with best practice and recent thinking around marking and feedback



9781472978622 | £16.99

Includes a visual booklet of the key ideas illustrated by Oliver Caviglioli

## Let's Hear It from the Boys

Real-life testimonies from boys and advice on why boys may underachieve and how teachers can tackle this

The definitive guide to raising boys' achievement in secondary schools from expert Gary Wilson

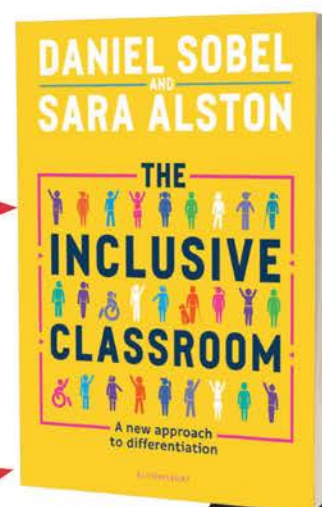


9781472974631 | £19.99

## The Inclusive Classroom

Clear, innovative strategies on how to support vulnerable students in a low-cost and stress-free way

From inclusive education leader and author of *Narrowing the Attainment Gap*, Daniel Sobel, and SENCO Sara Alston



9781472977922 | £16.99

Order before 28<sup>th</sup> February 2021 to receive a **20% discount** at **Bloomsbury.com** on these titles, using code **TEACHSEC20**

@BloomsburyEd

BloomsburyEducation

BLOOMSBURY EDUCATION

Bloomsbury.com/Education



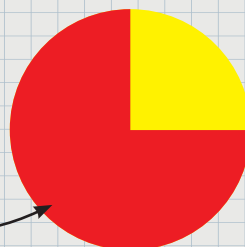
# IN A SPIN

When it comes to probability, students may find they come up with the right answer to the wrong question. Activities like this can help them realise their mistakes

Students often get confused about expected values in situations that involve probability and use the idea inappropriately, but there is a way to address this: we can present a task that makes the misunderstanding visible.

## THE DIFFICULTY

"Look at this spinner."



"What is the probability of getting red?"

This should be an easy question, and students should answer 'Three quarters'.

"You have to choose red or yellow, and if the spinner comes up with your colour, you win a prize."

"If I spin the spinner 12 times, how many of those times would you choose red?"

Give students time to discuss this in pairs.

The correct answer to the question above is "every time", but some students are very likely to give the wrong answer, by calculating  $\frac{3}{4}$  of  $12 = 9$  and saying "nine times". The expected number of times the spinner would land on red is nine, but this is the wrong concept to use to answer this question.

The expected number is the mean. If you kept spinning the

spinner 12 times, and for each set of 12 spins wrote down how many times it came up red, then, after a lot of 12-spin trials, the mean of those numbers would be very close to nine. But red is more likely on every individual spin, so it always makes sense to go for red. Students often find this counterintuitive.

## THE SOLUTION

Rather than giving students a long explanation of why they are wrong – which they might not believe anyway! – here are three possible ways to address this difficulty.

### 1. Do it!

A good way to be confronted by this error is to see it happen for real. Get students to make the spinner and try it out, deciding each time which colour they are going to choose. In the long run, students who choose red every time will win more often.

### 2. Change the fraction

If students say that they would sometimes choose yellow (e.g. three times in every 12), ask them what they would choose for these spinners:



Asking them to think about this may help them to realise their mistake. The third example is likely to generate a lot of discussion.

### 3. Change the question

The common student response is an example of 'the right answer to the wrong question'. Students need to see that "How many times would you choose red?" is a different question from "How many times would you expect red to come up?". Although we only expect, on average, to get red nine times out of 12, the important thing is that we can't know in advance which nine times this will be. And so, on every spin, it's better to choose red – even if the last nine spins have been red! Changing the question to "How many times would you expect red to come up?" may help students to appreciate the difference.



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



# CHEMISTRY. MAKING THE DIFFERENCE.



**Chemistry offers a vast range of career paths which can make a real difference to people and the planet.**

To help navigate these choices, the Royal Society of Chemistry has launched a **game** for young people to show how their interests and passions could drive their career.



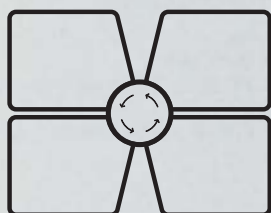
**FIND OUT MORE AND SHARE  
WITH YOUR STUDENTS AT**

**[rsc.li/careersgame](https://rsc.li/careersgame)**



# The Vocab Clinic

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



## TRY THIS TODAY: **THE FRAYER MODEL**

Teachers have used graphic organisers to both develop vocabulary and to support academic reading since the dawn of schooling. Mind-maps, Venn diagrams and fishbone diagrams are familiar features in most classrooms. One increasingly popular graphic organiser – well calibrated for vocabulary teaching – is the Frayer model.

It's a simple concept. You plan the new vocabulary item at the heart of the graphic, then devise four boxes around the term. These usually include a definition, examples, non-examples and characteristics of the word. Equally, you can be flexible and include a box for images or related words.

## Cracking the academic code

Every student has an instinctive sense of style and how to craft a sentence. Too often, though, this isn't clear to our novice writers. One aspect is how sentences are best structured.

The most common, and clear, structure is the 'right branching sentence'. That is to say, the subject of the sentence and the verb occur near the start of the sentence, with additional information being stacked to the right. For example, in geography you may write 'The infrastructure in Liverpool is failing, with countless issues, such as...' The subject and key verb are clear, allowing the reader to more easily make sense of what they read.



## DO THEY KNOW?

Arabic has a strong influence on English – e.g. alcohol, algebra, algorithm, coffee and lemon

## ONE FOR: **CHEMISTRY STUDENTS**

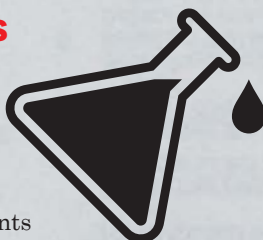
### CHEMISTRY

**Derives from:** the word 'alchemy', and the Arabic 'kimiya', meaning 'blackness'

**Means:** The branch of sciences involving the properties, composition and structure of elements

**Related terms:** Chemical, chemotherapy, alchemist...

**Note:** The notion of alchemy and 'blackness' may derive from the black soil of Egypt and their 'dark arts'



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

## ROOT

**In maths** = a solution to an equation, typically expressed as an algebraic formula or number

**In English** = the historical origins of a word



## One word at a time

In maths, art and English, 'abstract' has subtly different meanings. Originally derived from Latin ('abstractus', meaning 'drawn away') it has a philosophical meaning – the idea being that the abstract is drawn away from material objects. It also shares the root 'tract' with the word 'tractor', which similarly pulls objects.

In English, an 'abstract noun' describes an idea or a state that's separate from concrete proper or common nouns. In art, 'abstraction' is representing the world in way that doesn't try to accurately depict concrete reality.



Alex Quigley is a former teacher and the author of 'Closing the Reading Gap' & 'Closing the Vocabulary Gap'. He now works for an educational charity committed to supporting disadvantaged children.




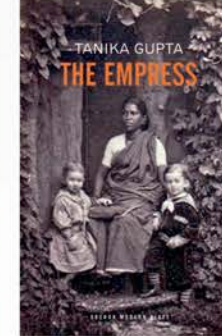
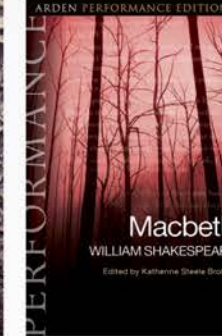



# English Literature and Drama set texts

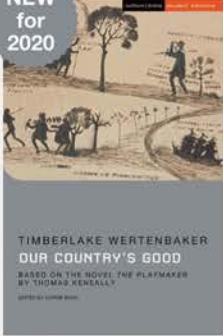
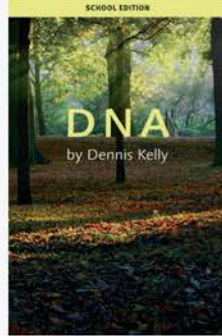
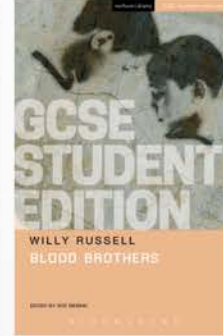



from **Methuen Drama**, **Oberon** and **The Arden Shakespeare**

Order 10 or more copies of any set text and get **20% off** at checkout

— English Literature set texts for GCSE and A Level —

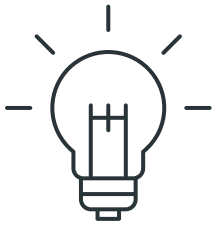
					
<b>A Doll's House</b> Henrik Ibsen Edited by Sophie Duncan Pb   9781350116788 £10.99	<b>The Duchess of Malfi</b> John Webster Edited by Karen Britland Pb   9781474295673 £8.99	<b>Measure for Measure</b> Edited by A.R. Braunmuller, Robert N. Watson Pb   9781904271437 £10.99	<b>The Empress</b> Tanika Gupta Pb   9781849434904 £11.99	<b>Macbeth</b> Arden Performance Editions Edited by Katherine Steele Brokaw Pb   9781350046788 £7.99	<b>Antigone</b> Edited by Angie Varakis Pb   9780413776044 £10.99

— Drama set texts for GCSE and A Level —

					
<b>Our Country's Good</b> Timberlake Wertenbaker Edited by Sophie Bush Pb   9781350097889 £10.99	<b>DNA</b> Schools Edition Dennis Kelly Pb   9781840029529 £9.99	<b>Blood Brothers</b> GCSE Student Edition Willy Russell Edited by Rob Merkin Pb   9781474229920 £10.99	<b>A Taste of Honey</b> Student Edition Shelagh Delaney Pb   9781408106013 £10.99	<b>Twelfth Night</b> Arden Performance Editions Edited by Gretchen E. Minton Pb   9781350002975 £7.99	<b>The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time</b> GCSE Student Edition Simon Stephens Pb   9781474240314 £10.99

Find out more online [www.bloomsbury.com/DramaOffers](http://www.bloomsbury.com/DramaOffers)





## THE NEXT BIG THING

# MINDFULNESS MINUTES

Join Eco-Schools England and let students lead on bringing better mental health and wellbeing to your school

### [ THE TREND ]

## MINDFULNESS MINUTES

Eco-Schools England needs your help to achieve one million minutes of mindfulness in schools across the country in 2021. Their Mindfulness Minutes eco-project will help teens and teachers find the valuable time they need in their busy school lives to integrate better mental health and wellbeing practice.

### WHAT'S HAPPENING?

Between January and June, students are asked to choose four weeks of term time when they will lead a series of mindfulness actions across the whole school. Using the resources provided by Eco-Schools England, young people will be shown how to promote and record mindfulness practice in their subject and year bubbles, assemblies, during lunchtime and even whilst travelling to and from school. School staff are also encouraged to take part in the project with mindfulness during meetings. At the end of the four-week period students will calculate the total number of mindfulness minutes achieved collectively in their school and submit to Eco-Schools England as part of a national goal to achieve one million minutes.

### WHAT'S THE IMPACT?

Mindfulness has many definitions, but put simply it means being more aware of what is going on around us and learning from what we find. The Eco-Schools Mindfulness Minutes eco-project highlights how the natural environment, whether in a rural or urban setting, can be used as a resource to help focus and engage the entire school community in mental health and wellbeing best practice. The eco-project also helps young people to develop a positive mental attitude towards themselves and others, providing them with the lifelong skills they need to cope with future stresses and moments of doubt, especially in the lead up to and during the examination period.



### WHAT'S NEXT?

To take part in the national Mindfulness Minutes eco-project, head over to the Eco-Schools England website where you will be able to download the free Mindfulness Minutes guide. The guide contains everything your students need to get started and plan for their four weeks of mindfulness practice in school and is linked to the Seven Steps of the Eco-Schools programme. The guide also takes into consideration restrictions faced by schools due to COVID and is entirely adaptable for any setting including SEND; with versions also available for pre-school and primary aged children should your students wish to set mindfulness homework for their younger siblings and families.

### Discover More...

Register for free with the Eco-Schools programme at [eco-schools.org.uk](https://eco-schools.org.uk) or email [eco-schools@keepbritain.tidy.org](mailto:eco-schools@keepbritain.tidy.org)



## GET INVOLVED

The entire Mindfulness Minutes eco-project is mapped to the global Seven Step framework of the Eco-Schools programme and can be used as evidence for the international Eco-Schools Green Flag. Eco-Schools is the largest educational programme in the world with over 53,000 registered schools across 70 countries. In England the Eco-Schools programme has been managed for the last 26 years by Keep Britain Tidy, with over 20,000 registered nurseries, primaries, secondaries and colleges all providing their pupils with the opportunities to lead environmental change.

# Is silence really ‘violence’?

**Jacob Reynolds** takes issue with the position adopted by some protest movements that if you’re not saying anything, you’re on the side of the oppressors

Amid the protests surrounding the Black Lives Matter movement this year, there’s one element I found especially interesting – the insistence that ‘silence is violence’. I should state from the outset that I don’t bring this up out of any antagonism I have with the BLM movement. My reason for examining it here is that I believe this phrase neatly sums up a political philosophy found across many wildly different movements, from Extinction Rebellion to anti-lockdown protesters.

It’s the idea that when it comes to big political issues, *there is only one way to think and one right answer*. It follows that the quiet work of reflection is at best unnecessary, and at worst, positively dangerous.

It’s an attitude that perhaps chimes with the contemporary classroom where active, even noisy participation is in vogue. Silence might be enforced in the exam hall, but teachers who enforce silent reading in class are most likely seen by their peers as quaint relics from a bygone era.

## What you don’t say

Another increasingly common refrain in the world of education is that words can be as violent as actions, be it in the context of hurtful bullying or racist speech. However, the newer ‘silence is violence’ dogma takes things a step further, in that it’s not just what you say, but what you don’t say that can now be seen as violent.

It’s easy to see where these arguments come from. Who wouldn’t be frustrated by company executives and politicians jumping on worthy social causes, only to disappear when more radical change is proposed? What’s more, it’s surely right that those complicit in racism need to do the work of changing.

In this context, at least, ‘silence is violence’, is supposed to remind those in power of their privileged position, and insist that no-one has the right to ignore racial injustice.

## Single-minded insistence

All that can be true, yet at the same time there’s an

ugly, perhaps even dangerous undercurrent to ‘silence is violence’. It’s there in the viral videos showing protestors entering restaurants, chanting ‘Black Lives Matter’ and insisting that the patrons of these establishments join in with the chants, raise a fist or take the knee. What’s implied is pretty obvious – *only a racist wouldn’t join in*.

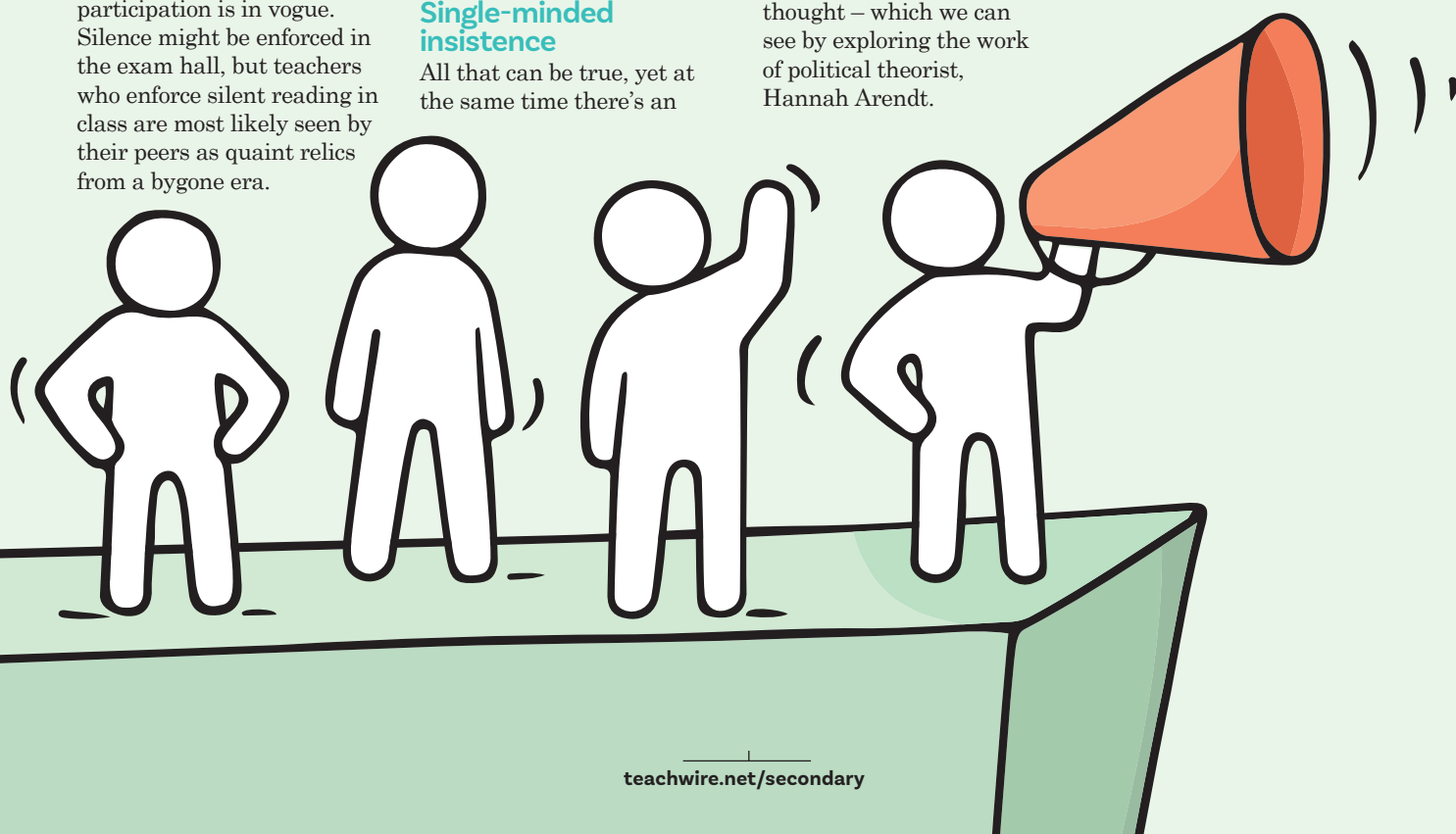
Yet there are many good reasons for not instantly consenting to protestors’ demands, even if you broadly agree with their aims. You might simply want to enjoy a peaceful meal. You might be unsure as to on whose behalf the protestors are speaking.

A single-minded insistence on there being ‘only one right answer’ is by no means limited to the Black Lives Matter cause. Political strategies of this sort are designed to stifle independent thought. Silence, by comparison, is intimately connected with independent thought – which we can see by exploring the work of political theorist, Hannah Arendt.

## A soundless dialogue

In a lecture delivered shortly before her death, Arendt suggested that the key feature of independent thought was the ability to ‘stop, and think’. She noted how Socrates, an exemplar of independent thought almost to the point of stubbornness, is reported to have always been stopping, suddenly immersed in thought. To think, you have to withdraw from your immediate surroundings, surround yourself in silence, and silence yourself. As Arendt memorably puts it, thinking is the ‘*soundless dialogue between me and myself*.’

Silence may be out of fashion, but teachers of all stripes will surely recognise that moment when a comment suddenly turns a pupil’s world upside down, prompting a visible retreat into this ‘soundless dialogue’ with themselves to work out what it all means.





## Join the CONVERSATION

The Academy of Ideas Education Forum gathers monthly to discuss trends in educational policy, theory and practice. Find out more at [academyofideas.org.uk/forums/education\\_forum](http://academyofideas.org.uk/forums/education_forum)

Arendt went on to observe how Socrates was often fond of concluding conversations with his fellow Athenians by remarking that there was 'that other fellow' waiting for him at home. That 'other fellow' was Socrates himself – the voice we all carry in our heads, with whom we speak when we're alone, thinking hard or deciding what to do.

The fact that we're capable of having such conversations with ourselves, Arendt argued, demonstrates that human beings paradoxically contain two voices in one person – 'me' and 'myself'. However, this second voice in our heads doesn't tend to say much when we're busy. When were you last immersed in a deep conversation, solving a complicated puzzle or playing sport? Chances are, that second voice will have

absented itself to let you get on with the task at hand.

### Thinking dangerously

The regular disappearance of this second voice is useful, because otherwise we'd never get anything done. Concerns of this sort no doubt played a part in the Athenians' decision to condemn Socrates – who filled them all with indecision – to death.

In our own time, committed political activists are liable to get frustrated by indecisive people who never seem to make up their minds. Yet it's for precisely this reason – that '*Hang on a minute...*' we hear in our heads – that silent reflection is so important. Doubt forces us to think again, justify ourselves, examine our prejudices, to – as modern parlance would have it – *check our privilege*. Arendt insisted that such doubt

was a natural consequence of thinking, stating

*'There are no dangerous thoughts; thinking itself is dangerous.'*

Thinking causes us to constantly question everything and makes us feel doubtful. It can be a taxing, even exhausting process, and one that typically requires silence. Silence therefore isn't 'violence', but rather an essential component for thought and reflection.

It's for this reason that slogans, catchphrases and especially chants are inimical to independent thought. '*Black lives matter*,' '*Build the wall*,' '*Lock them up*' – all occupy that part of your mind that would otherwise be engaged in a dialogue between you and yourself. As Arendt astutely puts it, "Clichés, stock phrases, adherence to conventional, standardized codes of expression and conduct have the socially recognized function of protecting us against reality."

### The same family

It's easier to make decisions by falling back on clichés than by consulting our own thoughts. If you want to inoculate yourself against reality – and from learning, changing, and improving – then avoid thinking.

But if you don't, then bear in mind that thinking needs silence and privacy. It requires space in which to

test out the results of your thinking, and others willing to productively criticise your position. The numerous teachers and educationalists who argue that schools should promote independent, critical thinking would do well to acknowledge the crucial role of silence.

At some point, thought inevitably has to stop and action has to begin. But if we're going to act, who can predict what we'll do if we haven't thought about it first? Silence and discussion, thought and action – these aren't polar opposites, but rather members of the same family. They need each other, even if they sometimes get in each other's way.

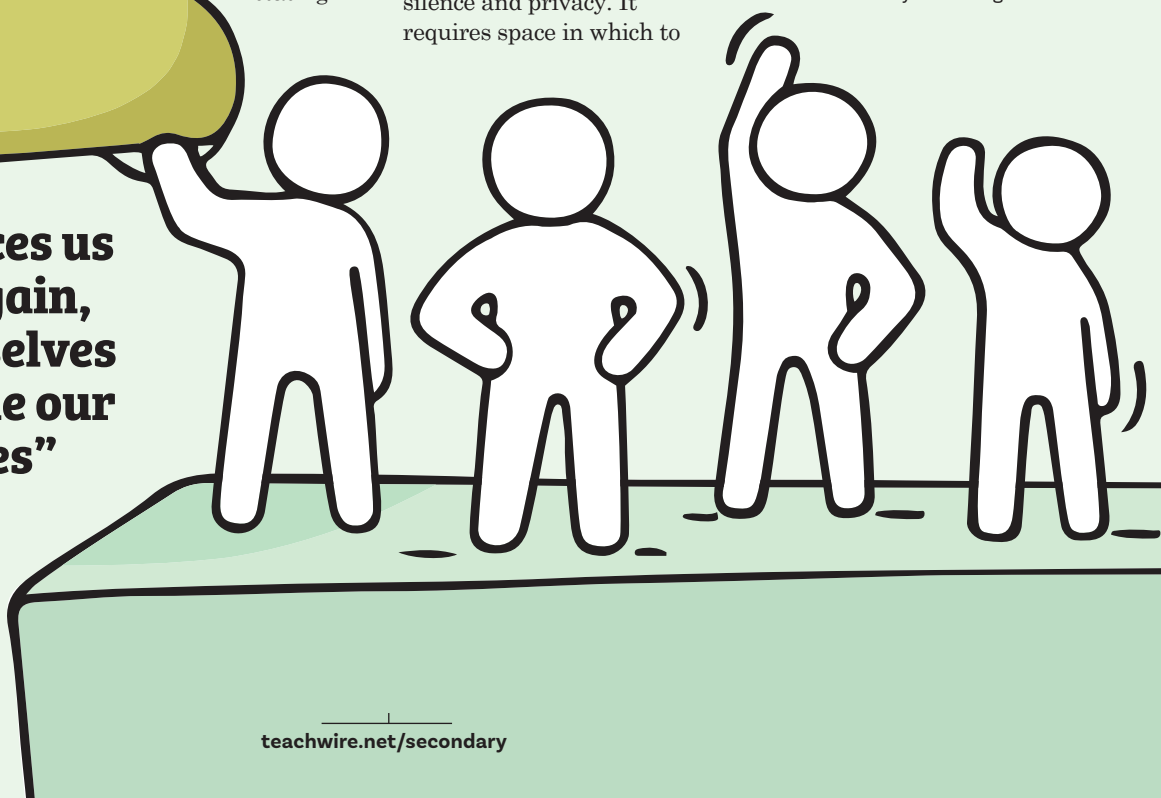
Silence then, is very far from being violence. As history has sadly taught us, violence swiftly follows when people insist that we silence ourselves and stop thinking.



#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Jacob Reynolds is partnerships manager for The Academy of Ideas, and this article is an edited version of a lecture given in the 'Ideas on Freedom' series run by the Academy of Ideas and the University of Buckingham Free Speech Society; for more information, visit [www.academyofideas.org.uk](http://www.academyofideas.org.uk)

**"Doubt forces us to think again, justify ourselves and examine our prejudices"**



COVID-19 has starkly exposed the weaknesses of overly centralised, semi-privatised public health provision – so could this spell the end of our overly centralised, semi-privatised school system...?

# Melissa Benn



**Over the decades, as a writer and campaigner on education, I've devoured hundreds of Ofsted updates, plus numerous newspaper articles, DfE announcements and think tank reports in my attempt to better understand our education system. But these efforts pale in comparison to what I learned as the parent of two children going through local primary and secondary schools.**

Over many years, that daily experience brought me hard-won knowledge of what schools actually do and the problems they really face – from the challenges of educating children from vastly divergent backgrounds, to the importance of fair admissions and urgent need for a supportive, rather than punitive system of inspection and accountability.

## Town hall to Whitehall

How can we expect local services – be they related to health, education or indeed anything else – to function without the accumulated wisdom of local residents and representatives? From the postwar period up until the late 70s, that was widely accepted government policy. National decisions would be made with respect to allocation of resources and overall structures, but important questions regarding implementation were largely left to LAs.

All that changed, as did so much else, with the arrival of Margaret Thatcher. So great was her dislike of municipal government that she abolished the Greater London Council in 1986. The Inner London Education Authority, one of the most pioneering and impressive education authorities, was later disbanded in 1990. This sidelining of local officials continued under New

Labour, with its establishment of academies. From 2010, the Conservative-dominated Coalition rapidly moved most of England's schools out of locally elected authorities, to the point where today some 80 per cent of all secondary schools are now academies or free schools, notionally controlled from Whitehall rather than the nearest town hall.

These ongoing debates over the role of the public versus the private in education have long felt sterile and polarised, with those arguing for a return to LA involvement in education often dismissed as unrealistic and nostalgic for a bygone age. But that's now changed in the wake of the COVID crisis, with the private sector's role in promoting (or perhaps sabotaging) the public good coming under harsh scrutiny. Criticism has grown of the government's so-called 'world beating' track and trace system, run as it is by entities with little direct experience of public health provision, but plenty of connections to the country's ruling political party.

## Local knowledge

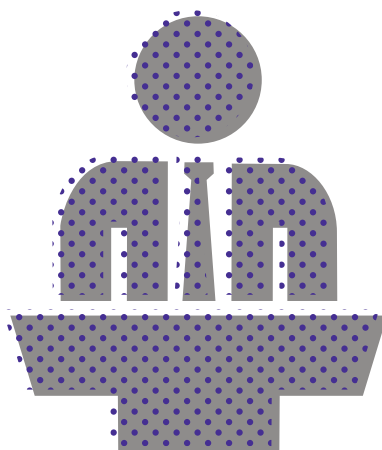
In November last year, a searing report from the National Audit Office found that contracts worth £10.5 billion were

awarded to suppliers of pandemic-related goods and services without any form of competition, while the comparatively small sum of £200 million was awarded via a mix of competitive tenders and bidding from a framework agreement (see [bit.ly/ts101-mb1](https://bit.ly/ts101-mb1)).

Simultaneously, there's growing recognition of how effective local efforts have been at dealing with COVID. Back in May, 10 days before the establishment of the government's test and trace system, Cumbria County Council set up its own fully functioning local system that drew on local knowledge – notably that of housing officers, who were familiar with where vulnerable residents lived.

It's therefore hardly surprising to see a renewed clamour for greater local involvement in education. Once again, we're hearing the argument that LAs are best placed to oversee fair admissions and local place planning, and that they should once again be able to build and open their own schools. To that, we can add a growing body of evidence that points to the potential for corruption within the academy and free school systems – from bloated CEO salaries to cronyism, nepotism and a worrying misspending of public funds.

So far, these discussions have been largely taking place within the Labour Party, as they should – the notion of education as a public good being at the heart of the party's historic mission. Let's hope that Labour's new leaders heed this public dissatisfaction at the government's toxic combination of outsourcing to unaccountable providers with centralised control across our public services, including education. It will then behove the Labour opposition to shine a harsh light on the many failings of our semi-privatised school system, while laying out detailed, realistic and practical plans for restoring effective local oversight of our schools.



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



There are no easy answers to the thorny question of whether exams should go ahead this summer – the best we can do is go with the least-worst option...



# David Didau

**As a parent of two daughters – one in Y12, the other in Y11 – I have a personal interest in this. When exams were cancelled last summer, my eldest was cut adrift by her school. The logic seemed to be that if exams weren't going ahead, neither should education. She was pleased with the grades she was awarded, but didn't feel they were earned.**

My youngest, then in Y10, plugged in and plugged away at her lessons – if not as normal, then certainly to the best of her ability. Like everyone else, she's not sure what's going to happen in summer 2021 year. At the time of writing, the government still insists that examinations for GCSE and A Level courses will take place, but given the U-turns we've seen on almost every other decision they've made during the pandemic, whether that remains the case is anyone's guess.

## The grade they 'deserve'

As to what should happen, there are no easy answers. Exams are always unfair. Some children have access to better teachers and schools than others. Some children have parents who pay for tuition and private education. Some children have advantages others can only dream of, but the present circumstances are less fair than usual. The 'learning loss' that many students have experienced will vary, depending on which part of the country they're in. Some students have endured weeks of self-isolation in communities that have been rocked by exposure to coronavirus, whilst others

have remained largely unaffected. Surely we should therefore bite the bullet, cancel exams and go with centre assessed grades (albeit minus Ofqual's benighted algorithm)?

Perhaps not. Awful as exams are, they're the least bad choice from a range of terrible options. Those who say we should trust teachers to award their students the grades they deserve miss two important points. Firstly, we're all victims of unconscious bias. Multiple studies have demonstrated that disadvantaged children are further disadvantaged by teacher assessments – not because teachers are bad people, but because they're human.

The second point is that however well teachers know their students, they've no idea how well anyone else's students are doing. That's not to say that teachers are untrustworthy, but rather it's impossible for them to have the perspective to award grades that recognise the full ability range. If last year's attempt to mediate this process with algorithms taught us anything, it's that there's currently no fairer way to ensure students get the grade they 'deserve' than sit examinations.



## What's the alternative?

None of this means we can't make exams far better than they currently are. The UK is almost unique in the amount of examinations students have to sit and the high stakes purposes to which they're put. Exams will always distort education, but they needn't distort as completely and as disastrously as they do at present.

This leads to a third mooted option – that we chalk everything up to 'unprecedented times,' write off the year and don't give out any grades at all. Students need a meaningful end to their years of education, but that doesn't have to include the awarding of grades.

In practice, however, it's far too late to come up with an alternative. GCSE and A-level grades are, it's sometimes argued, only useful for sorting and selecting students for their onward destinations. If colleges and universities need to know who to select, maybe they could organise their own selection system? It's an idea that has some merit, but one that's unlikely to work in the short term. Last year's A-levels fiasco jeopardised many students' apprenticeship and university placements – I think everyone would agree that we should avoid anything similar from occurring ever again.

The most pressing concern for now is to reduce unfairness in how grades are awarded. Unpalatable as it may be, that means exams should go ahead in some form. Happily, this seems to be the decision the government has made. Grade boundaries will be lowered, aspects of text content will be pre-announced and students will be given additional resources such as formula sheets. The situation is very far from perfect, but maybe these changes will make exams a little less unfair.



David Didau is an independent education consultant and writer. He blogs at [learningspy.co.uk](https://learningspy.co.uk) and is the author of several books, the latest of which is *Intelligent Accountability: Creating the Conditions for Teachers to Thrive* (£15, John Catt)

# Great Ormond Street Hospital is a place where extraordinary things happen every day

Your school can help us save more lives, develop new treatments, build new wards and support our young patients and their families.

**Start fundraising today!**

Visit [gosh.org/schools](https://gosh.org/schools) for great ideas, fun activities and handy resources.



Get in touch:  
[schools@gosh.org](mailto:schools@gosh.org) or  
020 7239 3131

# Schools



# Take centre stage

Command the front of the class and make your presence felt with these tried and trusted communication techniques from the theatre world...

## Harness your body's power

Warming up the voice and throat is as important for teachers as it is for actors. Teachers often find that they lose their voice by the end of term, so make vocal warm-ups part of your regular lesson preparation. These can include humming, taking deep breaths and performing 'noisy yawns' – the latter will help stretch the vocal muscles and energise your body through the stretching and pulling of faces. If you can arrive at your lessons feeling energised and alert, your increased presence will immediately energise your audience.

Our voices are created by our bodies, so the more our bodies can do to reflect and support our voices, the more effective those voices will be. When greeting your students, adopting a stance in which your chest and arms are open makes it more likely that your voice will follow through and sound more welcoming. Adopt a stiff and still body posture in a closed stance, and your voice will soon be struggling to get out.

Stamping your feet on the ground can also have the effect of making you feel more grounded and confident. If you feel tension growing within you during the day, take a moment during break to reset your body by shaking or stamping this tension out.

## Change the energy in the room

Your students will similarly benefit from brief bursts of physical activity. Spending an extended amount of time slumped in the same position at a desk can leave



the muscles feeling heavy, but you can alleviate this by changing the energy in the room.

Ask the students to stand up, stretch and look at things from a different perspective by temporarily moving to a different position within the classroom. Break up the day with short concentration games to help reset the mind – for example, asking students to collaborate in counting alternately from one to 40, replacing certain numbers or multiples with words (buzz) and actions (reverse direction).

Theatre rehearsal rooms are considered to be safe spaces where everyone is invited to try out new ideas, be creative and make mistakes. Teachers can nurture a similar

environment of their own by encouraging students to boldly experiment and have the confidence to try out new ideas. Instead of shutting down wrong answers straight away, offer positive responses ('Yes, and...'; 'I can see how you reached that answer, but...') and invite students to explain their reasoning.

## We all learn differently

Use a variety of ways to bring information to life and build new perspectives. Adding an element of surprise to each lesson will keep them memorable, and cement the expectation that no two lessons will follow the same format. In a geography lesson, for example, you could ask your students to write a poem or rap about a new topic to activate different

parts of the brain. Invite students to start a lesson themselves and assign the role of the teacher to them for a brief period. Instead of opening lessons with statements, try opening with questions of 'what?', 'why', and 'how' – invite your students to be inquisitive from the off.

## Teachers are learners too

Don't forget that your own learning and development needs as a teacher should to be tended to as well. Many local arts organisations have learning departments and offer teacher training programmes and opportunities for schools. The National Theatre's learning programmes, for instance, are specifically designed for schools; state schools also have free access to an extensive digital library of recorded world-class theatrical productions via the NT Collection. The NT's virtual Drama Teacher Conference can meanwhile offer drama teachers the opportunity to experiment with new teaching approaches with the help and support of artists across the theatre industry.



### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Sheila Chawla manages the National Theatre's TheatreWorks programme, which delivers professional and personal development training inspired by the performing arts. The NT makes theatre for everyone, staging productions in London, on tour nationwide and worldwide and via digital broadcasts, while supporting creative education through nationwide learning programmes; to find out more, visit [nationaltheatre.org.uk/learning](http://nationaltheatre.org.uk/learning) or follow @NT\_Schools

# Staying on track *and* consolidating learning



With the disruption to schooling over recent months, we know your priority is to get learners back into classrooms safely and help learners stay on track.

Whether it be refreshing key maths concept knowledge, practicing problem solving and reasoning skills, or boosting confidence, we have a range of free and paid-for resources to support you with this new routine of learning.

To explore our full range of resources and support for **KS3, GCSE, AS and A level Maths**, please visit:  
**[go.pearson.com/mathsontrack](https://go.pearson.com/mathsontrack)**



# 3 things we've learnt about... CHANGING SCHOOL ROUTINES

How have the introduction of COVID-19 safety measures changed those hitherto immovable parts of the school day? **Laura McInerney** takes a closer look...

## 1 Online marking is on the up – and not helping workload

If we'd told you a year ago that 1 in 4 secondary schools would move to set all homework online, you'd have likely thought us ill-informed – yet, here we are. This year, 24% of teachers told us that all homework in their secondary schools was now required to be online; around 1 in 12 of you aren't even allowed to collect any physical exercise books. For teachers of subjects where physical items are important – art and technologies for example – this is especially difficult, though many have adapted to using tablets and other devices.

This online transition could be posing problems for workload. Over the autumn term, we asked teachers about their volume of marking and found this had increased for the first time in two years. Marking loads steadily reduced since 2017, partly due to schools' focus on reducing workload in their retention efforts. Now it's on the uptick.

## 2 We're seeing less ability setting

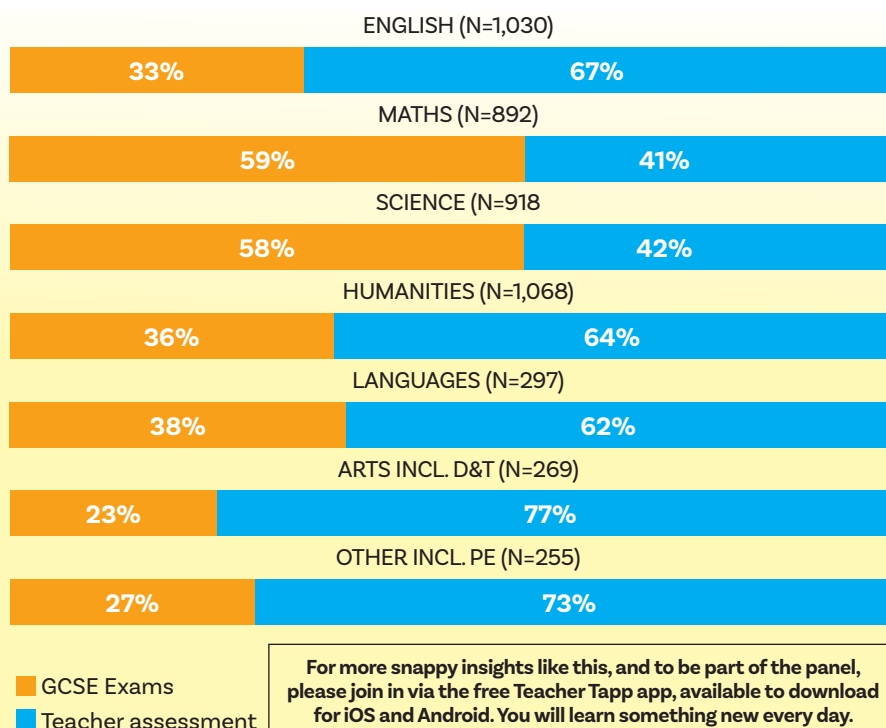
Reorganising the timetable has been a big challenge in secondary schools, with headteachers having to make bold decisions around how to practice social distancing, and classroom teachers needing to create new seating plans and cull group exercises. It's not been easy, but it's at least allowed for some experimentation!

More of you now have your desks in rows than in groups, which has led to far less group work in lessons, though there's still some partnered work happening – presumably since students are still often sat next to someone at their table. It also seems that 22% of Y8 maths classes are now being taught in mixed ability groups, compared to just 9% in 2018. Why? Because more students are being taught in a single class to reduce bubbles. Could this be the start of a new trend that continues even after the pandemic ends?

## 3 Exam attitudes are changing

Finally, how will schools assess what students can do in 2021? It's hard to say, given the different opinions held by different subject teachers. 59% of maths and 58% of science teachers think exams are the fairest reflection of student ability in their subject, but that figure drops to 33% among English teachers. There's also the issue of how much time certain year groups have spent out of school. In the north west, 1 in 3 schools have had to shut to the whole of Y11 for an extended period; in the east of England, fewer than 1 in 10 did the same. There have been calls from across the sector to consider cancelling GCSE exams, but when we surveyed teachers on this pre-pandemic, there was little appetite for this. An alternative is 'on-demand' GCSEs, which students sit when they feel ready, but that isn't much liked, either. Perhaps we're doomed to stay with exams forever...

**'WHICH WOULD PROVIDE THE FAIRER REFLECTION OF A STUDENT'S ABILITY NEXT SUMMER?'**





## CLASSROOM LIFE

# A global community

How hard is it to oversee a student population hailing from 70 different countries during a global pandemic? Barny Sandow, head of school at ACS International School Cobham, shares his experience...

**I** remember when I first arrived at ACS International School Cobham, moving here after spending a number of years overseeing a school in Brunei. I can still recall seeing the school's campus for the first time, 25 minutes out of Heathrow Airport.

Having begun with just 175 students in the site's original manor house building, we now have 1,200 on roll from ages 2 to 18, with many studying the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme in their High School years. We have a very broad international offering, however, so we also have students studying for high school diplomas and advanced placement qualifications.

### Safer and richer

The key thing for us in recent months has been our outdoor education provision. We're fortunate enough to have on-site woodland that we use for our Forest School offering, but we also try and get students across the school outside as much as possible. Beyond the expected PE lessons, we've endeavoured to hold classes outside, where appropriate. Take humanities, for example – a lesson on early man involving a

classroom exploration activity was made into a safer and richer learning experience by being held outside.

We don't simply encourage going outside for the sake of it, though. We'll always carefully consider beforehand how the students' learning can be made better by going outside and using our different outdoor spaces. On the whole, however, we've seen everyone's sense of wellbeing improve by spending time outside and being more active. The pleasant weather we had during the initial lockdown seemed to help everyone reconnect a little more – I suspect things would have

been more challenging for us, had we not been able to do that.

We're especially thankful for the strength of our school community. It sounds paradoxical, but being an international school attended by students of over 70 different nationalities makes our community tighter than most. Many of our students and parents have few or no family links here, with the result that we've seen everyone really pulling together to support each other.

Where there have been concerns, people have listened to our advice and communications and opted to isolate. I'm hugely grateful to

## IN NUMBERS

**Date established:** 1975

**Age range:** 2 to 18

**Student population:** 1,200

**Staff:** 220 teaching / 150 support

our facilities teams who have moved mountains to create a safe school environment, complete with handwashing stations and outside shelters so that the students are able to stay dry at break times and at the start and end of the school day.

### Back to the 1950s

And then, of course, there are the ways in which our teachers have had to adapt their practice. International schooling, and the pedagogies we have here, tend to be focused around children learning and working together, and solving problems by collaborating and communicating. Now, however, they've effectively had to go back to teaching in traditionally-styled classrooms, with all desks facing forwards as if it were the 1950s.

We've had to contend with a number of tough wellbeing







**“WE’VE HAD TO  
CONTENT WITH  
A NUMBER OF  
TOUGH WELLBEING  
CHALLENGES AND ARE  
HIGHLY AWARE OF HOW  
IMPORTANT IT IS TO  
RECOGNISE THEM FOR  
WHAT THEY ARE, AND  
THAT PEOPLE HERE  
FEEL ABLE TO TALK  
ABOUT THEM.”**

**BARNY SANDOW, HEAD  
OF SCHOOL**

challenges and are highly aware of how important it is to recognise them for what they are, and that people here feel able to talk about them. It would be hugely inappropriate to not recognise the many new stresses teachers are now under, and I’m enormously proud of how they’ve stepped up to the challenge. Colleagues have been able to express their feelings in a full and frank way via staff forums that are moderated by our HR team, and we’ve continued to organise regular wellbeing surveys among staff and students to identify any issues and what we can do to address them.

The students have been remarkably resilient on the whole, but there will always be those kids you need to look after, and we’ve worked with partners at the Family Wellness Practice to ensure that safety net is in place.

### Phenomenal pivoting

We have boarders at the school, and have found The Boarding Schools Association

to be a fantastic source of support and helpful advice. Its BSA COVID Charter provided us with a clear set of guidelines to aim for when reopening our boarding house, while giving both ourselves and our families a sense of safety and quality assurance in what we were doing.

When our 150 boarders rejoined us at the end of last August, they’d come from some 30 different countries around the world, so we had a number of students quarantining for a time. We’d considered bringing them back earlier, but after considering the prospect of keeping them in their rooms with nothing to do for a fortnight, we felt that would be significantly more damaging for their wellbeing than simply giving them schoolwork to be getting on with at the start of term via video conferencing and our VLE.

That speaks to how the entire profession has been through the most dramatic staff development experience any of us have ever experienced. The pivot we’ve seen to online has been phenomenal – last year we were accredited by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges, which told us that we’d completed two years’ worth of professional development within just two months.

### Human contact

The main thing I’ve learned over the past year is the place of artificial intelligence and digital learning within schools – how important and essential they both now are, but also that such systems aren’t replacements for, but rather supplements to existing, high-quality human connections.

The schools that have utilised these technologies successfully are those that have paid attention to the wellbeing and interpersonal relationships of their community, because when you do that, children will

flourish and thrive, and develop healthier relationships with each other and their teachers. I remember having conversations around the ‘fourth educational revolution’, back when teaching staff were all apparently going to be replaced with robots. The processes we’ve worked with over the past year have clearly shown all of us that that’s simply not going to happen. If kids are to make progress, there has to be that human contact.

My message to national education leaders would be to step back, take stock and consider what can be got rid of from the education system as it currently stands – what doesn’t need to be there? I know that I’m grateful to work in a school system

where we don’t do SATs or exams at 16, but instead allow children to be children and grow.

I once accredited a school where no external exams were held until the students were 18. I asked them how they could know where the children were, and was in turn asked if I knew how much time the school consequently got back. If your Y11s don’t lose a whole term just sitting the exams themselves, and if the huge amounts of preparation time within the preceding two years were to simply go, how much more time would you have that you could then spend on wellbeing and developing the actual skills students will need to survive in the real world?

## What would YOU do?

Earlier in the year we carried out a series of scenario planning role-play exercises with our teaching staff and parents via Zoom. We had different individuals fill various senior roles – mine, the deputy head, the principals of different sections – and familiarised them with the information and protocols their role entailed. We then presented the initial situation to them, under which they had to manage the running of the school – and proceeded to feed them new information every five minutes, such as text messages from worried parents and updated guidance from public health authorities.

Through doing this, we were able to ensure that teachers and parents alike wouldn’t have simply glanced at the school’s assorted medical sheets, protocols and flowcharts, but would have actually absorbed them and thus know what needed to be done in the case of a genuine outbreak. Everyone heaved a sigh of relief when they completed that hour-long exercise, but it certainly gave them all a detailed understanding of our processes.



# Education

Inspiring your teaching and learning



## Engage, inspire and connect with Teach Chemistry

**Sign up to Teach Chemistry for a range of great benefits to support you in the classroom and in your department:**

- Use the curriculum explorer to find relevant resources for your lessons
- Bridge the knowledge gap with online quizzes
- Your own personalised school page to help you share information with colleagues
- Newsletters to let you know about events and opportunities
- Free print copy of every Education in Chemistry magazine issue

**Find out more and sign up at [edu.rsc.org/teach-chemistry](https://edu.rsc.org/teach-chemistry)**



# 5 REASONS TO TRY... Super-Readable Rollercoasters

Exciting and accessible fiction for KS3 from award-winning authors



## 30 SECOND BRIEFING

From award-winning authors and developed in partnership with Barrington Stoke, experts in producing accessible fiction, Super-Readable Rollercoasters supports less confident readers to become lifelong lovers of books.

### 1 AMAZING AUTHORS

Super-Readable

Rollercoasters brings together best-selling and award-winning authors to create exciting and accessible fiction for 11-14 year olds. ***I am the Minotaur*** by Carnegie Medal winner Anthony McGowan, ***Rat*** from Patrice Lawrence, and ***Edgar & Adolf*** by Phil Earle and Michael Wagg are launching in January 2021. You can find out more about the authors by watching interviews with them on the OUP website ([oxfordsecondary.com/superreadable](https://oxfordsecondary.com/superreadable)).

### 2 ACCESSIBLE FOR LESS CONFIDENT READERS

This series brings together Oxford University Press's understanding of the schools market and commitment to improvements in educational outcomes with Barrington Stoke's expertise in commissioning and editing accessible fiction. The titles have been expertly edited to remove any barriers to comprehension and then carefully laid out in Barrington Stoke's dyslexia-friendly font to make them as accessible as possible.

### 3 CLOSE THE WORD GAP

Reading is one of the best and most important ways to build language, unlock vocabulary and to help close the word gap. Each Super-Readable Rollercoasters title has been written to support students in these areas, building confidence and enthusiasm by providing accessible material that encourages a love of



reading. Their shorter length allows readers to develop reading stamina whilst engaging in a gripping, well-told story.

### 4 EXCITING AND ENGAGING FICTION

The titles range from powerful historical tales of friendship and loyalty, to gripping contemporary stories of bullying, loneliness and growing up. They focus on relevant themes and issues that will resonate with 11+ readers both in and out of the classroom.

*"I love this book. I wish I could have read it when I was at school. A really important story, beautifully told."*

- Dan Freedman, author of the Jamie Johnson books, review of *Edgar & Adolf* by Phil Earle and Michael Wagg.

### 5 SUPPORT FOR SCHOOL AND HOME

To help readers get even more from each title, insights including author interviews, language analysis and book club questions are provided within the book. An additional teacher resource pack is also available for schools to download for free to support

the teaching of these titles within the classroom. Look out for the next titles in the series from Sally Nicholls, Tanya Landman and Marcus Sedgwick.

#### Contact:

[oxfordsecondary.com/superreadable](https://oxfordsecondary.com/superreadable)

## KEY POINTS

Fiction specifically written for students with a low-reading age by award-winning, contemporary authors

Exciting stories combine with relevant issues to engage and motivate readers both in and out of the classroom

From the content, to the font and paper colour; every element has been designed to be accessible

Includes reading notes at the back of the book and free downloadable online resource packs

# A whole world of reading

IN SCHOOL AND AT HOME



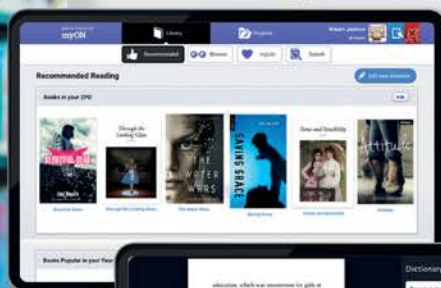
Over 7,000 enhanced digital books with Accelerated Reader quizzes



Homework features:  
Create and assign individual, group and whole-class reading tasks



Audio support, a built-in dictionary, highlighters, journals and more



myON comes more naturally to children who are learning from home and it helps with reading engagement.

– Finham Park Multi-Academy Trust



RENAISSANCE  
**myON**

Visit [renlearn.co.uk/myON-world](https://renlearn.co.uk/myON-world)  
to find out more!



# FOCUS ON: Blended learning

Many of the rapid changes to online learning forced by COVID-19 will be here to stay, so this issue we look at how best to blur the barriers between home and school learning

**What's the best way to organise and teach your lessons when not all learning takes place in the classroom?**

## THE AGENDA:

### 30 STAND AND DELIVER

Get up, step back and get moving – Nik Peachey explains how schools, teachers and students can still get better at distance learning

### 32 REIMAGINE YOUR ROUTINES

Gordon Cairns finds out how

successful blended learning requires not just the right technology, but a willingness to rethink a school's culture and daily timetable.

### 34 MAKE UP FOR LOST LEARNING

Chris Vallance talks us through his school's response to students

having to isolate at home – and what lockdown revealed about his colleagues' online teaching skills.

### 37 GETTING TECHNICAL

The latest tech tools to keep your lessons running – wherever they take place.



New Secondary book packs are now available on myON – the digital library from Renaissance. Students can explore a variety of digital books all suited for secondary level reading from publishers such as Saddleback, Orca Books and Sourcebooks. There's also a choice of books related to curriculum subjects and other important topics such as social injustice and mental health. [renlearn.co.uk/products/myon-by-renaissance](https://renlearn.co.uk/products/myon-by-renaissance)

# Stand and deliver

Get up, step back and get moving – **Nik Peachey** explains how schools, teachers and students can still get better at distance learning

I've worked with schools in a number of countries during Covid, and the one message I have if you want to do distance learning well is this: get on board.

In all the examples I've seen, the schools and teachers who have accepted and embraced technology and this new way of teaching and learning are the ones who have excelled. Schools in Turkey, for example, were open to EdTech's potential and the management were behind it, so they were very well prepared for lockdown learning. India also surprised me with how well adapted they are to teaching with technology, given there are often huge barriers with internet connectivity there.

The way schools have viewed this period has made a huge difference on whether they've succeeded or failed. There are those that see it as a temporary measure, who are waiting to get back to "normal", which often leads to treading water and delivering lackluster content – uploading teacher-created classroom materials and worksheets for students to download, fill in and upload again once completed. This is not a very good approach.

Schools that have adopted a longer-term view, however, are the ones who see this as an opportunity to move into the future. They've looked at developing content that's been *designed* to be delivered online. This, however,

often requires training.

If you want online learning that *really* engages students, gets them working together, and isn't just a repository for your worksheets, you need to invest in support for teachers. They need to know how to use the Learning Management System properly, and how to get the best out of it.

While a lot of schools do have, and have had, an LMS of some kind for a

in the classroom. That's done through your physical presence, the way you use your voice, the way you use your body, and the way you address students. But those skills are not being used online.

So, that's one of my main tips – stand up. Get a riser for your laptop so that the screen is parallel to your body (this way it's not distorting). Then, stand back from the screen, about a metre, even if you need to

towards the camera to emphasise certain things, and step away again.

Plus, standing up can also, contrary to what you might think, stop you from feeling fatigued. A lot of people have said they get tired just sitting in front of the camera, but if you're standing up, you feel more dynamic, alert and energetic.

A lot of teachers have said that they have students who are refusing to even turn their camera on, so give them more of a reason to tune in. They can also learn a lot about visual communication

**“One of the most disappointing things I've seen is the number of teachers who are just sitting”**

long time, many have been notoriously bad at using them to their full potential, and for what they were built for – online courses and creating interaction.

## How can teachers improve?

When they're teaching via webcam, one of the most disappointing things I've seen is the number of teachers who are just sitting. This isn't only teachers either, this is true of people presenting at online conferences or delivering online training – they're sat in a dark room, crouched over their laptop with a pair of poor-quality headphones, giving no thought to the visual impact their personal presentation can have.

Teachers are really, really good at interpersonal skills and building relationships with students

use a Bluetooth headset or an extension cable for your headphones.

When you look at yourself on screen, you want to be able to see from just above the top of your head to just below your elbows. That way you can start to use body language – you can use your hands, and you have room to move in



skills from seeing you do it well.

Some of the training I've been doing with teachers has been exactly that – helping them set up activities that have a visual aspect. So students need to turn their camera on, and *need* to do certain things in front of the camera, in order to fulfil their communication tasks.

### How can students improve?

It's obviously not all on the teachers though. Students don't always put themselves in the best position to learn online.

Just because they're learning on a mobile phone, some of them think that means they can be anywhere

they please, whether it's in a cafe, on a bus or any place that isn't conducive to good learning. And as you probably found out pretty quickly, if you're in a class on Zoom, any kind of background noise can really impact on everyone.

What's been missing in many cases isn't teacher training, it's learner training. Pupils haven't always been prepped on adjusting their learning environment to make it suitable. And there are lots of basic things that can really help them get the most out of their surrounding space. They might seem obvious, but they are things that people don't always naturally understand.

## 5 STRATEGIES FOR TEACHING ONLINE

### 1. Stand up

Get a stand-up desk, and start thinking about your body language, preferably with a bluetooth headset.

### 2. Make space

Make sure you can move around. Think about your presentation, your body language and how you look in front of the camera.

### 3. Talk to teachers

Get in touch with other teachers and share experiences – share successes and failures and how they are coping. And do it online too, not just with colleagues within your school.

### 4. Get social

Make sure there's an element of socialisation

within your classes.

Students don't just come to school to learn, they come to meet up, make friends and build relationships. So if you can, let your students have some kind of socialisation time, where there isn't a focus on learning, and they can just have a chat together for five minutes.

### 5. Start a diary

Start reading and writing about what's happening. It's great for teachers to have a blog. Write about your experiences, write about what you're learning, get some feedback on your blog and read what other teachers are writing on their blogs – many face similar issues and have found great solutions.

Things like how you set up a computer, how you set up the room you're working in, ensuring you have good sound equipment (or you at least have a headset) so that you're not creating a lot of echo that disturbs other people in the class, how to get the best from your internet connection, such as making sure there aren't lots of other devices connected to it while you're having your lesson, and that your proximity to the router is giving you the best connection you can get. These are simple things that can make a huge difference.



#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Nik Peachey is an educational technology consultant, teacher, trainer and author, who runs Peachey Publications. Find out more at [peacheypublications.com](http://peacheypublications.com)



# REIMAGINE YOUR ROUTINES

**Gordon Cairns** finds out how successful blended learning requires not just the right technology, but a willingness to rethink a school's culture and daily timetable

A major obstacle facing educational institutions trying to rapidly implement blended learning comes from the expectations prompted by that word – ‘blended’. If schools were trying to introduce ‘mixed’ or ‘combined’ learning, the joins between home and school would be clearer. Instead, ‘blended’ implies a form of high-quality teaching that smoothly transitions between the classroom and online provision accessed from home.

For school leaders, this means not only having to overcome the numerous technical problems that can limit such access, but creating a working relationship between teachers and students that’s conducted via screens. The challenge has been to attain a uniformity of instruction almost immediately, and, in many cases, from a standing start during a national crisis.

## Heavy lifting

It would be fair to say that Chris McShane, chief learning officer at Learning 3D, is ahead of the blended learning curve, having spent nearly two decades as a headteacher implementing classroom and remote instruction across a variety of settings, from struggling state to independent schools.

He therefore speaks from experience when he says, “I feel very sorry for the state education system at the minute, because they’ve been asked to do something they

have no experience of.” As he sees it, the speed with which school leaders have had to implement blended learning – without any meaningful reconfiguration of how their schools are managed – has hardly helped. “When I put this into schools, it was part of a change management system. When I first did it, it took me about five years; I’ve probably got it down to about three now.”

McShane points out that while ensuring learners can access the correct software via a robust internet connection is a big task in itself, that’s not enough. “Technology alone won’t make the difference, but you can’t make the difference without technology,” he says. “We use technology, but it’s not just the technology – it’s the culture and pedagogy that goes with it. The technology just does some of the heavy lifting.”

He goes on to describe a working structure in which teachers remotely plan high quality learning experiences for

their students while monitoring, tracking, supporting and challenging them, in a model of pedagogy that resembles coaching and mentoring. It’s McShane’s belief that success in this area may entail reimagining what were once non-negotiables, such as the need for a fixed timetable, the structure of the school day or the pace of learning.

“Do teachers need to stand for five hours in front of their students every day? If you can say ‘No’, that can liberate your thinking around what a school looks like. It’s amazing how flexible the timetable can become.”

## Making learning personal

McShane’s advice is that schools should radically rethink how they run the school day in a blended learning situation. “Schools can forget about trying to run a timetable online – you can’t do it. When we went to an online sixth form, the teachers realised you can’t teach how you’ve always taught. So the starting point is, how can we teach?”

One possible approach could be to use an online instructional video that allows students to go offline for half an hour to get on with their tasks, before returning with their





completed work. As McShane notes, “You take your hands off because you’ve done your job – it’s all on the video, and then you go back and open the discussion using tools such as Google’s Jamboard or Microsoft’s Sway, allowing the kids to come back with their ideas.

“If you want to encourage more collaboration, you can keep them online and assign them virtual breakout rooms where they can support and help each other. Those who don’t need me can just get on with their work.”

McShane believes that blended learning enables schools to eliminate two of the biggest barriers to learning – stress levels in students and lack of teaching time – thus allowing for a more individualised approach to learning, where classmates don’t measure themselves against each other or struggle to keep up with the pace of learning: “Because of self-pacing, you don’t have the same levels of anxiety in the process. The students are looking at what

they themselves are doing, rather than worrying about getting left behind.”

Above all, McShane sees blended learning as not simply a quick fix designed to address a national pandemic, but a positive tool that can change how we educate for the better. “After COVID, schools could return to how it was before but that would be a big mistake,” he says. “We’ve seen that it can actually make learning personal and engage the children much, much more in their education.”

### The online penalty

To achieve that goal, however, there’s work that still needs to be done. Data gathered during the first lockdown of English schools in spring and summer 2020 revealed that access to online learning was patchy, with disappointingly large numbers of students disengaged from learning. The most severely affected were those already among the most disadvantaged, in large part due to the ‘online penalty’ – a concept identified as far back as 2012 by the US academic Ray Kaupp, in a paper examining why Latino students didn’t perform as well as their white

counterparts in the California college system (see <https://bit.ly/ts101-routines>).

Justin Reich, an educational researcher and author specialising in networked learning, sums up what he considers to be the biggest obstacle to effective blended learning: “Most people do less well [online], but the people least well served by educational systems typically experience the largest online penalty.

“It seems that the students who don’t have self-regulated learning skills, and don’t live in conditions amenable to self-regulated learning – since in schools, peers

## IMPROVE YOUR BLENDED LEARNING PRACTICE

1. Planning lessons in minutes rather than time periods can ‘create’ time; a 1,000-minute topic, with 300 assigned to working independently, will expand the available time for the subject.
2. The ability of students and teachers to meet any and all deadlines for work set online is key to making progress.
3. Some schools have set up hotlines, text lines or video conference rooms – teachers are only required to respond during set hours, with other individuals being available after hours.
4. When using external materials, it’s important that these are personally introduced by the teacher so that links can be made to the learning area.
5. Know your definitions, so that you’re aware of where best to place your resources; online, blended, flipped, distance and remote learning are all slightly different.

**“If you just don’t care about learning the stuff, you can’t call a 24-hour hotline to make you care; that’s going to require a human being”**

and teachers will help them with that self-regulation – can get stuck when they hit these road bumps. Things that would take a person a minute or two to debug can become fatal to a learner’s progress.”

Reich believes that online teaching support of the sort offered by the providers partnering with the government’s recently launched National Tutoring Programme could have a role in helping these disengaged students. “The institutions that seem to be doing the best job of closing this online penalty are those investing in things like coaching and 24-hour hotlines – which generate a real-time human connection.”

Reich furthermore contends that these human connections don’t necessarily have to involve class teachers. “If you just don’t care about learning the stuff, you can’t call a 24-hour hotline to make you care; that’s going to require

a human being. It might not have to be your physics teacher who makes you care about physics, though – it could be an advisor or coach.”

Somewhat ominously, however, Reich predicts that short-term school closures will become a regular occurrence in future, whether caused by disease or climate change, and that schools will have to build systems in order to cope: “If you’re a kindergartener, this is probably not the last global pandemic you’re going to live through. We’re going to have to accept more interrupted schooling.”



#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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

# MAKING UP FOR LOST LEARNING

**Chris Vallance** talks us through his school's response to students having to isolate at home – and what lockdown revealed about his colleagues' online teaching skills...

I'm strategic director for student experience at Samworth Church Academy – a 1,170-pupil secondary school in Mansfield, Nottinghamshire. Part of my role, which is equivalent to vice-principal, is to oversee a mix of online and face-to-face intervention for pupils designated as needing catch up support.

I manage a team of part-time staff who work exclusively as catch-up tutors. Together, they make up the equivalent of one full-time role for each of the three core subject areas – science, maths and English.

## More demands

We decided to use our catch-up funding to build our own team of part-time teachers, after learning about the effectiveness of one-to-one and small group catch-up teaching in EEF research.

During lockdown, staff supported students exclusively online in one-to-one and small group sessions. From September 2020 this support moved back into the classroom, but as the second spike of the pandemic began to emerge, we shifted to becoming a 'mixed economy', with around 65% of support provided in classrooms and 35% online. We currently expect the proportion of online sessions to increase further as we go along.

Online does give us more flexibility in the way we deliver our catch-up learning. We can fit our

support around times that are mutually convenient for staff and pupils, including Saturday mornings or weekday evenings.

Some of our tutors have used the Bramble live online teaching platform ([bramble.io](https://bramble.io)) to provide online learning support, which places more demands on learners compared to using Teams. There's scope to create interactive and engaging lessons that are more reflective and dynamic. That's largely down to the 'interactive whiteboard', on which it's possible to display lesson content and provide a focus for teacher and students alike. There's also the facility to write notes and annotate lesson materials, such as science diagrams. This all helps to convey the sense that sessions are taking place in a classroom environment.

Attendance and behaviour for these online sessions has been good, and we're certainly seeing fewer cases of students 'being present, but not present'.

## A question of attitude

The contrast between online teaching during the first lockdown and towards the end of the December was marked. During the first lockdown our online offer was very improvised, but we learned as we went along

and improved our skills very quickly. Colleagues who felt they needed support were pointed towards confident online teachers, and we shared online resources that would help them. Starting in September, we ran training sessions that looked at how the remote technology could be used effectively, sharing techniques and practice that would help our teaching staff and reinforce the school's expectations of what these catch-up sessions ought to achieve.

What we've found from our experiences of the past few months is that effective remote teaching isn't really

an issue of skill; our teachers have been easily able to transfer their classroom skills to the online world, with just a few tweaks needed to make their approach more suited to one-to-one and small group situations. It's more a question of attitude, and ensuring that staff are able and willing to embrace the opportunities remote teaching can open up for our students.

Our moves into online teaching have involved some challenges. The teachers have been able to confidently adapt their delivery technique to live online





teaching, but have expressed concerns about what to do in the event of any concerns they have around student welfare or safeguarding. We've given several colleagues support in this area, and endeavoured to set out a clear reporting process.

### Device availability

By far the biggest issue with moving our catch-up support online, however, has been ensuring that enough pupils have the technological capability to access the sessions. Many pupils in Samworth Church Academy's catchment are from disadvantaged backgrounds, and there's a sizeable minority who don't have access to a device of their own.

At the height of lockdown, we received requests for packs of printed lesson resources from 110 students because they couldn't get online. And yet, broadband connectivity per se has never been the issue – in disadvantaged households,

the real problem is a lack of devices. Students may not be able to get exclusive use of a family's sole device at the point where they need it, for example.

That 110 figure eventually came down to 85, as we managed to acquire some laptops through the government's scheme and bought some additional units ourselves. At the time of writing, however, around 70 students are still receiving our printed resource packs – we want to get that number to below 50.

We're now seriously considering streaming all of our lessons, so that students who cannot attend school won't miss out. The next step for us is to therefore seamlessly integrate the technology we've thus far been using for catch-up into the rest of the school day. We've enjoyed using Teams so far, but are conscious the next step for us will involve making more extensive use of what other live online learning platforms are able to provide.

## THE VIEW FROM THE FRONT

Tara Stirland is a catch-up science teacher working mainly with Y10 students at Samworth Church Academy. She supports around 30 pupils identified by the science department as needing additional support to help them catch up on their learning.

Tara teaches these pupils in small groups of between two and six. During lockdown, Tara was supporting the students remotely using Bramble. With the reopening of schools in September, Tara returned to the school to deliver face-to-face support, but found herself spending increasingly more time on remote learning as the term progressed, as a growing number of students became unable attend the face-to-face sessions due to self-isolation.

In Tara's view, however, the remote online learning was, in many ways, more effective than the face-to-face sessions. "We had real success with the online learning approach during lockdown," she says. "I found that we could actually engage more with the children, [and] there were fewer distractions, such as room changes. It allowed the students to be much more focused."

Tara believes that the school's mix of remote and face-to-face support since the pandemic took hold proved to be very effective. "Some people still perceive online learning to be not as good as face-to-face, but in many cases it's actually just as good, or even better. I've seen what some of my students have got from it. I can see what they're doing on the screen, and I love the fact that they can listen again to sessions via recordings, and also search for particular topics. Some students really prosper with this type of learning."

### NEXT STEPS

Insights into live online tutoring have been published in a new white paper from Bramble. 'Getting the most out of live online tutoring: Insights from half a million hours' can be downloaded via [bit.ly/ts101-bramble](https://bit.ly/ts101-bramble); for more information about the Bramble platform, visit [bramble.io](https://bramble.io)

### ABOUT

#### THE AUTHOR

Chris Vallance is strategic director for student experience at Samworth Church Academy – a role that involves management of the academy curriculum, intervention programmes and careers provision



ATTEND ANYTIME

# ICT

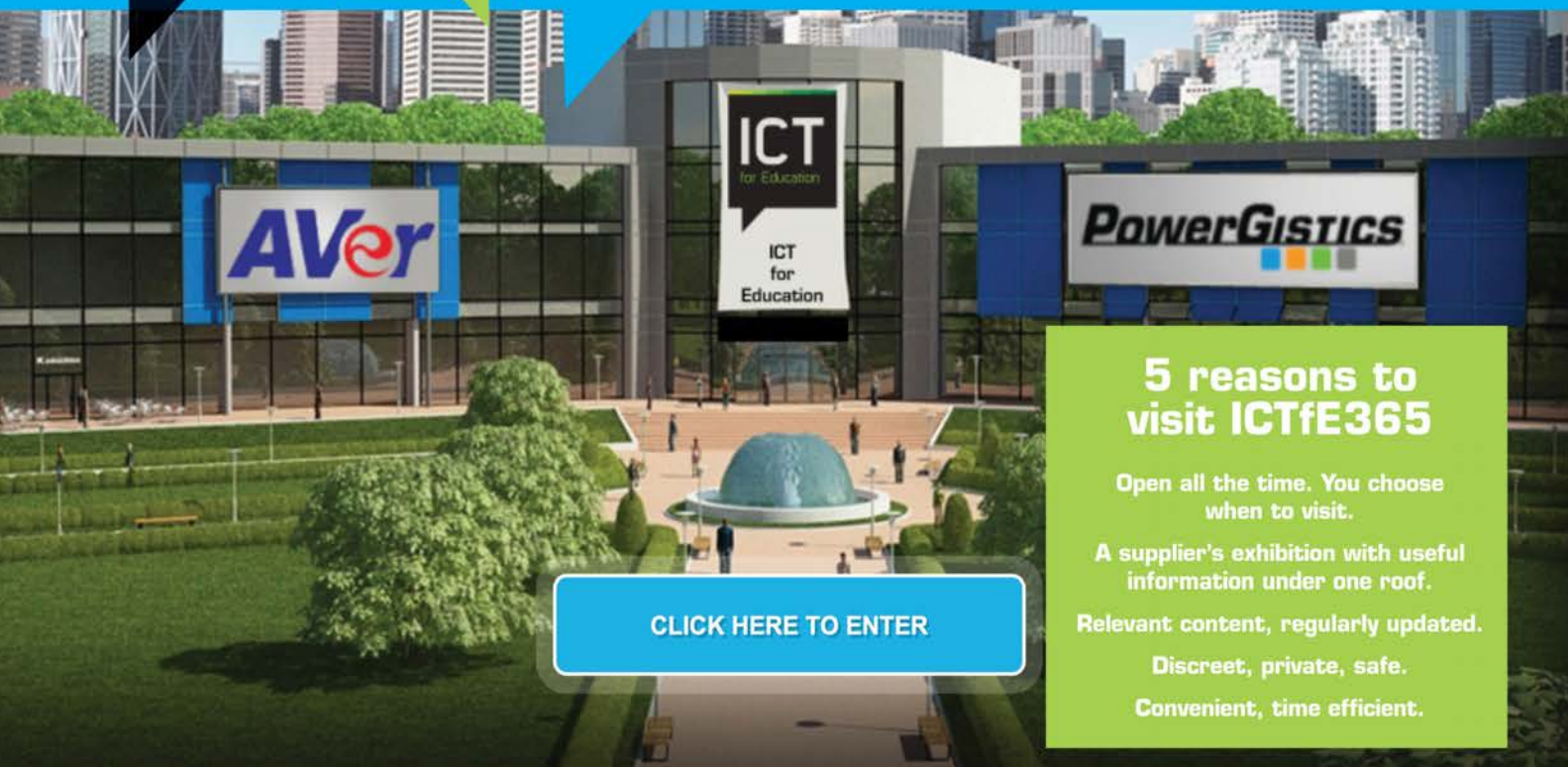
for Education

Trusted by Teachers

Since 2012

## An online exhibition and conference always open when you want to visit

ICTfE365 IS NOW OPEN at [www.ictfe365.co.uk](http://www.ictfe365.co.uk)



### 5 reasons to visit ICTfE365

Open all the time. You choose when to visit.

A supplier's exhibition with useful information under one roof.

Relevant content, regularly updated.

Discreet, private, safe.

Convenient, time efficient.

ICTfE365 is a virtual exhibition which gives teachers 24x7x365 access to an exhibition of companies that supply technology solutions to schools.



Check out leading suppliers



Convenient, Discrete, Safe



Content from industry leading speakers



Product Reviews



Information, news, articles



Practical ideas for your school

“ I love the look of the virtual conference. Runs very smoothly. Very impressive. ”

**Phillip Craig**  
ICT Network Manager

VISIT:  
[www.ictfe365.co.uk](http://www.ictfe365.co.uk)

[info@ictforeducation.co.uk](mailto:info@ictforeducation.co.uk)

**01983 812305**



# The perfect blend

Technology that supports high-quality learning, wherever you are



1

## eduu.school

Deliver a broad and balanced curriculum both in school and remotely with eduu.school. This online platform offers read-made lessons that mix easily with existing plans, providing a sequenced, thematic curriculum for Key Stage 3 and thematic learning linked to GCSE subjects for Key Stage 4. It also takes a unique approach to wellbeing and pastoral care, offering wraparound

support for students, with additional materials created by mental health experts.

Using eduu.school will help you to meet and exceed the new DfE requirements around remote learning by ensuring all students can access a broad curriculum on any digital device. You can develop online teaching skills and knowledge too with ongoing training and support. Learn more at [hoddereducation.co.uk/eduu-school-21](https://hoddereducation.co.uk/eduu-school-21)



2

## Mastery in Science

A new way to teach the KS3 and GCSE subject content, Mastery in Science uses big ideas to encourage deep understanding of key concepts, linking together content in a logical and steady way from Year 7 to Year 11.

The big ideas are introduced in Year 7 where students secure their knowledge in each key theme, with the mastery pathways structured to consolidate previous knowledge and add an extra layer of deeper understanding each time an idea is revisited. Regular formative assessment points are included to help identify areas where more support will be needed.

Visit [pearson.com](https://pearson.com) to find out more.



3

## Digital Shakespeare

The Shakespeare Birthplace Trust in Stratford-upon-Avon has devised a suite of new online courses to support and inspire KS3-KS5 students with Shakespeare. The pre-recorded and live sessions with its team of award-winning educators are curriculum specific and delivered in a friendly, conversational tone.

Designed in consultation with teachers, the new digital offer aims to provide greater awareness of Shakespeare in context, increase student motivation and inspire students to share thoughts and ideas.

Classes range from 40 to 90 minutes in duration with costs from £100 to £300 for individual and combined sessions. Tailored study days are also available. For enquiries about online classes and bookings contact [learning@shakespeare.org.uk](mailto:learning@shakespeare.org.uk) or see [shakespeare.org.uk/education](https://shakespeare.org.uk/education)



4

## myON

Engage students in reading anytime, anywhere with a growing collection of 7,000 digital books with audio support, highlighters and a built-in dictionary. myON by Renaissance is more than a digital library, it's a whole-class teaching tool, a central check-in point for learning and an integrated homework hub. With myON Project, you can create and assign individual, group or whole-class reading tasks designed to be easily accessed in school, at home, or in a blended learning environment. There are tools for matching students with the right book at the right reading level, based on their interests to ensure personalised learning, and access is available online and offline 24/7. In addition, new children's and YA books are available with the Cranachan Publisher Pack and Welsh language books are offered too.

To learn more, email [ukanswer@renlearn.co.uk](mailto:ukanswer@renlearn.co.uk) or visit [renlearn.co.uk/myon](https://renlearn.co.uk/myon)



5

## Tassomai

The award-winning online learning program known for its science content, Tassomai has added two new KS4 subjects to its schools package - GCSE maths and English literature are now both included at no additional cost.

Tassomai engages students through frequent quizzing (or low-stakes testing) and instant feedback, which is proven to be the most effective way to embed knowledge.

The program is designed to stimulate metacognition, and is based on learning science that incorporates proven techniques such as interleaving and spacing.

Evidence from users is compelling, with schools reporting significant improvements to GCSE grades, gender attainment gaps and Progress 8 scores. It has also helped school leaders deal with the challenges of COVID-19 and blended learning. Find out about the free

5-week trial and more at [tassomai.com/schools](https://tassomai.com/schools)

# “THE BEST WHICH HAS BEEN THOUGHT AND SAID”

**Phil Beadle** unpacks a borrowed educational rallying cry that has come to signify something rather different to its intended meaning...

**I**t is a strategy of power to state that schools should be apolitical, without any sense of the ridiculousness of that position, to force children to sing the national anthem and memorise ‘The Charge of the Light Brigade’. It is a strategy of power to demand balancing ideas to “Victim narratives’ that are harmful to British society,” as if such ideas could be balanced – the ‘balancing perspective’ to stating that Black Lives Matter being that they do not. And it is a strategy of power to direct children in the path of “The best that has been thought and said,” believing that it will “engender an appreciation of human creativity and achievement.”

Where does this idea, ‘the best that has been thought and said,’ come from? Is it simply, and self evidently, a notion that requires no examination, no criticism, no, erm, balancing ideas? In answer to this, it first appeared in our discourse during the middle years of the last decade when that prince regent of misquotation, Michael Gove, started throwing mangled versions of it around in lofty speeches. It appeared as “The best that has been thought and written” in his speech about the Mister Men ([bit.ly/ts101-cc1](http://bit.ly/ts101-cc1)) and in the same form in a letter to

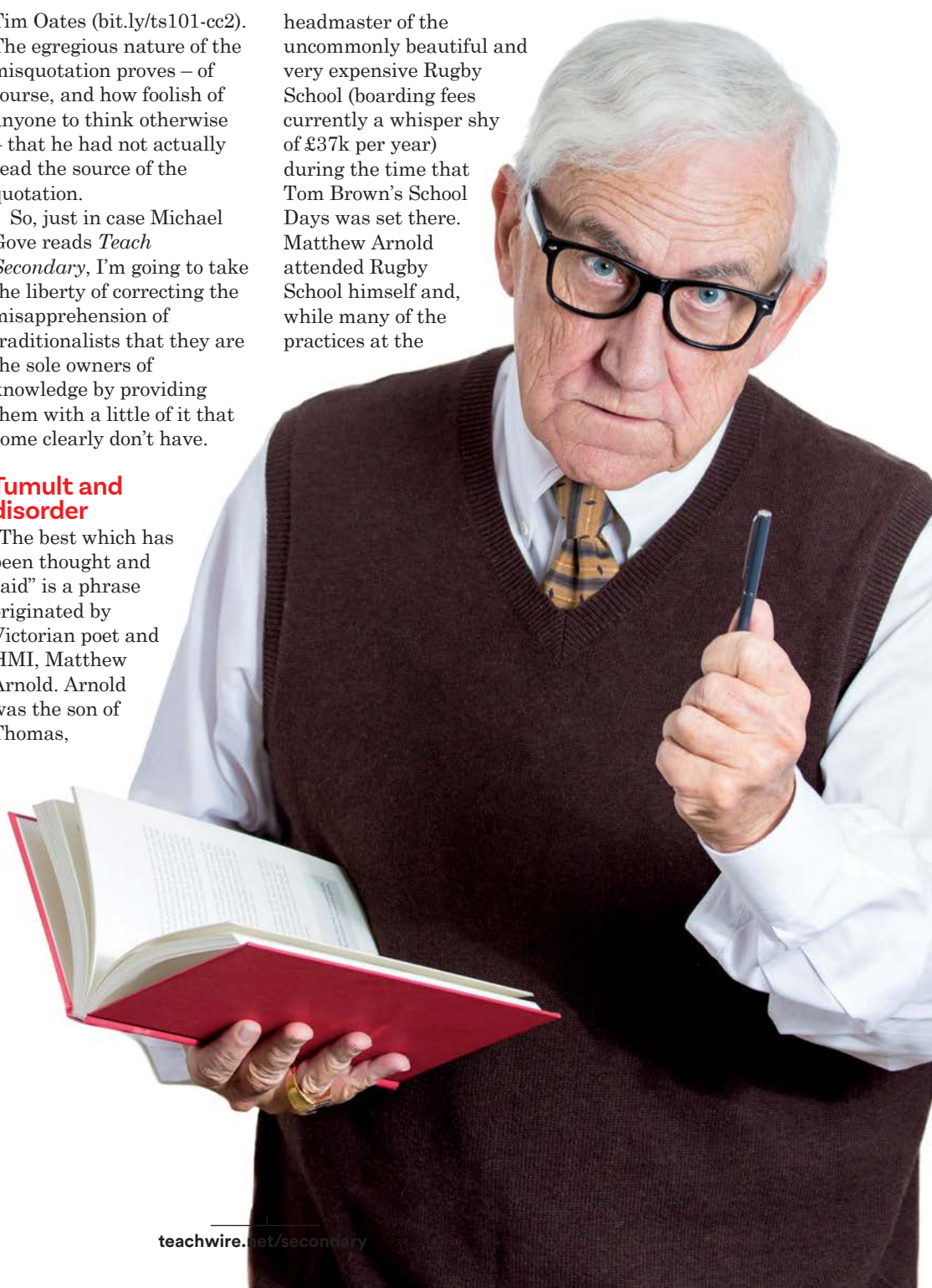
Tim Oates ([bit.ly/ts101-cc2](http://bit.ly/ts101-cc2)). The egregious nature of the misquotation proves – of course, and how foolish of anyone to think otherwise – that he had not actually read the source of the quotation.

So, just in case Michael Gove reads *Teach Secondary*, I’m going to take the liberty of correcting the misapprehension of traditionalists that they are the sole owners of knowledge by providing them with a little of it that some clearly don’t have.

## Tumult and disorder

“The best which has been thought and said” is a phrase originated by Victorian poet and HMI, Matthew Arnold. Arnold was the son of Thomas,

headmaster of the uncommonly beautiful and very expensive Rugby School (boarding fees currently a whisper shy of £37k per year) during the time that Tom Brown’s School Days was set there. Matthew Arnold attended Rugby School himself and, while many of the practices at the





school – fagging, roasting, smoking out and tossing in a blanket – were barbaric, Arnold, in a rarely acknowledged fact, was decidedly a product of halls of privilege.

The phrase appears in his prose piece *Culture and Anarchy*, which appeared immediately after working class political protest – which Arnold refers to as “tumult and disorder” – had succeeded in securing the vote for working class urban males.

Culture and anarchy are presented as deliberate antitheses: the two potential paths out of what Arnold saw as “our present difficulties”, caused by a working class losing “their strong habits of subordination and deference”. He saw the need for the middle class to embrace knowledge, so they might be ready to guide the country away from the potential anarchy of working class rule. “Then let the middle class rule once they have perfected themselves,” he wrote in *A French Eton*.

### Fresh thought

Arnold also saw two paths to enacting the will of God (with which middle class rule conveniently coincided) – the Hebraic, the study of the scriptures, or the Hellenic, the study of all knowledge. Arnold embraced the Hellenic, so, quite reasonably, he is a foundational voice for those who would argue for a knowledge-rich curriculum ... if only they had read him.

When you just take a phrase that seems to have come from nowhere, that you might dimly misremember from school, and don't do the research before putting it in important documents like the National Curriculum, you can get things wrong. Had the people responsible for the National

Curriculum read *Culture and Anarchy* they would have noticed, as Dominic Wyse did in a blog for the IOE (see [bit.ly/ts101-cc3](http://bit.ly/ts101-cc3)), that Arnold recommended engagement with “The best which has been thought and said” in order to “turn a fresh stream of thought onto our stock notions and habits”.

Arnold wished his people to engage with great and historic literature to come

engagement with such books, since these generally exalt freedom and individuality. The way we view such texts in terms of their position in the social space is not necessarily the way readers view them.

The working class child who realises they can understand Shakespeare, Blake and Keats is one who is subject to a profoundly emancipatory

**“When you take a phrase that seems to have come from nowhere and don't do the research before putting it in the National Curriculum, you can get things wrong”**

up with new ideas beyond their stock responses. But the DfE misuse Matthew Arnold. Far from utilising culture as a springboard for fresh thought, they use it to resurrect the primacy of the stale, the male and the pale; to reinstate the kneejerk paternalism of the private schoolboy – stock notions, check; stock habits, present also – and thereby ensure that children read only books written by white people before the dawning of the 20th century as that, allegedly, “Is the best training for the mind”.

The canonical arguments of right and left often fail to realise one thing. While they tend to agree that a dead, white and (chiefly) male canon will be likely to deliver a more culturally obedient populous, one side argues this is a good thing while the other argues against it. What is not noticed is that the idea of a repressive curriculum is not necessarily the real impact of the working class's history of

epiphany that affects his or her future engagement with the intellectual realm. As Jonathan Rose writes in *The Intellectual Life of the British Working Class*, “Contrary to all the intentions of the authors, classic conservative texts could make plebeian readers militant and articulate.”

Accepting this, however, the glib ‘did-my-homework-on-the-bus’ responses of traditionalists are not sufficiently sophisticated on this subject to be taken properly seriously. What the right wing cultural commentators tend to do is to argue for the ‘great books’ approach by erecting a man of straw so sizeable it would be a candidate for a starring role in a remake of *The Wickerman*. “How patronising,” they say, “to assume Black and white working class children cannot get anything from Shakespeare.” As no one has claimed. Ever.

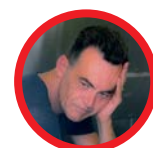
Ultimately, the misuse of Matthew Arnold is an assertion of the ruling class

establishment's (imagined) cultural superiority. By asserting that there actually is a best that has been thought and said, and locating that best on their home territory, they perform a nakedly political act while deluding themselves that they're acting apolitically.

Power says there is one legitimate culture for study in schools. Power says any social structure that could have hosted such great books does not have to be altered. Power says that your own culture is a prison of ‘disadvantage’. Power says nothing of worth has been produced in the last 120 years, nor indeed has anything of any cultural worth ever been produced by anyone with dark skin. Power says betterment is attained by devotion to the development of the internal realm.

Power requires you not to notice depraved inequalities in the external world. Power says ‘Here are our gods; they are better than yours.’ Power says worship them, and by extension, the hierarchies that allowed them to be produced. Power says ‘keep politics out of school’ while simultaneously loading your plate with heaps of poorly concealed propaganda.

That is what “the best that has been thought and said” is all about. It is a wolf clad in fairy's clothes, hoping no one notices it's a wolf.



### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Phil Beadle is an experienced teacher, author, broadcaster, speaker, and journalist; his latest book, *The Fascist Painting: What is Cultural Capital?* (John Catt, £16) is a wide-ranging exploration of ‘cultural capital’, its meaning and place within the school curriculum. For more details, visit [philbeadle.com](http://philbeadle.com) or follow @PhilBeadle



# CLAUDIUS

Duplicitous and deceitful, how do the words of one of Shakespeare's greatest heels reveal his desire for power?

*"Therefore our sometime sister,  
now our queen [...]  
With mirth in funeral and  
with dirge in marriage  
Have we [...] taken to wife"*

Act 1, Scene 2, lines 8-14

Claudius from the beginning of the play indulges in a kind of double speak, here characterized by the oxymorons he uses to describe the old King's funeral and his rather hasty wedding to Gertrude. It sets up the feeling that this is not a man to be trusted.

*"...but to persevere  
In obstinate condolement is  
a course  
Of impious stubbornness.  
'Tis unmanly grief"*

Act 1, Scene 2, lines 92-94

Claudius attacks Hamlet's behaviour and character in their opening conversation in the play, calling his continued mourning for his father both unsuitable for a man and against religious norms. Perhaps he finds it necessary to undermine the character of the man who should have replaced his father to justify his taking of the throne.

*"...what is should be,  
more than his father's death,  
that hath put him  
So much from the  
understanding of himself,  
I cannot dream of."*

Act 2, Scene 2, lines 7-10

Claudius moves from doublespeak to outright lies here. He is fully aware that it is his own actions that have caused Hamlet's sorrow and although he is not aware what the ghost of Hamlet's father has told him, he knows he needs to keep the prince under a watchful eye.

*"There's something in his soul  
[...]  
And I do doubt the hatch  
and the disclose will be  
some danger."*

Act 3, Scene 1, lines 163-166

Having witnessed Hamlet's manic interaction with Ophelia, in which he has implored her to go to a nunnery, Claudius seems now to be fully aware of the danger that Hamlet presents. Although he initially wanted to keep the prince close where he could control him, he now hatches his plan to send Hamlet to England.

*"O, my offence is rank it smells  
to heaven;  
It hath the primal curse upon't  
A brother's murder"*

Act 3, Scene 3. Lines 36-38

Following the Players' performance and aware that Hamlet knows what he's done, Claudius finally admits his crime in a soliloquy, conforming to the tradition of characters always telling the truth in this form. He notes that this is the oldest type of murder, fratricide, and he tries to confess his sin so that he appears penitent.



## Who is he?

Claudius is the newly crowned King of Denmark. He has taken the position following the sudden death of his brother King Hamlet and while his nephew, Prince Hamlet, is away at university in Wittenberg. He has also married his dead brother's wife, Gertrude, within a few weeks of her husband's death. Revealed to have been his brother's murderer, he is one of Shakespeare's enduring villains.

*"My words fly up, my thoughts  
remain below:  
Words without thoughts never to  
heaven go."*

Act 3, Scene 3, lines 97-8

After Hamlet, seeing his uncle apparently praying, passes over a prime opportunity to exact his revenge, Shakespeare uses dramatic irony to excellent effect. Claudius reveals to the audience that his prayers were not accompanied by a true feeling of guilt.

*"Why now you speak  
Like a good child and a true  
gentleman.  
That I am guiltless of your  
father's death."*

Act 4, Scene 5, lines 146-148.

Suddenly faced with two vengeful sons of dead fathers, Claudius has to placate Laertes. Typically, he sees the opportunity to use Laertes' rage to his own benefit, turning it on Hamlet. The subsequent revelation of Ophelia's madness gives him more ammunition.

*"She swoons to see them bleed!"*

Act 5, Scene 2, line 293.

Knowing that Gertrude has drunk the poison intended for Hamlet, he tries to cover his own guilt. It is the death of his mother and his own fatal wounding that give Hamlet the impetuous he needs to finally avenge his father.



## CLASSROOM VOICES

# “My solution has been to dust off old bingo pens”

**Matt Hallam** describes what he and his fellow literacy leaders are doing to fight COVID-19 – one chapter at a time

**L**ike many areas of secondary school development, literacy is being well and truly tested in the wake of COVID-19. As well as the significant loss of in-school learning during lockdown and continued disruptions in school attendance as many students are required to isolate, literacy leaders are further faced with various barriers to learning presented by COVID safety measures. So what can we do to fight back? Here are some ideas from my own experience...

## REFINE YOUR VOCABULARY LISTS

Many teachers are now teaching lessons by moving around year bubbles. That's great for increasing our 'daily steps', but not having our own rooms means students lack access to tier 3 (subject-specific) word walls. The visualising of vocabulary is still crucial in helping students develop their spelling and application. There can be the temptation to plaster the walls where they are with vocabulary from every curriculum area, but students will likely find this over-stimulating (and nobody wants to lumber the reprographics staff with a huge job at this precise moment).

What you can do, however, is scale down your vocabulary lists for books and, crucially, ensure they're applied to every lesson. Knowledge organisers can be used proactively to teach vocabulary via a flipped learning approach. Combining this with low-stakes spelling tests (carried out with the aid of mini whiteboards) will prevent COVID measures from disadvantaging our students' vocabulary banks.

## MAKE MARKING SAFER

A lot's changed in 2020, but students still require the same level of literacy feedback. Understandably, many teachers won't be comfortable circulating the room with a red pen, but now is a good time to get students thinking independently about the extent of their literacy, rather than spoon-feeding them corrections.

Channelling the cherished memories I have of my late grandma's bingo obsession, my solution has been to dust off some old bingo pens and use them to give coded feedback in a way that doesn't require me to rest my hand on the page. For literacy, I'll typically use a simple code of red for SPaG mistakes, orange for weak (tier 1) vocabulary and green for impressive (tier 2) vocabulary or celebrating improvement. This lets me provide timely feedback and quickly address common class mistakes while positioned at single location within the room; since the students bring their work to me, I can maintain a conducive learning atmosphere while reducing our physical proximity to each other.

## RETHINK YOUR LIBRARY OFFERING

Another unfortunate effect of COVID has been the closure of many school

libraries, but we can't let this hinder reading age progress. In September, our school launched a tech-assisted 'Click & Deliver' service in an effort to keep our library doors open (even if only ajar). Using a QR code, students can access an online form that lets them select one of our most popular reads or a different book altogether. Our librarian then delivers the requested books to form rooms each morning. Once the students have devoured their latest read, they return it via a quarantine box in each bubble zone.

This arrangement took a while to initially set up, but the time investment has paid off, with hundreds of books being requested during the first few weeks of term. The system has also led to a rapid rise in the number of new registered library borrowers, many of them hitherto reluctant readers. Perhaps the anonymity of being able to select books online has removed a barrier to library use for some of them?

## SHARE AND SHARE ALIKE

There's been enough isolation in 2020 as it is, without isolating ourselves as practitioners. Establishing networks with literacy leaders at other local schools will help to reduce workload and catalyse best practice. With all of us having to plan for a plethora of possible future scenarios, the regular sharing of our literacy planning and resources will ensure that our literacy provision can weather any future COVID challenges. After all, we're in this together for all of our students' futures.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Matthew Hallam is a literacy leader, English/literacy SLE and senior examiner based in Oldham



# ARE YOUR STUDENTS FEELING THE STRAIN?

**Helen Spiers**, head of counselling at Mable Therapy, explains how the stresses and strains of post-COVID schooling are fuelling new trends in bullying

**B**ased on the referrals we've seen at our counselling service, many young people are currently presenting with heightened anxiety – which is perhaps to be expected, given all that's happened in 2020.

Less expected, however, is how those numbers seemed to rise only after the first lockdown of last year, when secondary schools readmitted students that September. Primary children felt the impact as well, of course, but would have benefited more from the extra time spent with their families, and been more likely to have returned with a sense of excitement at seeing their friends again.

For teenagers, however, the developmental stage they're at often sees many reject their parents to some degree, and attempt to forge their own identity – to a large extent, through socialisation with peers. To have been denied that for such a prolonged period amounts to a massive developmental gap that will have a profound impact.

## Heightened stress

Adults often envisage young people as being quite carefree, and perhaps less mindful of the consequences to not obeying the rules. In fact, many young people feel the exact opposite – they're

at an age where they're hearing lots of news about the pandemic and are able to comprehend what's happening, but are less able to process and filter that information as an adult might. Consequently, we've seen young people who are attending school while being genuinely terrified of catching COVID and

seen are also partly down to academic pressures – teachers are feeling anxious themselves at the amount of work their students have missed, which some students will inevitably pick up on.

## Pressure cooker

These pressures can and do have an effect on

***“If we're ‘all in the same storm but in different boats’, then schools need to be the lifeboats”***

bringing it home, leading to a heightened form of stress.

Having been exposed to hardly any other people outside their immediate family for months on end, and then suddenly thrown back into classes of 30, many students will have naturally experienced enormous levels of social anxiety. The lack of socialisation these teenagers have had with their classmates will have made many much more nervous and prone to second-guessing themselves when interacting with peers.

These issues have fed into a significant rise in referrals for school refusal. I previously worked as a school counsellor, and have never witnessed anything approaching the extent to which we're seeing it now. The levels of stress we've

interpersonal relationships within schools, but we haven't seen a significant rise in concerns around in-person conflict, as such. More common have been concerns around the reduced number of individuals to whom younger students can turn to for emotional support and advice.

That said, a number of students will have found themselves confined to bubbles with a real ‘pressure cooker’ feel, due to being with the same set of peers at all times – great if those are people they get on with, but very challenging if they've been separated from friends and placed with groups they don't particularly like.

In a state of heightened anxiety, humans can go into

a form of ‘survival mode’, where traits like empathy, courtesy and compassion can become suppressed. As adults, we can recognise this when it happens and reacquaint ourselves with that part of our nature relatively quickly, but it's much more difficult for young people to do the same. The corollary of this can be an uptick in bullying, though so far we've found there to be relatively low reporting of face-to-face bullying. What has risen considerably, however, is the amount of cyberbullying carried out online.

## Disinhibiting effect

This was always going to be inevitable, given the dramatic increase in hours students have spent gaming, using social media and other online services. In many ways, this time spent online has been a godsend, in that it's enabled people to connect with one another, helped children maintain social contact with their friends and, on occasion, served as a babysitter of sorts for parents at home but needing to work.

In some cases, we've seen children start using online services at a younger age than their parents would have otherwise allowed, due to the important opportunities for socialisation that they can provide. Lacking the maturity needed to navigate online interactions



appropriately, however, cyberbullying has thus become an easy behaviour for otherwise kind and compassionate children to fall into, due to the inherently disinhibiting effect of online interactions. They can find themselves inclined to act in ways they never would face-to-face, and sometimes won't even recognise that they're engaging in behaviours which could accurately be classed as bullying.

Added to this are the series of pressures that often come with being online – the sense of being judged, and the compulsion

to seek validation through likes, follows and similar metrics. Most of us, children and adults alike, will have things in our lives that serve as a corrective to this behaviour, whether it be participation in local sports teams, attending classes or clubs, or doing well in exams. Since the spring of 2020, however, there have been extremely limited opportunities to partake in any such activities.

Children form their sense of identity and receive validation from joining various friendship groups and cliques, which can sometimes involve ostracising others who

aren't like us. Social media is very good at facilitating precisely this, which can easily escalate into full-blown bullying.

### The new sloppiness

Where there have been cases of real-world bullying, some schools have needed to amend their policies to account for

COVID-related bullying incidents, such as including sanctions for children who deliberately cough on others. Reactions to COVID have brought about a uniquely contemporary form of bullying that could almost be described as 'The new sloppiness' – where a student might have previously been picked on for working hard in class or doing well at their homework, some children are now being bullied for wanting to wear masks in class, in the face of others' mockery or derision.

On the whole, however, we detect the sense that there's been a temporary 'pause' of bullying, because of the very general state of the crisis we're in and the trauma we've collectively experienced.

There's a now well-known analogy that says 'We're all in the same storm but in different boats'. In my view, schools need to be the lifeboats – attending to the different boats their children are in, gathering them together and clearly explaining how they're going to help get everyone through the trauma of all that's happened.

Schools could take a positive step by easing off somewhat on those academic pressures – though as a former teacher prior to being a counsellor, I appreciate how hard that would be. Yet schools have a responsibility to help children develop maturity, build empathy and resilience.

The opposite approach would be to plough ahead with those academic priorities, but children and young people can't learn and make meaningful progress in a state of anxiety – it just doesn't happen. That lack of progress can then add to the pressure and resulting in yet more low self esteem – the key ingredient bullying needs to thrive.

## BULLYING INDICATORS

### • School refusal

If students aren't coming in, schools need to get to the bottom of why that is

### • Withdrawal

If a student is very withdrawn, or their mood seems low, and they're not participating in things they used to enjoy, it could be a sign that something's going on

### • Aggression

Aggressive outbursts can be an outward sign that a student is being bullied, or that they're taking part in bullying behaviour

## BULLYING STRATEGIES

• A reactive approach to bullying can sometimes be necessary, but it's far better to try and eliminate it. The culture of a school should be one in which young people recognise bullying and perceive it as wrong

• Your pupils are the school's eyes and ears; they're the ones who can report incidents, which they will if they can be assured that matters will be dealt with firmly but fairly

• Many schools are spending the catch-up funding they're currently entitled to on additional teaching capacity, but this can also be spent on mental health provision



### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Helen Spiers is head of counselling at Mable Therapy – a provider of online speech and language therapy and counselling services for schools; for more information, visit [mabletherapy.com](https://mabletherapy.com) or follow @mabletherapy

# Game changing LESSONS

For some, PE is a source of anxiety, but with the right approach we can help all students put their fears aside

**T**his year has been like no other on record. A narrowing of curriculum choices due to COVID-19, National Governing Bodies dictating mutated variations of sporting activities, limited extracurricular opportunities and no inter-school fixtures.

Our young people need physical activity now more than ever, but circumstances mean we must adapt and move away from traditional games and PE-driven curriculum activities.

In 2020, secondary schools include a diverse mix of cultures, religions and sexual identities. PE has had to adapt to changing circumstances and students are no longer pigeonholed based on somatotype (body shape) or physical prowess; today schools need to provide different curriculum pathways to students as they develop into young adults.

Choosing your approach to PE depends on so many factors – as Alex Beckley, lecturer in PE at Kingston University, made clear in a recent post online. We need to consider the purpose and aim of the programme, the time allotted to PE on the curriculum, the resources and facilities available, group dynamics, individual abilities, staff skills, and the culture and ethos of the school. That's quite a list, but as the following models-based approaches

demonstrate, PE has the potential to be a flexible and inclusive subject.

## ME in PE

A common approach to making PE more tailored to the needs of the students has been to create strands of learning based around the individual and his or her strengths. Tom Brush (@tombrush1982), head of PE at Nishkam High School in Birmingham, devised his model 'ME in PE' around five strands of wellbeing: healthy, physical, thinking, social and personal. Tom first developed the method in order to move away from grading students on levels, but it also had the benefit of allowing a broader range of personal qualities to be assessed.

Students are no longer being compared against black and white criteria that determine achievement based on skill, athleticism, and success. They are now assessed on their ability to organise, create and lead in activities where participation is the goal, and every student has a tangible role.

## The sport education model

This model usually centres around team games, although it is not strictly necessary. The focus is on organising leagues, leadership within teams and how individuals develop within the structure of a team or organisation. Students are

encouraged to take on roles beyond participating in the game itself, which can be rewarding for many as it allows them to officiate, manage and organise. You don't need to stick to more traditional team sports either – games like handball and ultimate frisbee are becoming increasingly common in secondary schools and have wide appeal.

## The strength and conditioning model

This groundbreaking approach is based around building confidence in the key movement skills of running, jumping and throwing. This is done by breaking complex movements into manageable chunks for students of all abilities, using a series of stretching,







**“It’s perfect for students who find PE daunting and difficult, enabling them to develop good habits for the future”**

movement and plyometric exercises that run through the core of all sports on the curriculum.

This unique model is currently being developed by James McCann (@jrmccann16), head of PE at Whitgift School, Croydon. Its design is perfect for students who find PE daunting and difficult, enabling them to develop good habits that will define how they take part in physical activity in the future.

### Extracurricular options

As educators we are charged with teaching a broad and balanced curriculum, offering a varied selection of

activities and opportunities in school and as part of the extracurricular schedule. Facilitating these opportunities in the transition from primary to secondary is critical if students are to continue their interest in sport.

Writing in Physical Education Matters back in 2018, primary PE coordinator Ryan Forwood (@RyanForwoodPE) suggested that the sheer breadth of activities now offered in primary schools is not always mirrored in secondary, and this narrowing of choice as children move from Y6 to Y7 and beyond can lead to participation and interest dropping off significantly.

Whether linked to GCSEs or not, schools’

## TRY SOMETHING DIFFERENT

Whatever approach a school chooses to take, funding remains key in our pursuit of inclusivity. If your PE department has adequate financial support, then the following games will provide all students with activity that improves their physical, social and mental wellbeing.

Importantly, they offer the opportunity for students to develop as part of a models-based approach or through a widening of the curriculum.

### FOOT GOLF

The beauty of this activity is that you’ll already have the equipment in your PE department - footballs, cone markers, plus your school playing fields. Yes, you can pay £75 or more for a proper foot golf hole, but coned greens and football corner flag posts are all you need.



The real benefit of this activity for young learners is they can set up the course, create the score cards and manage the rules. It offers all students the chance to play competitively or for fun, and requires minimal motor coordination.

### ULTIMATE FRISBEE

This game has long been established in the USA and whilst played competitively in the UK is still relatively rare in secondary schools. It too requires minimal equipment: a set of frisbees will set a department back £100 and these will last for several years. Again, you play on an existing football or rugby pitch, but unlike traditional games frisbee can be played at a gentler pace (to suit your participants), and the technique is easily mastered.



### STOOLBALL

This is a medieval game still played in Kent and Sussex. It’s a cross between rounders and cricket, but striking the ball is easier thanks to the bat, which is shaped like a large spoon. The scoring is like cricket and the nature of the game means it will suit all abilities and contexts. Equipment is available to buy from the Stoolball England website (stoolball.org.uk).



### MIX IT UP

Dodgeball, boxercise, boccia, spike ball - all these sports are ideal for small groups wanting fun, physical activities that place less emphasis on athletic ability. A small investment will immediately open up options for students and hopefully help them develop a lifelong love of exercise.



extracurricular programmes are evolving, with trampolining, weight training, indoor rowing and boxercise all proving popular. Because these activities can be less competitive, they allow more introverted students to thrive without the need for athleticism.



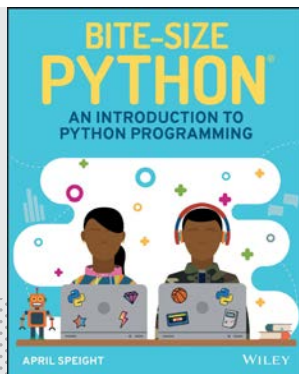
### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Zeph Bennett (@pegeekscorner) is a PE teacher and Achievement Lead at Werneth High School, Stockport.



# Off the Shelves

Brilliant titles for you and your students to explore



## **Bite-Size Python: An Introduction to Python Programming** (April Speight, Wiley, £18.99)

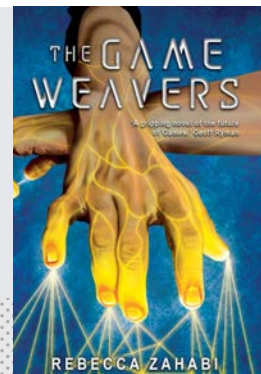
Learning a programming language, especially a text-based one like Python, can be hard going. While it's possible to start using graphical programming languages straight away, without knowing hardly any technical terminology at all, Python demands such knowledge from the outset. With that in mind, this book features an impressive structure and layout. First, a concept is introduced and explained. There then follows a mini project that makes use of that concept. On the face of it, the book's pages come across as very simple, to the point where you could be forgiven for thinking that its target audience is rather young. Yet the language used, combined with the way in which the projects gradually build up in complexity, serve to dispel those early impressions. 'Checkpoints' placed throughout provide useful guides to what should have been learnt in each chapter, complete with full answers and a very useful index at the back.

**Reviewed by Terry Freedman**



## **Concrete Rose** (Angie Thomas, HarperCollins, £TBC)

Angie Thomas' third novel is a prequel to her multi award-winning debut, *The Hate U Give*. *Concrete Rose* returns to the impoverished inner-city ghetto of Garden Heights (modelled on Mississippi's Georgetown) to tell the story of 17 year-old Maverick Carter – a member of the King Lord gang who's 'slinging' drugs to pay the bills while his dad is in prison. Ably taking care of his family and girlfriend, he feels he's mastered the boyhood to manhood transition, up until the shock discovery that he himself is a father. Worlds collide as Maverick proceeds to juggle the complexities of child-raising, drug dealing, gang loyalty and the brutal murder of a loved one, all whilst finishing high school. Thomas' nuanced style is raw, yet delicate, conjuring the brutal reality of coming of age in a world where black lives really do matter. YA Fiction that's as vital as it is compelling.



## **The Game Weavers** (Rebecca Zahabi, ZUNTOLD, £9.99)

This gripping fantasy novel throws readers into a judgemental and illiberal alternate reality Britain. We follow 20-year-old Seo, who's competing in the world championships of a macho national sport called Twine, which combines magic and hyper-aggression. Having grown up with his brother in a South Korean orphanage, his impending fame and riches seem to be the solution to all his troubles – but then his sexuality, carefully concealed for years, is outed by the press... Zahabi brilliantly portrays the struggles, confusion, and newfound freedoms that come with adulthood, while exploring the role of the press in shaping views of women, LGBTQ+ representation and ethnic minorities in wider society. The novel's message is one of hope; given the intolerance we continue to see in the media and real life more generally, portrayals of characters like Seo seem more important than ever.

**Reviewed by Ollie Wells**



## THE WORD

Find out what our regular student reviewer, Oliver Minter-King (Y13) has been reading this month...

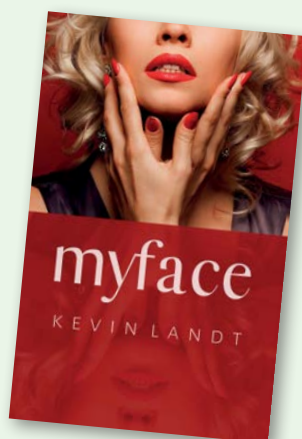
### Myface

(Kevin Landt, Rippland Publishing, £5.59)

Celebrities and social media seem made for one another – the glamorous lives of these famous personalities perfect for platforms that help you broadcast yourself to an audience. In this story of narcissism, drama and suspense, however, Kevin Landt explores how social media can be wielded with malicious intent...

Desperation strikes Sebastian Schafer – a previously successful LA car salesman, reduced to a crushing low. With next to no income, he uses the titular social media platform Myface to fabricate the identity of Angela Fox, a Hollywood socialite whose ‘association’ with Schafer convinces a new employer to hire him. His ruse quickly spirals outwards, however, forming a convoluted web of deceit that entangles the lives of a select few, with fatal consequences.

Throughout Myface, Landt excels at building up memorable characters with interesting and satisfying arcs, whilst jabbing at topics like the invasiveness of social media, self-image and catfishing, making for a short, yet effective story.



## Meet the author



### JAMES MANNION

#### What were yours and Kate McAllister's reasons for wanting to write the book?

We wanted the book to tell the story of the work we've been immersed in for the last 10 years, designing, teaching and evaluating a Learning Skills curriculum. I did an 8-year evaluation for my PhD, which found that the Learning Skills curriculum led to significant gains in subject learning across the curriculum, and that it was especially beneficial for children from disadvantaged backgrounds. How to close the disadvantage gap is the question that's been on everyone's lips for the last 10 years or so, so that seemed to us to be a story worth telling.

#### What motivated your interest in wanting to explore Learning Skills in particular?

We felt that schools are good at some things – teaching children how to read and write, teaching them subject knowledge – but not very good at teaching children how to become really confident, proactive, self-regulated learners, which is what you need to succeed in life. We wanted to see whether we could address that agenda within the context of a busy secondary school. And our research to date suggests that you absolutely can.

#### What did your approach involve?

Our approach was that of a complex intervention, rather than a single 'thing' aimed at making kids more independent. This multilayered approach came in part from my background in medicine and neuroscience, where complex interventions are widespread in health literature – but they're almost absent from thinking around education, where people still tend to focus on the notion of one-shot ideas and silver bullets.

We wanted to put together a big, complex package based around marginal gains – that individual gains from different ideas will stack up, producing a bigger effect size overall.

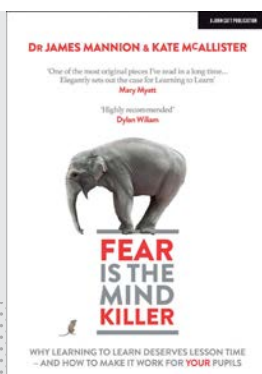
What we did boiled down to three key ideas – metacognition (the monitoring and controlling of thought processes), self-regulation (the same again, but focusing on emotions, feelings and behaviours) and oracy (speaking and listening). Each of which will set learners free in different ways, by giving them knowledge of self, knowledge of subjects, the ability to find their voice and the confidence to go out and take their place in the world.



### No Shame

(Tom Allen, Hodder Studio, £20)

What are the published recollections of the comedian, presenter and frequent panel show guest Tom Allen doing here? Put simply, a substantial portion of No Shame is given over to a highly entertaining and acutely observed study of educational attitudes and teenage psychology. That's partly a function of the author's age, of course, but a fair few teachers in their late 30s and 40s will find much to enjoy in the vividly drawn 90s-era school corridors, classrooms and dining hall against which Allen's memories of his teenage flamboyance and solitude play out. Is it one for the school library? Well, you might not necessarily want your Y8s to be poring over it, but Allen's frank and honest discussion of growing up gay and feeling isolated at school may well speak in a powerful way to some of your Y11s and sixth formers.



### Fear is the Mind Killer

(James Mannion and Kate McAllister, John Catt, £16)

From its arresting title (cribbed from Frank Herbert's sci-fi novel Dune) down to its structure (a forensically detailed case study, preceded by a brief theoretical history lesson and a critique of its own central premise presented as a mock trial), Fear is the Mind Killer isn't your standard professional development book. Mannion and McAllister set themselves the task of explaining why schools should embrace Learning to Learn – the idea that as well as imparting knowledge, schools have a role to play in teaching children how to learn and acquire knowledge for themselves, in a way that can set them on the path to becoming more confident, independent and less fearful learners. Written in a friendly and approachable tone, the book does a great job of guiding readers through a series of dense, complex ideas that the authors don't shy away from analysing and interrogating. Highly recommended.

# How effective is your curriculum sequencing?

**Kat Howard and Claire Hill** examine how careful consideration of what to teach and when can make a huge difference to the overall effectiveness of your curriculum

If a curriculum is to be coherent and follow a logical progression, attention needs to be paid to the order in which knowledge, in whatever form that might take, should be introduced and revisited. The curriculum in many subjects is dependent on a deliberate approach to the sequencing of knowledge because one concept often relies on the understanding of what has come previously and what will come next.

Effective sequencing can also provide a way of embellishing and unifying what may otherwise seem like disconnected fragments of knowledge. To create a sense of coherence for the discipline that we teach, we need to ask ourselves: Why this? Why now?

## Cognitive load theory

Cognitive load theory informs our curriculum sequencing by revealing the role of memory in helping students build the cognitive architecture required to access the curriculum effectively. As working memory is limited, we need to sequence our curriculum to reduce cognitive load by drawing on prior knowledge and logically sequencing episodes of learning so they accumulate in small stages, securing understanding at one stage before moving on to the next. This assists in reducing cognitive load as students can draw more

effectively from their long-term memory, thereby reducing the load for their working memory.

Although activating prior knowledge is an effective method for reducing cognitive load, this needs always to serve new learning. Take, for example, a history teacher introducing the concept of colonialism through a study of the British Empire. Students need to access a working definition of 'empire', relying on their understanding of vocabulary such as 'monarchy' and 'reign'. The teacher then provides an explanation of imperialism, with a brief allusion to their previous teaching of Russia the year before, polished off with the image of Queen Victoria's statue that displays the words 'The entitlement of Great Britain' underneath.

In this example, prior knowledge functions as extraneous load: students are left grappling with their working definitions of key terms and their recognition of Queen Victoria, alongside a plethora of completely new information, made more complicated by attempting to draw from their prior knowledge, as prompted by the teacher, with very little context.

If, however, the teacher opened the

lesson with a retrieval task that prompted students to recall the definitions of 'empire', 'monarchy' and 'reign' and framed these within the context of the lesson – making explicit the connection between Queen Victoria and the British Empire's role in widespread colonisation – then cognitive load is well-managed and the activation of prior knowledge is purposeful for the lesson, resulting in the delivery being far more cohesive and ensuring one idea connects to and informs the next.

Whilst careful sequencing can support new learning by exposing its relationship to prior knowledge, we need to ensure its activation does not contribute to extraneous load. When sequencing learning we need to judiciously select the knowledge most likely to support and connect to new learning so that we do not unintentionally hinder students' understanding.

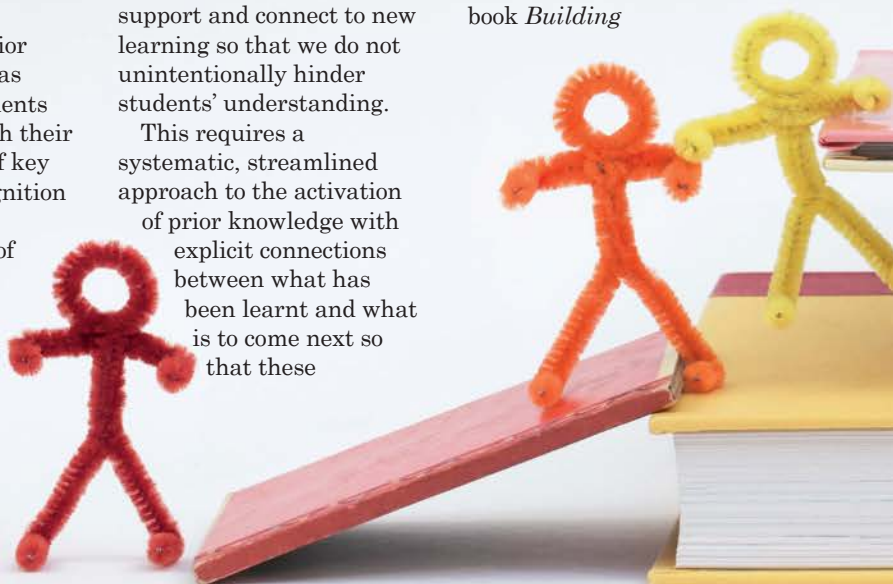
This requires a systematic, streamlined approach to the activation of prior knowledge with explicit connections between what has been learnt and what is to come next so that these

connections strengthen students' cognitive architecture, rather than act as an extraneous distraction.

## Coherence and connections

Sequencing of the curriculum is clearly more than the ordering of its component parts – it is about the relationships and connections between them, and the deeper understanding that the sequence allows our students to access. It is more than simply this, follows this, follows this – it is narrative, it tells the story of our subject, it is a conversation between its parts.

However, curriculum design can sometimes be reduced to 'Fragments of knowledge [that] float around without being placed in a coherent structure', as noted by Mary Myatt in her book *Building*





*Curriculum* – or, in some cases, disjointed units of work merely connected by the command words of GCSE exam papers with no real sense of cohesion. We begin to move towards a better model when we start to see how one episode of teaching requires prior knowledge to not only reinforce memory but to access new learning.

However, teaching one unit and then returning to some of the core knowledge of that unit later as a bolt-on exercise in retrieval practice is unlikely to have the desired effect of creating strong schematic models for students. The approach we take in activating prior knowledge needs to pay service to the internal dynamics of our subjects, which are complex, transformational and symbiotic.

When returning to key knowledge, we must undertake a revisiting that digs deeper than simple retrieval: we need to explicitly draw attention to where we have seen this vocabulary,

concept, behaviour or pattern before and expose its relationship to what we are teaching now. It is a process that involves foreshadowing, reference, embellishment, echoes and evolution – a continuous ebbing and flowing between the simple and the esoteric, rather than a mere layering of one building block on top of the other.

This could be as simple as using signposting statements. Where have we seen this before? What does this remind us of? How does this have a relationship with what happened previously? How does our understanding of the previous concept inform our understanding of this one? To sequence our curriculum in a way that is sensitive to, and prioritises these internal dynamics, we need to have some understanding

of how this works in our subject and how we can harness this when designing our curriculum.

### Knowledge structures

To understand the relationship between the components of our curriculum, we need to consider how structures of knowledge affect

their sequencing. For the purposes of curriculum sequencing, we can broadly divide knowledge structures into those which are hierarchical and those which are cumulative.

Subjects may be more hierarchical than others or more cumulative, but to define them as distinctly one or the other would be to oversimplify the nuances of these definitions and the subjects they apply to.

Broadly, subjects such as English literature, geography, history, art, drama and music may be considered more cumulative than hierarchical, as there are fewer threshold concepts that require one component being taught before the next. Although units of study may be related, they are less likely to be reliant on each other for understanding. However, subjects with more cumulative structures still benefit from unifying principles to reinforce an understanding of the subject discipline.



#### ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Kat Howard is a senior leader at the Duston School, Northamptonshire, and Claire Hill is trust vice principal and secondary improvement lead at Turner Schools in Kent; this article is based on an edited extract of their book, *Symbiosis – The curriculum and the classroom* (John Catt, £14)

# 4 REASONS TO TRY... Kites for learning

Teach lessons across the curriculum with a virtual workshop on kite making, from Infinite Arts

## 1 IT'S ALL IN THE BOX

Internationally known kite maker and artist Pauline Taylor provides an online call to introduce the project and you can access an instructional video to take you through the stages. A box of materials and equipment will be sent to you in advance of the session including kite sails, bamboo sticks, kite tails, and flying line.

## 2 CROSS CURRICULAR

Kitemaking can support the curriculum in many ways from symmetry, scale and measurement in maths, to gravity and forces in science. There's also plenty of critical thinking and problem solving involved, and it presents opportunities for outdoor



learning. You can even take an eco angle by using recycled materials to make kites.

## 3 SHARED LEARNING

Everyone knows what a kite is, but many adults don't know where to start when it comes to making one that flies - so teachers and pupils can learn

together. The project can be linked to an awareness of recycling and wind power, or it could be used to support the transition to secondary school.

## 4 LEARNING BY DOING

As a learning tool, Kite making can offer opportunities to include pupils who find it hard to engage with other types of learning. It can involve pupils of different ages working together or be used to bring in parents and the wider community to collaborate and share knowledge.

## At a glance

- + Teach many aspects of the curriculum and explore other key skills such as critical thinking and problem solving
- + Support pupils who find it difficult to engage with more traditional approaches to learning
- + Use the project to connect with members of the community and bring in parents to collaborate with students

Visit:  
[infinitearts.co.uk](http://infinitearts.co.uk)  
email:  
[info@infinitearts.co.uk](mailto:info@infinitearts.co.uk)  
or call 07870 585952

# 4 REASONS TO TRY... The Taste Kitchen Challenge

Encourage students to learn about healthy eating and cooking skills by creating their own original recipes

## 1 THE CHALLENGE

Aldi and Team GB are challenging young people aged 5-14 from England, Scotland and Wales to create their own original recipe, inspired by Team GB. The competition is open to all students aged 5-14 in England, Scotland and Wales and will be judged across three categories: ages 5-7, ages 7-11 and ages 11-14.

## 2 YOUR OWN RECIPE

Each student's recipe must include at least two fruits or vegetables and be linked to Team GB. This means it could be inspired by their favourite athlete, sport or the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games! Students can then submit their recipes to [info@getsetateatfresh.co.uk](mailto:info@getsetateatfresh.co.uk) up until the 12th of February.

## 3 THE RESOURCES

The resources help support students in learning about what goes into healthy recipes. With curriculum links to food technology and PSHE, the resources use simple exercises to get students thinking about what foods are best for healthy development and a sustainable diet.

## 4 THE PRIZES!

The winners of each category will receive £50 in Aldi vouchers, Team GB goodies and exclusive Tokyo 2020 signed merchandise, a certificate, and their recipe will be featured on the Aldi and Get Set to Eat Fresh sites. The winners' schools will receive £200 in Aldi vouchers and a bag of fresh produce.



The resources are available to download for free at [getsetateatfresh.co.uk/resources](http://getsetateatfresh.co.uk/resources)

## At a glance

- + One overall winner's recipe will also be featured on a full or double-page spread of an Aldi leaflet.
- + The judging panel for the challenge will include Olympic Gold and Silver medalists Alistair and Jonny Brownlee.
- + Prizes will be awarded to both students and to the schools which they attend.
- + Use the free resources to make links with other areas of the curriculum, such as food technology and PSHE



# What's New?

Our pick of the latest solutions and innovations for secondary education

## Reach every family, every day

IRIS Engage (formerly PS Connectis) is an all-in-one parent communications platform built to bridge the gap between home and school.

Designed with the needs of large secondary schools and MATs in mind, IRIS Engage combines a number of engagement solutions to empower school communications like never before.

Including a free absence management module, social media management tool and free translation service into over 40+ languages, IRIS Engage is used by over 1000 UK schools to ensure student wellbeing and to reach every parent, every day. Visit [iris.co.uk/products/iris-engage-for-education/](https://iris.co.uk/products/iris-engage-for-education/)

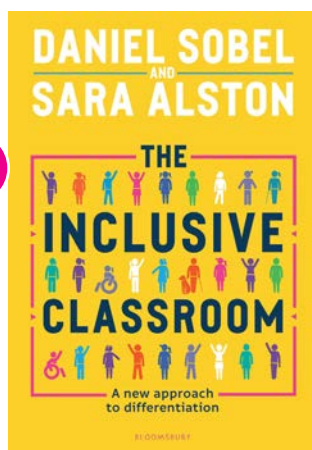


## Cleaner and greener

Leaffield's bestselling EnviroStack recycling bin has been designed to encourage students to recycle. Its slimline and compact form makes it ideal for canteen areas, corridors or in classrooms and both the 32 and 52-litre units can be stacked to collect multiple waste streams.

The black base is made from up to 100 per cent recycled material, WRAP compliant colour coded lids and labels come as standard and the EnviroStack can be manufactured with an antimicrobial protection to inhibit the growth of microbes by up to 99.9 per cent.

Call **01225 816541**, email [recycle@leaffieldenv.com](mailto:recycle@leaffieldenv.com) or visit [leaffieldrecycle.com](https://leaffieldrecycle.com)



## Quick, stress-free differentiation

Effective inclusion in the classroom shouldn't be a burden; it should be the most rewarding aspect of a teacher's role. In this innovative guide to supporting the most vulnerable students, experts Daniel Sobel and Sara Alston help teachers understand the barriers to learning, emphasising the importance of meeting needs rather than focusing on diagnosis.

Guiding teachers through the different phases of a lesson, from starters to plenaries, each chapter contains simple, effective actions to improve learning outcomes for students vulnerable to underachievement, including those traditionally labelled SEN, EAL, pupil premium, looked after and young carers.

These differentiation methods will maximise learning for the whole class, while reducing stress and saving time for the teacher.

Visit [bloomsbury.com/uk/education](https://bloomsbury.com/uk/education) to find out more.

## Reactivate your lettings

If you need help with managing your lettings administration upon re-opening, consider BookingsPlus - the online school lettings software platform designed to help streamline your working day. Not only will BookingsPlus help you save time administering your lettings, its built-in marketing tools will also help you showcase the facilities you have for hire and increase your lettings income.

Once registered, BookingPlus users can manage their bookings with ease, actively promote their facilities for hire, generate new business enquiries, effectively share important lettings information and improve their cash flow. For more details, visit [bookingsplus.co.uk](https://bookingsplus.co.uk) or contact the team on **01604 677 764** [sales@bookingsplus.co.uk](mailto:sales@bookingsplus.co.uk)



## Eco-Schools CPD

Since 1994, schools across England have used the Eco-Schools programme to engage young people in environmental action, creating the next generation of environmental leaders in the process. If you wish to do the same in your school, you can join the new Eco-Schools CPD sessions. This online training has been developed by former teachers to provide support at every stage of the Eco-Schools Seven Step framework. Whether you're new to the programme or have already achieved one of the international Eco-Schools Green Flags, there is a training course to suit your needs. Register for training today [eco-schools.org.uk/get-involved/training](https://eco-schools.org.uk/get-involved/training)

# EMBRACE THE FEAR FACTOR

Author **Cynthia Murphy** makes the case for why it's well worth steering your reluctant readers in the direction of the horror genre

**W**e all know a reluctant reader. You may even be one yourself, especially when it comes to notions of what qualifies as 'literature' and which works can be called 'classics'. Yawn. Yes, I'm well aware that there are titles out there that are universally recognised as great. But I'd wager that most of the kids in your classroom would prefer to not spend their time analysing why everyone in *Wuthering Heights* is such a horrible person and instead hang out on TikTok...

...or enjoy the sensation of reading a book that scares them.

## An indelible mark

The horror genre has seen something of a resurgence in recent years, particularly in YA fiction aimed at 12 to 18-year-olds. Many writers, myself included, will tell you that a teenage love of horror novels (notably the *Point Horror* series – remember those?) shaped what they would go on to read later in life.

These are books that can claw an indelible mark into the psyche. You'll often find that many of those horror fans turned authors identify as being easily distracted, and some as dyslexic. Unique among literary genres, horror has the unerring ability to catch a reader's attention and hold it. It's addictive in the best possible way.

Let's get back to those reluctant readers. It seems harder than ever to engage young people with a book these days, surrounded as they are with a plethora of distractions in the form of on-demand everything and social media. Instead of admitting defeat, though, let's look at what actually makes those modern attention sinks so endlessly engaging and compelling.

On-demand media channels provide viewers, listeners and readers with

this frightening world behind whenever you want. In a sense, it's about control – something that many teens feel they lack in other areas of their lives.

Sue Wallman, author of the popular YA thrillers *Lying About Last Summer* and *Dead Popular*, is also a secondary school librarian. She describes encountering students who are thirsting after good, age-appropriate horror books: "Reading for pleasure is about finding a book which makes you go,

absolute winner in my eyes."

It's a sentiment echoed by Amy McCaw, author of the upcoming vampire thriller *Mina and the Undead* (due for publication in April 2021): "Horror drags readers into an unsettling world where characters are pushed to their limits and the adrenaline rush is real."

In Amy's view, horror can also serve as an effective introduction to many other forms of literature, without being intimidating in the way that the works of Austen or Shakespeare might be. "Authors can push their imaginations to the darkest places, while also giving readers elements they might get from other genres, like romance and thrillers, as an added bonus."

Teachers and librarians, however, may shy away from horror as a genre – often because the content could be seen as too mature for young readers. Yet YA horror has come a long way in recent years, and can be very sophisticated in how it grapples with a range of age-appropriate themes. Modern horror writers don't just deal with the morbid and macabre – they also portray everyday challenges that teens face, from coming out as LGBTQ+, to mental health issues and friendship worries.

These are books that have teen stories at their heart. Having the central protagonists face relatable challenges will naturally make the reader root for them – whether that

**"Horror drags readers into an unsettling world where characters are pushed to their limits and the adrenaline rush is real"**

the ability to switch content on and off at will, to dip in and out of stories and narratives as they please. Social media, on the other hand, serves up instant gratification and concentrated dopamine hits via those ever growing likes, favourites and followers. There's a real sense of exhilaration to be had at seeing a meme or video we've posted suddenly go viral.

## Terror and control

But what does any of that have to do with horror fiction? Well, to put it simply, it's the thrill, the danger – that sense of being utterly terrified, while retaining the power to leave

'Ooooh...' I literally see joy on the faces of students when they have their hands on a book they want to read in one delicious gulp.

"Students often ask me for horror books and tell me they want to be scared 'in a good way'. What they mean is they want to be scared in an exciting, fun and safe way. They want to be transported away from real life for a chunk of time – and who doesn't want that now and again? A good horror book, with great foreshadowing, rounded characters, perfect pacing, clever plotting and the irresistible lure of a satisfying ending, will keep someone reading. And a book that can do that is an



## PUTTING THE 'BOO!' IN BOOKSHELF...



### **Breaker** **Kat Ellis**

Set at a boarding school where kids sneak off

for secret parties while avoiding becoming the Bonebreaker's latest victim – what more do you want?!



### **The Dead House**

**Dawn Kurtagich**  
Another boarding school horror, this

one has a unique twist. Kurtagich, who herself is dyslexic, breaks up the prose with details such as old therapy records and video transcripts.



### **Wranglestone** **Darren Charlton**

A gay, coming-of-age, zombie apocalypse story.

Nominated for the Costa Prize, this is heartfelt and gripping. And did I mention the zombies...?



### **Frozen** **Charlotte Alex Bell**

This book is the one that got me (and

my teenage niece) excited about YA horror again. It's reminiscent of the early Point Horrors and features a very creepy little doll in the main role. A must for teens who will look at their own childhood toy collections in a very different way after this!



### **White Out** **Gabriel Dylan**

When this school ski trip goes wrong, it really goes

wrong. Students will love that the teachers are the first to bite it, leaving the cast of teens to fend for themselves when they're snowed into their resort with some, erm, undesirable company...

challenge is moving to a new school, or facing off against a newly-minted vampire...

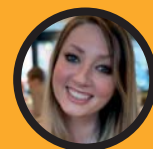
### **A perfect bridge**

Therein lies the real magic of horror fiction. Horror novels often involve taking a pacy, breakneck journey through the life of someone who is (probably) having a worse time than the reader. The books themselves tend to present a vivid form of escapism and are structured in short chapters that typically conclude with cliffhanger endings. If your reluctant teen readers balk at the idea of picking up a novel about windswept Regency darlings, then one or two thrilling chapters of the latest YA could be just the thing to whet their appetites – all the more so if the subject matter appears more mature in content.

Kat Ellis, author of *Harrow Lake*, sums up this

latter point particularly well: "Horror is a perfect bridge between fiction for young readers and adults, and gives readers that same thrill-seeking experience as riding a roller coaster. Who doesn't want that in a book?"

So don't be scared to put the latest blood-curdling YA title under the nose of a student who has proclaimed all books to be 'boring'. It just might be their gateway to a lifelong love of reading...



### **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

Cynthia Murphy is a YA writer from the North-West of England, though her 'real job' is in education; her debut novel, *Last One to Die* (Scholastic, £7.99), is due for publication on 7th January 2021; for more information, visit [cynthiamurphy.co.uk](http://cynthiamurphy.co.uk) or follow @onetiredwriter

**Save  
40%**  
when you  
buy direct

# Practise makes progress



Foundation 9781382006934  
Higher 9781382006941



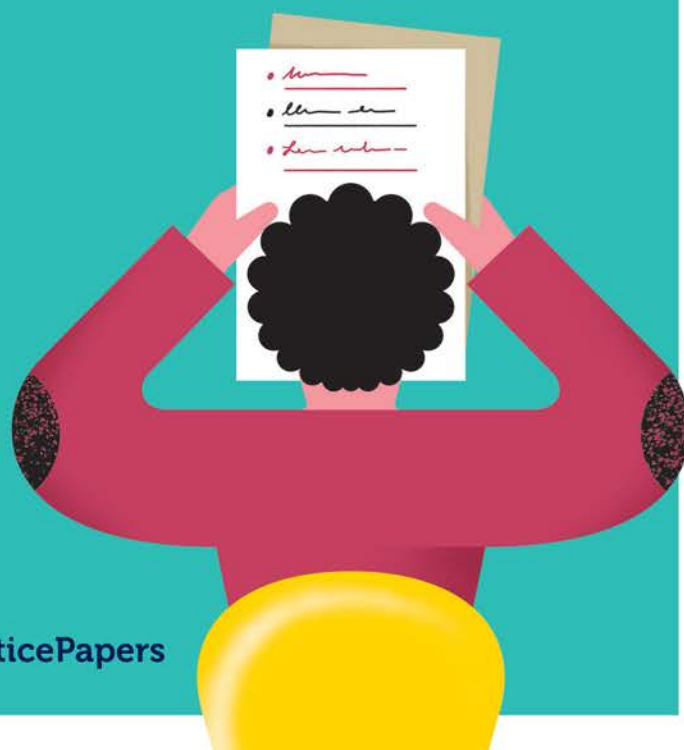
Foundation 9781382007030  
Higher 9781382007047



Foundation 9781382006989  
Higher 9781382006996

Each write-in book contains three sets of exam papers in the style of the AQA exams, plus model answers with commentary.

- Help students practise all four exam skills
- Build confidence in how to approach questions
- Demonstrate how to give good answers





# Make MFL meaningful

Having trouble with KS3 students tuning out during MFL lessons? **Steve Smith** suggests trying a fresh, more bold approach to building their confidence in speaking and listening

One of the main challenges facing MFL teachers is the reluctance exhibited by many KS3 pupils to engage with communicating in a new language. This can partly be explained by the prevalent attitudes to other languages and cultures we see in some communities, as well as the dominance of English as a world language, but a growing number of MFL departments are overcoming reticence and improving students' confidence and skill by experimenting with innovative methods.

Among these is the use of sentence builder tables, knowledge organisers or a combination of both as tools for developing confidence in listening and speaking from an early stage. After many years of approaches that have discouraged the use of English in lessons, these tools make a virtue of showing pupils English translations in an effort to make things more meaningful to them. This is important, since many pupils can rapidly switch off upon encountering incomprehensible language.

One of the research fundamentals of language learning is that we need to understand messages in order for the brain to process a new language. Put another way, comprehensible input is the bedrock of second language acquisition.

When language is presented in

phrases or full sentences alongside English translations, there's no barrier to understanding. Everything becomes transparent, and pupils aren't limited to responding in single words or short phrases – a frustrating experience for learners who want to speak in sentences.

## A typical lesson

A printed or displayed resource will serve as the basis for a range of classroom tasks, such as whole class repetition and reading aloud, paired reading, phonics and reading aloud games, translation, comprehension and guided writing. The stress is initially on language input, with compositional writing only emerging later on once pupils have recycled the target language on numerous occasions over a number of lessons.

Lessons may be quite teacher-led, or feature a good deal of paired practice. MFL lessons can generally end up being quite noisy, but also highly productive, with lots of listening and speaking.

A rigorous focus on accurate

pronunciation builds phonics skills, which help to produce not just more confident speakers, but also more effective listeners. To retrieve words in the stream of sound, learners will, after all, need to have a clear phonological memory of the words and phrases in the target language. Of note is the fact that lesson plans from the National Centre for Excellence for Language Pedagogy website ([ncelp.org](http://ncelp.org)) make extensive use of both phonics practice and translation.

When pupils are speaking and listening a great deal, however, there may be a relative dearth of written evidence to show observers, particularly in the first year. It's therefore incumbent upon MFL teachers to explain how their methodology is underpinned by second language acquisition theory and cognitive science. The latter will likely include the importance of comprehensible input, phonological working memory, phonics awareness and chunking language repeatedly to maximise the efficient use of working memory – alongside spacing and interleaving, for building long-term memory.

## WHAT MAKES FOR AN EFFECTIVE CHUNKING APPROACH?

- More focus on phrases and sentences, less on individual words
- Keeping everything transparent and comprehensible
- Rigour combined with fun
- Efficient use of phonological working memory
- Spaced repetition to build long-term memory
- Grammar taught 'after the event'
- A curriculum-led communicative need, rather than topic or grammar

Evidence from schools suggests that phonological, phonics and pronunciation skills developed early on provide a firm foundation on which to develop more creative use of language.

Allowing pupils to frequently work with phrases and full sentences reflects how we acquire our first languages, whilst also giving pupils the means to work confidently with a repertoire of useful language. Evidence from many happy MFL classrooms suggests that revised schemes of work have made a real mark.



### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Steve Smith is an MFL teacher, author and teacher educator. Latest book: 50 Lesson Plans for French Teachers; for more information, visit [frenchteachernet.blogspot.com](http://frenchteachernet.blogspot.com) or follow @spsmith45



# CALLING ALL TEACHERS

# 3 ISSUES FOR £6\*

## IF YOU SUBSCRIBE TO TEACH SECONDARY TODAY!



Teach Secondary's mission is simple: to help you become the best teacher you can be. Packed with evidence-based advice, simple strategies and free resources to boost student progress and reduce your workload, every issue is designed to support your career progression... and make your busy schedule that little bit easier!



## SUBSCRIBE ONLINE OR BY PHONE

[www.teachsecondary.com/9220](http://www.teachsecondary.com/9220)

**T: 0800 904 7000**

**Quote: 9220**

\*Terms and conditions apply. See online for details.



# THE TS GUIDE TO... INTERVENTIONS

Timely, targeted well-evidenced interventions can keep students' attainment on track - so what really works when it comes to supporting students of all abilities to achieve their full potential?

## IN THIS SECTION

### 58 WE CAN'T BE REACTIVE

To prevent children with SEND being bullied, says Professor Adam Boddison, we must stop reacting and create a culture where no child feels like the 'odd one out'.

### 61 MIND THE GAP

Poorer pupils are nine months of learning behind by the end of Y6 and even before the pandemic, the gap was getting bigger.

### 62 MASKING THE PROBLEM

Nearly every child's learning has suffered over the past year, but how many of us are truly aware of the challenges deaf students have faced?

### 67 MAKE IT PERSONAL

Though students may at times be physically remote, we must make sure we don't lose sight of individual children's learning and progress, says Vanessa Leach.



### Free research-based guide to closing the gap

Exclusively from Renaissance, Focus Skills are the building blocks of student learning. Based on research into how learning progresses in reading and mathematics, Focus Skills provides a roadmap for closing learning gaps. Now, for the first time, Renaissance Learning is offering schools free access to Focus Skills from the Learning Progressions built by experts at NFER. Download the free teacher guide at [renlearn.co.uk/focus-skills](https://renlearn.co.uk/focus-skills)

## IN FIGURES: BIGGEST IMPACT EEF INTERVENTIONS

### +8 months

Feedback studies tend to show very high effects on learning. However, it also has a very high range of effects and some studies show that feedback can have negative effects and make things worse.

### +7 months

Metacognition and self-regulation strategies are usually more effective when taught in collaborative groups so that learners can support each other and make their thinking explicit through discussion.

### +6 months

There is extensive evidence to support reading comprehension interventions from a range of studies over the last 30 years. The majority of studies are from the USA and focus on pupils aged between 8 and 18.

**3** FREE LESSON PLANS  
FOR YOUR SCHOOL

### IMPROVE HAND-EYE COORDINATION (KS3/4 PE)

Learn how to use the 'speed square' activity to develop a range of fitness and skill components for KS3/4, with links to GCSE and A Level practical performance descriptors for games activities. This example focuses on football, but the concept can be adapted to any game that involves travelling, sending and receiving, and will develop teamwork and resilience for all ages and abilities.

DOWNLOAD AT: [bit.ly/101special1](https://bit.ly/101special1)

### CALCULATING ANGLES IN A PIE CHART (KS3 MATHS)

This is something that students will often learn in a mechanical fashion, and as a consequence, become confused over when to multiply or divide, and where the '360' is supposed to go. In this lesson, students build up to these calculations from simple examples. The aim is to work with students' understanding of the situation, rather than with meaningless rules.

DOWNLOAD AT: [bit.ly/101special2](https://bit.ly/101special2)

### THE BATTLE OF HASTINGS (KS3 HISTORY)

Use the battles of Stamford Bridge and Hastings in 1066 to deliver skills in comparative analysis, evaluative thinking and summarising strategies and tactics. Y7 students are also reminded of the conceptual links their work is making between English and science and together, these three curriculum subjects contribute to the overall task, which is to answer the driving question - 'Is strategy and tactical thinking more valuable than respiration or love?'

DOWNLOAD AT: [bit.ly/101special3](https://bit.ly/101special3)

# WE CAN'T BE REACTIVE

To prevent children with SEND being bullied, says **Professor Adam Boddison**, we must stop reacting and create a culture where no child feels like the 'odd one out'

All children are at risk of bullying, but we should be especially concerned about pupils with SEND (special educational needs and/or disabilities). Not only are they at least twice as likely to be bullied as those without SEND, but the consequences of bullying are also likely to be more acute.

While schools have a moral responsibility to prevent bullying in general, the Equality Act 2010 also introduced a legal responsibility to ensure that those with protected characteristics, including SEND, are not discriminated against in the form of bullying.

A review of the evidence into bullying conducted by the Education Policy Institute (EPI) in 2018 (<https://bit.ly/3nKdXCm>) suggests that around two in five pupils experience bullying and it is perhaps

unsurprising that cyberbullying is becoming increasingly prominent within these statistics.

While bullying has traditionally taken the form of physical or verbal abuse, it is important to be aware of other forms of bullying. Cyberbullying in particular may be harder to identify in our schools, but it likely affects a significant proportion of pupils.

The anti-bullying organisation Bullying UK (<https://bit.ly/2GZJ382>) suggests that almost two thirds of people have reported receiving nasty private messages via apps on their smartphones with 91 per cent of those reporting cyberbullying stating that no action was taken. Whilst this data is for society in general, it has direct relevance to schools, given the rising use of smart phones by school-aged children.

Similarly, the types of bullying that occur may differ according to cultural and socio-economic backgrounds as well as gender. The EPI research report stated that bullying between girls is more likely to be indirect and to take the form of, say, social isolation than physical aggression.

Given the relative under-identification of SEND in girls in comparison to boys (<https://bit.ly/3iUqNdJ>), the increased likelihood of bullying for learners

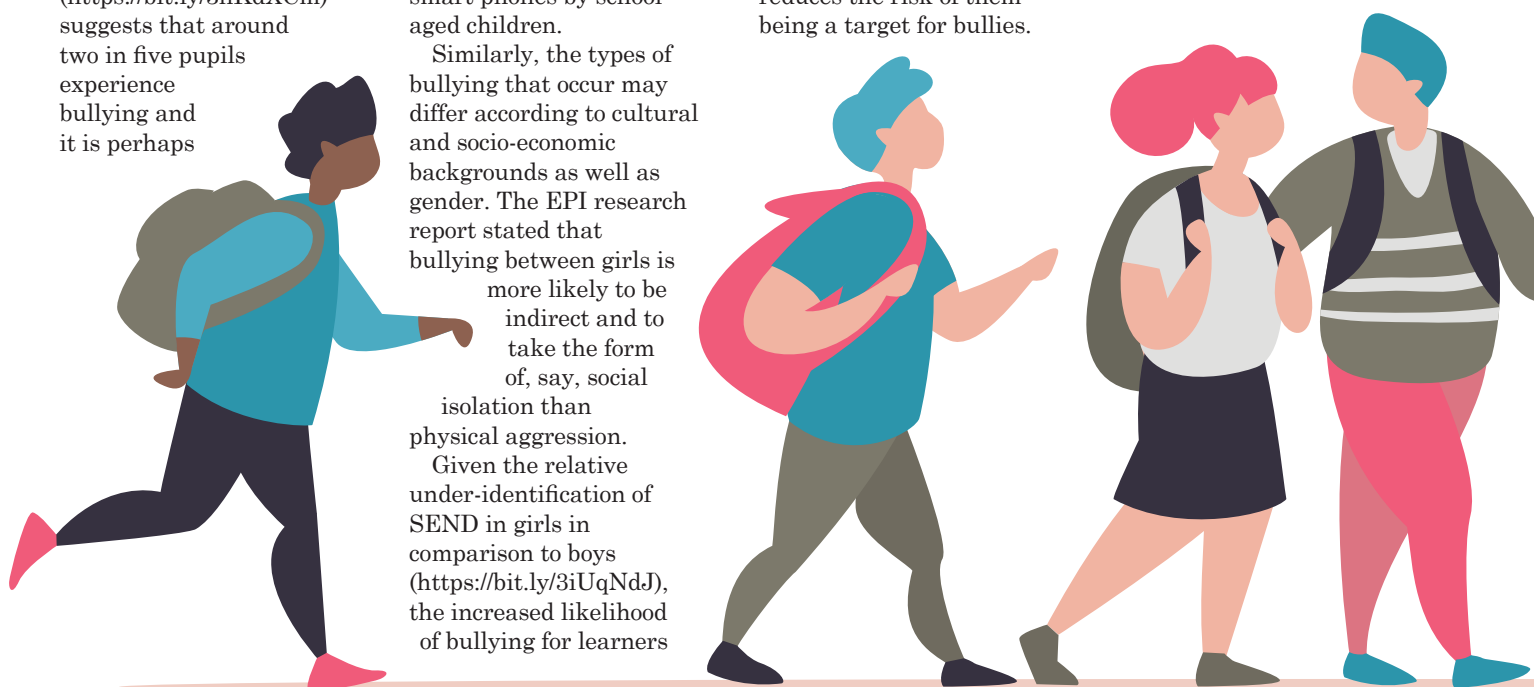
with SEND and the potential increased severity of the impact of bullying for learners with SEND, schools should ensure they have appropriate mechanisms in place to protect girls with SEND from bullying.

## Creating an ethos of inclusion

There are many schools that are effective at creating a culture where bullying in general is minimised, but also where preventing the bullying of pupils with SEND is a particular focus. This is achieved by proactive rather than reactive strategies that seek to encourage an ethos of inclusion. By actively promoting inclusion, schools can prevent individual children from being excluded and feeling like the 'odd one out', which reduces the risk of them being a target for bullies.

A key part of the proactive approach to creating an inclusive school environment is helping children and young people to understand the impact of the terminology they are using, irrespective of whether it is being used intentionally for bullying. For example, expressions such as 'it was mental', 'what a retard' or 'are you blind?' can sometimes be used as part of casual interactions between children without them really understanding the offence of such expressions to others. An effective pastoral programme in school can help to tackle the ignorance that exists amongst pupils, so that unintended consequences are significantly reduced.

One of the consequences of bullying is the potential negative impact on pupils'





SEMH (social, emotional and mental health), which is itself one of the four broad areas of needs as per the Children and Families Act 2014.

For learners with SEND who are being bullied, this adds a further complexity to their individual needs, which will make it more challenging (and potentially more expensive) for schools to put effective provision in place. For learners without SEND, this means that bullying can effectively create additional needs, adding further pressure to a system that is already at breaking point.

### Whole school approaches for all pupils

Whilst the therapeutic focus in schools may understandably be on those learners with SEND who are being bullied, it is important not to forget about other pupils. For example, the EPI research suggests that

bullies are more likely to come from challenging home circumstances, so they may have their own SEMH or attachment needs that should be supported by the school.

Universal provision that is put in place to support the needs of all pupils should be a key priority for SENCOs. It could be thought of as a rising tide of support that lifts all pupils.

Another important group of pupils are the bystanders; those who are witnesses to bullying occurring. The Finnish anti-bullying programme Kiva (<https://bit.ly/2GSJgu3>) has a significant focus on enabling bystanders to effectively remove the power base from those who are bullying others. This shifts bullying away from being about victims and perpetrators to being about the school community more broadly.

The approach to SEND in England is moving from being based on a medical

## STRATEGIES TO REDUCE BULLYING

- Ensure that SEND anti-bullying interventions are weighted towards bystander training and restorative justice, rather than zero-tolerance behaviour policies.
- Preventing the bullying of learners with SEND is the responsibility of the entire school community. Review the prominence of anti-bullying content within staff and volunteer training and family communication. In particular, check that form tutors, teaching assistants and families have a consistent understanding of how to respond to reports of bullying as they are more likely than most to be the first adults that children speak to when there is an issue.
- Given the rise of cyberbullying, school leaders should ensure that social media policies and other IT policies are sufficiently robust.
- Pastoral leaders should check that PHSE arrangements are adequate to proactively listen to pupils with SEND to check they are not being bullied.

model of disability to a social model of disability. The medical model is premised on the concept that a person with SEND needs to be 'improved' or 'cured' through medical, social or educational interventions. The social model focuses more on the environmental barriers to participation and how these can be removed or reduced, including through wider societal change. The anti-bullying focus on bystanders is closely aligned to the social model on the basis that changes to the wider school environment can reduce exclusion.

This means that children with SEND are less likely to be seen as different, so are less likely to be the target of bullying.

In the current context of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is important to be aware that some of the measures that schools might typically have in place to support anti-bullying may not be operating as usual. This comes at a time when significant numbers of children will be under increased emotional strain having experienced bereavement or other family pressures such as job losses. SENCOs should consider casting their supportive net wider than usual during this time of unprecedented challenge for children with SEND.



#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Professor Adam Boddison is the Chief Executive of nasen. From January 2021, free nasen membership will be available for all individuals. Visit [www.nasen.org.uk/membership](http://www.nasen.org.uk/membership) for further information.

**“By actively promoting inclusion, schools can prevent individual children from being excluded and feeling like the ‘odd one out’”**



# Identify attainment and knowledge gaps

WITH STAR READING



## TEST



Screen an entire class  
with 20-minute computer  
adaptive tests

## TRACK



Instant reports to identify  
pupils from intervention  
to mastery

## TEACH



Personalise instruction  
with resources aligned  
to targeted skills



Star Reading has helped teachers to monitor progress by  
observing students' change of reading age as well as looking  
at how strong they are in the different components of reading.

– New Barn School

RENAISSANCE  
**Star Reading**

Visit [renlearn.co.uk/reading-gaps](https://renlearn.co.uk/reading-gaps)  
to find out more!



# Mind the gap

Poorer pupils are nine months of learning behind by the end of Y6 and even before the pandemic, the gap was getting bigger

2020 was a year like no other. Teachers and schools have responded to the many challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, often going above and beyond to deliver pupils' education. But in spite of the herculean efforts of those working in the education system, we know that all the disruption of last year is highly likely to result in lost learning for children.

Pupils from more disadvantaged backgrounds will be facing the biggest hurdles, given they are likely to have been hit the hardest by school closures. Evidence shows that during lockdown, more affluent pupils are more likely to have had teacher interaction through remote classes, personal tutoring, and a home environment that is more conducive to learning. The ongoing pandemic has exposed many things in this country – not least the extent of educational inequality. But these inequalities are by no means a new development; we know that the learning gap between rich and poor pupils was already a growing problem even before COVID-19 struck the education system.

## Annual report

Each year in an annual report, Education Policy Institute researchers look at the 'disadvantage gap' – the gap in school attainment between poorer pupils and the rest. Our report, published in August 2020, found that last year, disadvantaged children were over a year and a half of learning behind their better off peers by the end

of secondary school. What is perhaps more disturbing is that on the eve of the pandemic this gap between rich and poor pupils had actually begun to widen: social mobility had started to go into reverse gear.

Inequalities are evident early on in a child's life, and grow as they make their way through the education system. Even in primary schools, these gaps are large: our research found that poorer pupils in primary are already over nine months of learning behind at the end of Y6 – and that gap has now got bigger for the first time since 2007. In recent decades, policies from different governments designed to tackle inequalities in education had seemingly helped to narrow this gap. But in the last few years, this progress has gradually ground to a halt.

What exactly is driving this concerning trend? While we can't say exactly from our

latest findings, there are several big clues. One of these is the rise in the proportion of children that are in long-term, persistent poverty. These pupils have some of the biggest learning gaps and, on average, trail more affluent pupils in school attainment by as much as two years by the end of secondary. Because this group is now on the rise, and they have the biggest gaps, it's causing the overall education gap between rich and poor to rise.

## Pivotal role

It's also likely that several years of austerity and welfare reforms have a part to play. The rate of per-pupil school funding has fallen in real terms over the last decade. It is for precisely this reason that we cannot expect teachers and schools to deal with these deep-seated, national problems, as is sometimes implied. Schools have a pivotal role to play in

improving outcomes – particularly for the most vulnerable pupils – but we cannot expect the school system to continually pick up the slack, and deal with what is clearly a wider, societal problem.

Teachers have the power to play a transformational role in individual pupils' lives, but they are now faced with a rising tide of deprivation at a national level. It's here where we need to see changes. The government urgently needs to prioritise closing the disadvantage gap. This means reassessing funding to ensure that the most disadvantaged pupils are given the support they need. It also means a wider programme that confronts the root causes of inequalities in education, especially persistent poverty.

We are now facing a critical moment for children's life chances, with COVID-19 having exacerbated a whole host of deeply ingrained problems. We must follow the evidence and act decisively to stem the rising levels of disadvantage, or risk wiping out decades of progress in narrowing the gap and improving outcomes for the poorest children.

**“We cannot expect the school system to continually pick up the slack, and deal with what is clearly a wider, societal problem”**



## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Natalie Perera (@natalieperera1) is executive director of the Education Policy Institute (epi.org.uk).

# MASKING THE PROBLEM

Nearly every child's learning has suffered over the past year, but how many of us are truly aware of the challenges deaf students have faced?



**H**ave you met a deaf person before? With nine million across England, you probably have, even without knowing. But how about a deaf child? Possibly not. So you might not know there are 45,000 in England alone, or that they're currently facing the challenge of their educational lifetimes.

Deaf children battle many misconceptions. They're born deaf, use sign language, go to deaf schools and can't hear any sound, right? Actually, for most deaf children, this isn't true. Only half are born deaf.

More than 75 per cent go to mainstream schools. Just one in 10 use sign language in school. The vast majority can access some sound, often through hearing technology.

Most people understandably don't know much about deafness. We're working on that. The problem is, schools often don't have any deaf pupils, so their knowledge is limited too. When a deaf child arrives, this needs to change fast. Most deaf children get support at school. Deafness itself isn't a learning disability, so they should achieve the same as their hearing classmates.

However, gaps in this support mean too many deaf children underachieve throughout school. On average, they achieve an entire grade less at GCSE. They're less likely to get A-Levels, go to university or find a job.

During COVID-19, things could get even worse. As a charity, we work to give teachers the tools to support deaf children. So at this difficult time, this is what good support looks like.

## When to wear facemasks

Almost all deaf children rely on lip reading and fight an exhausting daily battle to

understand their teachers and classmates. Face masks have made that even harder, leaving some deaf children reluctant to go to school. Others come home in tears.

Government guidelines don't recommend face masks in class, but our research shows half of deaf children in secondary schools have teachers wearing them. Schools need to make sure their deaf pupils can understand in class, so before changes are made, they must hold discussions with specialist teachers, parents and deaf children themselves. Together, they can identify and meet a deaf child's needs.



Government advice also allows face masks to be temporarily removed when communicating with deaf people. Where this isn't possible, clear face masks will work for many deaf children.

Sadly, there is no catch-all solution for this huge challenge, but with tailored support and reasonable adjustments, teachers can help deaf children understand their lessons.

## “On average, deaf children achieve an entire grade less at GCSE”

### Learning from specialist staff

Teachers of the Deaf are vital for deaf children, and a key part of their role is advising schools on teaching deaf pupils.

Given the classroom time lost this year, deaf children face a huge battle to catch up. Teachers of the Deaf must be consulted regularly to make sure the learning environment works for deaf pupils, particularly when they're moving classrooms every lesson.

Where necessary, in line with government guidelines, Teachers of the Deaf must be allowed to visit schools or provide support remotely. Where schools or college provide catch-up support and tuition, Teachers of the Deaf must be involved too, particularly where staff haven't worked with deaf pupils before.

With a tailored and accessible catch-up program, deaf children can still achieve their potential.

### Offering radio aids

A radio aid broadcasts the wearer's voice to a receiver, which clips onto a deaf child's hearing technology. It means they get their teacher's voice straight to their ear, making it much easier to hear.

Many deaf children need one and we're expecting the number to increase during COVID-19. Local authorities and schools need to work together to provide this technology.

Some schools are withholding radio aids because of COVID-19 hygiene concerns, although they likely carry no more risk than other school equipment. Many children aren't allowed to take them

home, making remote learning or conversations with family difficult to understand.

This needs to change. Teachers can clean radio aids in the same way as mobile phones, without damaging them. Local authorities can work with schools and Teachers of the Deaf to identify who needs a radio aid and let children take them home.

Although minor, these changes would make a massive difference to deaf children's lives.

### Remote learning

Setting up remote learning has been a major challenge for schools. There may be no alternative in some areas, particularly in local lockdowns or when pupils are self-isolating, so deaf children must be considered in this. There are simple things that teachers can do to make remote learning deaf-friendly, but we know of many cases where it's been inappropriate or inaccessible for deaf students.

Schools are required to make reasonable adjustments so deaf students can access remote teaching and online learning, such as subtitling software, British Sign Language translation and

### She was in tears two days running

Kate lives in Nottinghamshire. Her daughter Anna, 11, has progressive hearing loss. She uses hearing aids and relies on lip reading too. When Anna started secondary school, there was lots of communication with the school and specialist staff, but Kate says they couldn't give clarity on face mask use and they weren't sure if her radio aid could be passed round teaching staff.

### By week two, some teachers were already wearing masks, including her tutor

“She came out of school in tears two days running as she hadn't understood anything in tutor time. I've asked if she could give Anna notes on what she was talking to the class about.”

### In the classroom, pupils now have to face forward.

“Anna sits at the front, but in a class discussion when someone behind her speaks, she's not allowed to turn and lip read. We're trying to educate the teachers to repeat questions, but it's a hard slog.”

“The school also experimented with captions on video work, but ran into problems and Anna was told that the rest of the class needed to hear. They were removed. A couple of teachers use clear visors, which is better, but then the light hits it and it's impossible to lip read. Her radio aid can also sound muffled by a mask or visor.”

### We're now taking her to and from school

“Face masks on the school bus mean she can't interact with her friends. Compulsory masks in communal areas of the school also really limit the interaction she gets at break time, on top of the problem of untangling her mask and hearing aids.”

### We worry about her education suffering

“But I suppose the bigger picture is as long as everyone stays healthy we'll be OK. I think many young people will have mental health effects from this, not just our deaf young people. The added isolation is hard for them.”

video calls with support staff. They also need to consider whether families have access to technology at home, and whether features such as voice recognition captions are enabled.

The challenges created by COVID-19 have been unprecedented. Teachers and schools are battling on admirably, but we cannot rest. No deaf child should struggle on alone, particularly when their education, mental health and life chances are on the line. So we'd ask all schools to discuss the changes they make with deaf children and their families. By involving a Teacher of the Deaf or

their Local Authority Specialist Education Service, they'll be equipped with expert advice too.

By working together, we can all make sure no deaf child is ever left behind. More resources, including our helpline and blogs on these topics, are available on our website ([ndcs.org.uk](https://ndcs.org.uk)).



**ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

Ian Noon is head of policy at the National Deaf Children's Society.

# Award-winning online tool to help identify learning difficulties and behavioural difficulties for ages 4–16



Special Needs Assessment Profile

**£199+VAT**  
1-year subscription

*SNAP* is an online diagnostic assessment that profiles 17 behavioural difficulties and 20 specific learning difficulties which, without identification, may limit a student's potential to learn.

*SNAP* follows the **Assess – Plan – Do – Review** model, as set out in the SEND Code of Practice (2014), so pupil assessments can be administered by any member of staff without the need for additional training.

## Assess

Online questionnaires to help identify 20 specific learning difficulties and 17 social, emotional and behavioural difficulties.

Learn more at [hoddereducation.co.uk/snap](https://hoddereducation.co.uk/snap)





**“SNAP is designed to fit with the systems of identification and assessment that all schools have. The detailed information gathered will help to provide appropriate responses to learners’ needs, along with useful suggestions for classroom interventions. Its assessment will help schools to move from subjective concerns to purposeful actions.”**

Teach Secondary Awards

## Plan



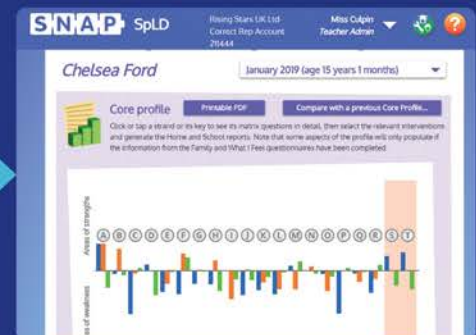
Instant online reports show a student’s strengths and weaknesses at a glance.

## Do



Interventions and strategies are suggested to be used by teachers in school and at home by parents/carers.

## Review



Reassess to track a student’s progress and demonstrate the impact of chosen interventions.





The original and comprehensive  
PSHE Scheme of Work  
for 11-16 year olds

*Comprehensive coverage of  
PSHE/Health and Well-Being*

- Fulfills statutory Relationships, Sex and Health Education
- Easy-to-use lesson plans
- Flexible delivery model
- Excellent for non-specialist teachers

Download our  
**FREE**  
Recovery Pack  
supporting students in  
the pandemic  
[www.jigsawpshe.com/  
recovery/11-16](http://www.jigsawpshe.com/recovery/11-16)

*Includes*

- Mental health and resilience
- Personal development
- Mindfulness philosophy and practice
- Development of 'employability skills'
- Full Assessment process

New prices  
proportionate  
to number  
of students

Resource  
endorsed by

**ncfe.**

*Supports*

- Safeguarding and Prevent agendas
- SMSC, British values and Ofsted outcomes
- Emotional Literacy development

Book onto one of our **FREE**  
Taster webinars to learn more  
2nd Feb, 3rd Feb, 9th Feb,  
11th Feb, 23rd Feb 4-4.30pm  
See [www.jigsawpshe.com](http://www.jigsawpshe.com)  
for details and how to book your place



# Make it PERSONAL

Though students may at times be physically remote, we must make sure we don't lose sight of individual children's learning and progress, says **Vanessa Leach**

**T**here is no simple, one-size-fits-all approach to helping young people catch up on the learning they have missed during the pandemic. Each student will have specific gaps in their knowledge and understanding and will require different approaches to help ensure they do not fall behind even further. A personalised approach is the only way to ensure no student falls through the cracks or is left struggling.

It is often the case that students do not have access to adequate digital devices for online learning and sometimes, there may be family pressures that make it difficult to learn from home effectively. Therefore, it is important to make any key catch-up activities available on the school site, whether during, before, or after school.

Of course, teachers have a heavy workload and there are already so many demands on their time. Utilising digital support, whether this is free online resources, or specialised tutoring through the Government's National Tutoring Programme, is a practical and effective solution. However, it is vital such methods can be personalised to suit a student's individual needs and that progress can be tracked against meaningful learning objectives.

Unfortunately, further disruption from COVID-19 is inevitable over the course of the year, which means more remote learning for many students across the country. This could result in further attainment gaps and



disparity between young people. Although there is no cut-and-dried solution, there are measures that can be taken to safeguard young people from significant learning losses.

The first and most important thing is ensuring students have access to key learning materials. This might be print out resources, or digital devices which enable them to access online learning. However, while access to the proper learning provisions are vital, this will not necessarily guarantee that students are keeping on top of their studies. As such, it is important to offer young people a regular check in, where they can talk through what they are struggling with or discuss their progression. This will help teachers pinpoint where their students' learning might need extra support, and offers a chance to not only give them targeted

advice, but also provide an insight into where the gaps in their education might lie when they return to school.

Secondly, it's important to prepare students ahead of remote learning. Hold a class where you talk through the struggles they faced whilst undertaking remote learning the first time around and discuss different strategies together that can help them overcome this. This might be about how to structure their day so it is more manageable, shorter days and smaller lessons and taking more breaks. Additionally, schools can discuss the importance of mental wellbeing during this time and suggest useful tactics such as breathing exercises, short yoga practises or encouraging students to get outside the house more. Ultimately, if students are equipped with ways to look after their

mental health, their learning will benefit.

Finally, if possible, offering some form of online learning throughout the period of remote learning is one of the most effective ways to ensure education can continue. Online learning, where attendance and progression is monitored, enables teachers to keep track and make sure students are accessing a certain number of hours of learning daily, helping to maintain a standard of education throughout the period of remote learning.

The pandemic has caused incredible disruption for so many young people, and this has been especially devastating for the most disadvantaged children in our society. With many still struggling to catch up, we are potentially facing even more upheaval over the next few months. It is vital that we all work together to make sure young people do not miss out on the futures they dreamed of because of this pandemic. There is no single solution to ensure achievement in this pandemic; however, talking to young people and providing personalised instruction and learning plans is key to beginning this process of closing the attainment gap.



#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Vanessa Leach is managing director of Tute, which has been selected as an official Tuition Partner in the Government's National Tutoring Programme (NTP). Tute's qualified teachers work with schools to plan targeted learning programmes for groups of three students.

*I wish to be a teacher*

**Leah, 7**

Brain tumour

*"Leah is noticeably  
more independent  
since her wish."  
Mum, Elaine*

## Get your whisks and mixing bowls ready!

Hold a Bake-A-Wish fundraising event this term and help grant life-changing wishes for seriously ill children, like Leah.

Get your free Bake-A-Wish fundraising pack today at  
[make-a-wish.org.uk/bakeawish](https://make-a-wish.org.uk/bakeawish)

**Make-A-Wish<sup>®</sup>**  
UNITED KINGDOM

01276 40 50 60  
@MakeAWishUK

Charity Reg Nos. 295672/SC037479



Registered with  
**FUNDRAISING  
REGULATOR**



# Get back on track

Find the gaps in students' learning and get the right support in place fast with these intervention resources



## Jigsaw 11-16

This fresh, teacher-friendly, student-centred, whole-school programme for PSHE meets all of the DfE's statutory requirements for Relationships and Sex Education, and Health Education, as well as being aligned to the Curriculum for Wales and Curriculum for Excellence.

Teaching and learning activities within PowerPoint lesson plans offer challenge and there are six units for each year group, all

of which include a summative assessment workbook to support evidence of learning and progress.

Endorsed by the NCFE, Jigsaw empowers students to understand themselves, stay safe and build and maintain resilience, mental health and positive relationships.

Visit [jigsawpshe.com](http://jigsawpshe.com) to download sample materials and the free Jigsaw Recovery Pack (created to support students during the pandemic). Email [office@janleveragegroup.com](mailto:office@janleveragegroup.com)



## Identify maths gaps

Supported by research conducted by the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) and trusted by over 6,000 schools in the UK and Ireland, Star Maths provides the perfect computer-adaptive online assessment tool. Using sophisticated item calibration and psychometrics to adjust dynamically to each student's unique responses, Star Maths tests can be taken at any time throughout the year and as often as results are required. Screen a class in just 20 minutes to reveal which students need help to reach benchmarks and group children by proficiency levels. To learn more, email [ukanswer@renlearn.co.uk](mailto:ukanswer@renlearn.co.uk) or visit [renlearn.co.uk/maths-gaps](http://renlearn.co.uk/maths-gaps)



## Catch up and consolidate

Justin Craig Education is offering a range of small group and one-to-one courses to support schools and students to consolidate knowledge and gain confidence. The courses have been adapted for online delivery and can be used to help students catch up on missed work or support them with challenging subjects throughout the year.

Just Craig works in tandem with schools to provide tuition in a stimulating, small group environment (a maximum of eight students per class) with six hour sessions spread over whole or half days. All classes are delivered by experience and qualified teachers (with enhanced DBS checks) and are available weekends or weekdays. Visit

[justincraig.ac.uk](http://justincraig.ac.uk) or call 01727 744340.



## Support for science

With the disruption to schooling over recent months, Pearson knows that the priority for teachers has been to get learners safely back into classrooms and labs. To support schools in this endeavour, it has created a suite of resources to help students bounce back, rebuild their confidence and consolidate their learning.

The catch up package includes the Pearson Tutoring Programme, 2020 Revision packs, and the free Pearson Revise app. To find out more about the full range, visit the catch up section of the Pearson website. [pearson.com/uk](http://pearson.com/uk)



## Special needs assessments

SNAP (Special Needs Assessment Profile) is an award-winning, online diagnostic assessment to help identify 17 behavioural difficulties and 20 specific learning difficulties.

The new online edition of SNAP has an easy-to-use design, following the Assess - Plan - Do - Review model, as set out in the SEND Code of Practice (2014), so pupil assessments can be administered by any member of staff without the need for additional training.

SNAP offers a triangulated approach by involving teachers, parents/carers and the pupil to capture a complete overview of a student's strengths and weaknesses.

Targeted interventions and suggested strategies are designed to be combined with approaches already used in school and at home to offer an entirely rounded approach.

# teachwire

YOUR LINK TO THE BEST IN EDUCATION

## Quick & easy uploads



Have you ever devised...

- A memorable secondary activity?
- Any behaviour or assessment strategies that have helped save valuable time?
- An effective approach to engaging with parents?

If so, Teachwire's resource archive is now open for submissions from secondary teachers with creative and inspirational ideas.

Share yours at  
**[teachwire.net/teaching-resources/submit-a-resource](https://teachwire.net/teaching-resources/submit-a-resource)**



# FOCUS ON: EdTech

The necessity of remote learning has brought education technology to the fore once again. In this issue, we take a look at what can and should be possible

**We might all be using technology in schools, but are we using it to its full potential?**

## THE AGENDA:

### **72 UK STUDENTS WILL BE LEFT BEHIND IN 10 YEARS**

Tech CEO Lady Marième Jamme shares her thoughts on how STEM is currently being taught, and why coding isn't catching among students in the way it should be.

### **74 BRINGING ART ONLINE**

We might feel we know our way around a Zoom call, but when it comes to visual media, we've yet to explore the creative possibilities that technology offers.

### **78 THE TIMES TABLES ARE A CHANGING**

If we want to properly prepare students for life in the 21st century, we'll need to place greater emphasis on personalised learning, says Professor Rupert Ward.

### **81 WE MUST PRESSURE THE GOVERNMENT**

Teachers have a vital role to play in pushing for greater online protection for students, says Charlotte Aynsley.



# “10 years from now, UK students will be left behind”

Tech CEO **Lady Marième Jamme** shares her thoughts on how STEM is currently being taught, and why coding isn't catching among students in the way it should be...

I didn't go to school. I began to read and write from around the age of 16, then quickly moved on to reading intensively, before gradually getting into mathematics. Without a formal education, however, I struggled to get a job in my 20s because I didn't have the necessary credentials. Where I could, I would work cleaning jobs in hotels and restaurants during the day, before visiting my local library in the afternoons and evenings.

It was my difficulties at securing jobs that first inspired me to learn how to code. I immersed myself in basic coding skills, and just as I had with reading, began studying code much more intensively and eventually picked up seven different coding languages in two years.

## A coding conundrum

Years later, I now wear two hats – I'm a software developer and coder, and also run a UK software company called Spotone Global Solutions which sells educational platforms, and supplies chain management software and enterprise resource planning solutions to government, private sector and charitable organisations.

Within the last couple of years I've begun trying to help marginalised girls across the world



**“Those African girls who can code have experience of developing applications for the Android mobile platform, but many girls in the UK aren't even aware that Android exists.”**

without online access, and launched a charity called iamtheCODE, the aim of which is to teach a million women and girls how to code by the year 2030. We're now in 68 countries around the world and have taught

25,000 girls how to code so far.

I gave iamtheCODE a global focus, because I thought the problem of how to interest girls in coding was one you'd find in parts of Africa and South

America, but I've seen just as many issues, if not more, in the UK. Here, the standard narrative is that we can do it all – but if you look at the take-up of coding among girls, what you'll actually find is that girls across South America, Africa, the Middle East and Asia are far better at coding their UK peers.

I've visited public schools and seen girls who have access to all the resources they could want, but little interest in using coding as a creative tool. By contrast, I've met many girls of similar ages in India and Brazil who can code in two or three languages and know all about CSS, JavaScript and more besides.

## Telling a story

Personally, I would put this down to how wider conversations around STEM often overlook the crucial importance of coding to these girls' everyday lives. How did Facebook, Instagram, TikTok and all these huge internet platforms come to exist? They're there because of coding. And yet, approaches to digital skills and innovation in the UK tend to focus mainly on STEM. The messaging, language and narratives that surround STEM does little to get girls excited, but nor is there much talk of why coding is important, what it actually does and how



knowledge of coding can lead to successful careers in the tech sector.

STEM conversations often revolve around 'technology' and 'innovation', and focus far less often on specific areas such as data, statistics, AI, machine learning or big data. Girls are unable to get excited about any of those things, because they barely know what they are.

In my own conversations with girls attending school in the UK, there's little familiarity with this language, but also very few people helping them understand why coding is important. Part of my coding education involved performing tasks with Excel. I was able to recognise and learn how to use the symbols I needed in part by being good at maths, but I wouldn't say that maths made me a coder. I became a coder because I wanted to tell a story.

### Forging links

Something else stopping girls in the UK from making further advances in coding is that we when we talk about 'technology' here, we still tend think of computers first, rather than smartphones. Those African girls who can code have experience of developing applications for the Android mobile platform, but many girls in the UK aren't even aware that Android exists. (There's also the fact that online access is widespread in the UK; in countries with more limited access, the ability to build applications that can run on an Android device without an internet connection is very helpful).

Education around coding could be improved by making clearer links between programming languages, the online platforms students are familiar with and what it takes to create them. What



language would you need to know in order to help maintain BBC iPlayer, YouTube or Instagram? When giving lectures at schools and universities, I'll spend some time discussing the differences between a frontend and a backend, and what the role of a user interface designer might involve versus an engineer who will spend most of their time working with a platform's underlying code.

Coding can sometimes be presented in a way that attempts to make it look easy, but coding is often complicated and requires discipline. When coding is taught appropriately, girls and boys alike will need to properly apply themselves.

That said, the tools used to teach coding are now much more streamlined and accessible than they once were. It's possible for aspiring programmers to build their first applications within just two to three days using drag and drop design interfaces that are now commonplace, but we mustn't lose sight of how the core fundamentals of coding ultimately require

some understanding of STEM subjects, as well as art and design when it comes to user interfaces.

### Moving forward

We haven't sufficiently invested in developing the knowledge and skills of girls and boys in marginalised communities. I've been making regular donations of computer equipment to my local library, which is facing closure. I came to the UK as a broken 16-year-old girl, having had a terrible childhood. I had no mum and dad, no experience of formal education, but from going to the library I was able to learn how to read and write in a safe space where I could immerse myself in books. That saved my life.

If we want to move forward from where we are, then we need to invest in teachers. Let's develop their digital skills and have the confidence and honesty to explain what programming languages actually are, so that students, and young girls in particular, can develop ambitions to build

applications one day, and know what they need to do to get there.

Without that, we'll be wasting our time. If nothing changes, then 10 years from now UK students will be left behind by their peers in Africa, Asia and the Middle East, because the girls I've seen in those parts of the world are serious. They're the ones who'll be running tomorrow's equivalent of Google. If the UK genuinely wants to produce the next Mark Zuckerberg, Amazon rival or multimillion dollar tech company, then starting now, we need to give our young people a better understanding of not just the business that surrounds STEM, but also the software and hardware that drives it.



#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Lady Marième Jammé is the Founder of iamtheCODE.org. You can hear her speak on The Good Business Festival's Reinventing Business Through Inclusion panel at <https://thegoodbusinessfestival.com/on-demand/>. For more details, visit [iamthecode.org](http://iamthecode.org) or follow @mjamme

# BRINGING *Art Online*

We might feel we know our way around a Zoom call, but when it comes to visual media, we've yet to explore the creative possibilities that technology offers

I'm a regular user of tech, though it is mostly standard fare and, for me, COVID-19 led to tweaks rather than leaps in my practice. At Ludlow Sixth Form College, where I am head of Visual Arts, Media and Film, we had to embrace the various image editing programs used by students, and the loss of formal work experience was replaced by Zoom tutorials – all led by academics, past students and creative employers. We even made a link with Aardman Animations where students formed a focus group panel and reviewed new animations. Because of our rural setting, these are all new connections that will be maintained and relevant to us beyond the pandemic, but it feels like the tip of the iceberg, and I was interested in to find out what more we could be doing in the digital sphere.

## The art of noise

Galleries are always a rich source of ideas and so I spoke to Rosny Hayward, learning officer at Nottingham City Museums and Galleries, who has developed projects that blur creative and technologic boundaries.

"We create workshops and lessons that are born out of our exhibitions and collections, so as artists make increasing use of technology, we have looked

to mirror this in our schools' programme," she told me. One key artist is Jason Singh whose practice explores the electrical impulses of plants – responses to their environment such as the moving sun or the sudden appearance of a hungry caterpillar. "In response we devised a lesson where pupils learnt about these natural electrical impulses," said Rosny. "We made sculptures of flowers using conductive materials to creating simple circuits and, through a computer, turned these signals into sounds. Students were able to play the sculptures like instruments."

By combining tools from websites such as [makeymakey.com](http://makeymakey.com) and [scratch.mit.edu](http://scratch.mit.edu), your students can create similar interactive, musical pieces of art. If you wanted to make this a cross-curricular project, you could team up with the computer science department so students can complete their own coding.

## How big tech does it

Apple, one of the world's biggest tech companies, opens its website's educational pages

with the line "Every child is born full of creativity. Nurturing it is one of the most important things educators do." It offers teaching tools and lessons in areas such as augmented reality, but perhaps its most interesting offering is the

*Everyone can create* project guides, which cover music, drawing, video and photography. These offer step-by-step exercises, linked to Apple tech, with accompanying teacher notes. Of course, it does tie you in to Apple, but even if





this technology isn't available some of the guides – the drawing one in particular – can be applied to PC use.

## Connect with your peers

Drawing on the resource of large organisations can be incredibly useful, but many of us get our best ideas through connecting with fellow experts in the field – other art teachers.

Andy Ash, an artist, researcher and teacher, through his work with InSea (The International Society for Education Through Art), has been central in connecting teachers across the globe.

In a recent recorded live discussion titled Re-learning, Re-thinking & Re-framing Art Education, InSea showcased many

great examples of remote, tech-supported learning, and great art teaching in general.

I recommend watching the session yourself, but my highlight was Tim Proetle from Wittelbacher Gymnasium, Germany, who presented a range of projects including *The Disease Infiltrates Everyday Life*, looking at the work of Arcimboldo. In this example, students collected items from around their homes and used these to create three-image stories giving a visual interpretation of COVID-19 and ending with the 'COVID monster' being destroyed. The equipment required was not too advanced – a camera, a computer to lay out a photographic triptych and an internet connection – but the results were varied, considered and exciting.

## Always learning

Of course, any use of tech is dependent on access and teacher know-how. There have been many reports of children

unable to access education during lockdown due to a lack of access to laptops and the internet. Compare the UK's patchy provision to Estonia's long-term investment in digital learning and you will see how government priorities deeply affect learning.

Estonia was one of the first countries in the world to classify internet accesses as a human right. With their investment into digital study materials, school management systems and hardware, Estonian children's learning simply moved online when schools closed, with little interruption. One key pre-lockdown idea was to provide online learning during PD days, meaning that when Estonian teachers were in training, so were their students. Within art and design this could be an up-skilling opportunity, with a range of Photoshop exercises to complete, for example. With programmes such as Photoshop, giving students the chance to burrow down the rabbit hole of image editing and come out with results – often not intended by the teacher – can do much to develop their digital craftsmanship.

## Making tech the norm

But schools can't provide all this independently. We need to champion and push for better access and work with outside partners, as Julie Green, CEO of Glasspool, a national charity that awards essential living funds to those in need, knows all too well.

"The days when technology was a luxury for the few has long gone," she reflects. "It is now essential for daily living, to access goods and services and prevent social isolation. At Glasspool Charity Trust, we have seen how COVID-19 has increased digital exclusion, especially for families. Without computers in their homes,

## UPGRADING YOUR ART LESSONS

- Talk to teachers in other departments. Are there collaborative ways of working which might be straightforward, cost effective and completed in house?
- Get in touch with your local gallery or museum and speak to their learning officer. If they don't currently explore tech in art, can they develop a programme alongside you and your school?
- Expand your knowledge of artists using tech in their work. The website [2020.tecart.nl](https://2020.tecart.nl) lists many working in this discipline.
- Students often learn new tech faster than teachers. Can they demonstrate this learning to the group?
- Set up a tech art club. Experiment in a targets and results-free zone as you familiarise yourself with new tech artists and processes.
- Link with outside partners to support tech access at home. See the Learning Foundation and BT's free six-month internet access.
- At the end of the week relax with your own digital arts experience using Creation Theatre's interactive digital shows.

they have struggled to access services and further their children's education, impacting negatively on their lives"

While in the past grants for items such as bedding or furniture might have been the norm, a recognition that digital support is also a central need is emerging. Tech in creative education is no longer an add-on or a gimmick, it should form a key component of some, if not all, of our projects; tech's value in creative education must be championed, with inclusion for all at its heart.



### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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

# Responding to the COVID-19 challenge

School closures during the first national lockdown created mass disruption for teachers and students. In response to the challenges of last year, eduu.school was developed to help meet the needs of disadvantaged learners in danger of being left behind.

eduu.school is an online platform which provides a sequenced thematic curriculum for Key Stage 3, thematic learning linked to GCSE subjects for Key Stage 4, and curated content to support the wider curriculum, including a focus on wellbeing and pastoral support.

## KS3

- **A complete curriculum programme** for English and the Foundation Subjects.
- **Lessons and support for wellbeing**, character education and the wider curriculum.
- **CPD videos and webinars** to support delivery and hybrid learning.

## KS4

- **Thematic units linked to GCSE subjects**, with independent, guided activities.
- **Links and information on related careers**, virtual tours, videos, podcasts and more.
- **Support for wellbeing.**

Choose from a range of resources that mix easily  
with existing plans.

Access free resources at [hoddereducation.co.uk/eduouschool-21](https://hoddereducation.co.uk/eduouschool-21)



# Your flexible online learning platform for Key Stages 1-4

Launching  
Spring 2021

Supporting you in delivering a broad and blended curriculum in-school and remotely with a unique approach to wellbeing; taking care of the curriculum and the student, now and in the future.

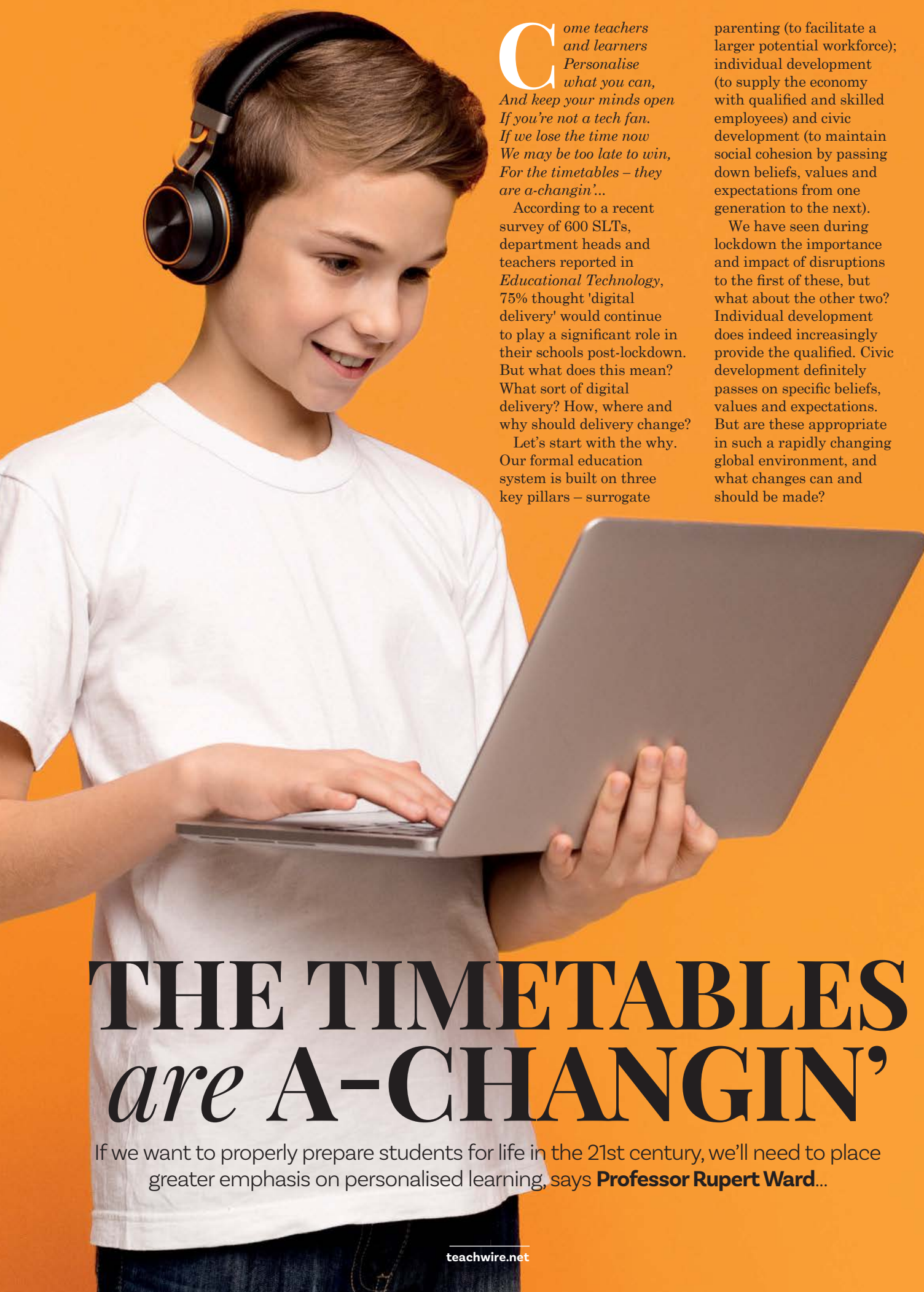
"Our pupils absolutely loved it! It instilled a love of learning, which is really important for our students."

– 2020 Pilot School



eduu.school is a partnership





**C**ome teachers  
and learners  
Personalise  
what you can,  
And keep your minds open  
If you're not a tech fan.  
If we lose the time now  
We may be too late to win,  
For the timetables – they  
are a-changin'...

According to a recent survey of 600 SLTs, department heads and teachers reported in *Educational Technology*, 75% thought 'digital delivery' would continue to play a significant role in their schools post-lockdown. But what does this mean? What sort of digital delivery? How, where and why should delivery change?

Let's start with the why. Our formal education system is built on three key pillars – surrogate

parenting (to facilitate a larger potential workforce); individual development (to supply the economy with qualified and skilled employees) and civic development (to maintain social cohesion by passing down beliefs, values and expectations from one generation to the next).

We have seen during lockdown the importance and impact of disruptions to the first of these, but what about the other two? Individual development does indeed increasingly provide the qualified. Civic development definitely passes on specific beliefs, values and expectations. But are these appropriate in such a rapidly changing global environment, and what changes can and should be made?

# THE TIMETABLES *are* A-CHANGIN'

If we want to properly prepare students for life in the 21st century, we'll need to place greater emphasis on personalised learning, says **Professor Rupert Ward**...



## Civic fissures

In my books *Personalised Learning for the Learning Person* and *Getting Personal: How we learn and why we don't*, I tackle these very issues. There are many educationalists, not least Andreas Schleicher of the OECD, who have highlighted where there needs to be a fundamental shift in education.

Schleicher emphasises the importance of our capacity to live in a multifaceted world as active and engaged citizens. We need to better develop what are broadly termed 21st century skills, with a reduced focus on received wisdom and a greater focus on user-generated wisdom.

One particular area of concern, for example, is group problem solving

educational model. And the way do we do that is by using technology to enable learners to learn better.

## Social learning

In recent years we've seen a huge increase in the number of people getting fit. Why is that? Social trends? Fashion? Influencers? Yes, definitely – but also technology, and through this, improved fitness processes. The tracking of progress enables individuals to gain instant feedback, analyse their performance and exert agency over their exercising.

There has also been an increasing focus on fun activities and sports psychology, accompanied by the growing popularity of social exercising, such as park runs. In short, we're

society, but for all of us individually. Our physical and mental health are inextricably linked to our social environment and how we individually interact and process environmental input. We have to provide students with better capabilities of self-regulation, both as people and as learners. If we want to foster lifelong learning, then we need an educational system which supports, rather than stigmatises; which enables and expects differential progress, without seeing this as failure.

## The big iDEA

The Inspiring Digital Enterprise Award (AKA [iDEA](#)) is one of the world's most successful free educational technologies, providing a personalised learning approach that's used in over a hundred countries worldwide, and which makes learning as engaging as possible. It is highly adaptable for use within schools and can be used to support extracurricular lunch or after-school clubs. It employs a system of digital 'badges' that can be employed in various ways – to set homework, expand in-class conversations and empower students to share their thinking. iDEA badges can also help to introduce a topic before teaching a lesson on it, and serve as topic research prompts for students. iDEA itself can form part of teachers' CPD with the aid of the iDEA Record of Achievement to provide evidence.

iDEA recognises both individual and social learning, and has proved to be phenomenally successful because it's fun. It shows quite clearly how digital delivery can run alongside traditional education, and in some cases even replace parts of it. It further highlights how we can make such a change by introducing similar shared

content developed by teachers and others, and by gradually adopting more of this in the curriculum.

We all share three key foci in life – knowing our place in the world, underpinning which is our self-esteem and self-fulfilment. To address all three, we need to feel we are making progress; we need to be effective learners. By developing better technology-enabled learning habits, by having more choice and through better signposting to more opportunities, we can develop greater volumes of user-generated wisdom. We can become learners who learn how to learn – meta-learners.

First, though, we need the right tracking systems and the right feedback. We need to focus on fun, socialisation and educational psychology, and incorporate more of this into our educational systems. We need to reduce and remove barriers to learning, and instil in learners a clear and motivating view of how they are making personalised learning progress.

Personalised learning technology will enable those changes to be made, supporting teachers to be better teachers, and prompting a rethink as to how we ought to timetable teaching in order to enable better learning. Above all, it enables all of us to learn differently – because we all do learn differently.



### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Professor Rupert Ward is a professor of learning innovation at the University of Huddersfield, former project lead for iDEA and author of two books on personalised learning – *Personalised Learning for the Learning Person* and *Getting Personal: How we learn and why we don't*; for more information, follow [@rupert\\_ward](#)

# “We need to better develop what are broadly termed 21st century skills”

capabilities – less than 10% of 15-year-olds could demonstrate such skills in the 2015 PISA results. As well as individual development, we are also seeing increasingly concerning evidence of civic fissures, with decreasing levels of trust in information, expertise and, indeed, each other.

A much greater level of both personalised and social learning is therefore required, to ensure education can deliver the individual and civic development our rapidly changing environment requires. So how do we make these changes? How do we develop user-generated wisdom? How do we create time in an already busy timetable for more social learning? How can we even cope with yet more changes?

The answer is that we need to gradually wean ourselves off our outdated

getting physically fitter because the barriers to fitness are being reduced, and the clarity of how to make progress with getting fit is increasing.

I propose is that we can, and should, do the same within our educational systems. Individual learning should contain more choice, more bite-sized elements of learning and more interactive, engaging and fun content. More of this should be available online and freely accessible to all, anytime, anywhere.

Teachers will clearly need to monitor the progress of learners using such material and verify their learning in the classroom, but shifting to a more extensive use of individual online learning will help free up classroom time so that we can address the key gap in our current education system – more effective social learning.

Social learning is important not just for

# We need to talk about parent engagement

**Today, text and email alone don't cut it.**

Whether you're circulating forms, planning parents' evening or collecting online payments, your strategy should be managed from a single socially inclusive and cost-efficient platform.

And that platform has our (new) name written all over it.  
**Formerly PS Connect, IRIS Engage has it all covered.**

## All for one and one for all

**One log-in, one platform for all-in-one parent engagement:**



- > Free translation into 40+ languages
- > Manage school social media accounts centrally
- > Free school branded microsite to host information and resources
- > Integration with IRIS PlusPay for online payment management
- > Parents' evening planning and appointment bookings
- > Automated absence management suite
- > Bespoke online form and survey builder
- > Free parent app

And much, much more.

**Message received?**  
**Talk to us to find out more.**

Visit [www.iris.co.uk](http://www.iris.co.uk)  
Call **0344 2251525**

Look forward



# We must pressure the government

Teachers have a vital role to play in pushing for greater online protection for students, says **Charlotte Aynsley**

**A**s we all know, since lockdown there has been a huge surge in young people's use of social media and the internet more broadly. Being online has acted as a lifeline for many children and young people but, as time spent online has increased, protections have not.

We know the government wants 'the UK to be the safest place in the world to go online' and following the tragic suicide of Molly Russell in 2017, it drafted new legislation in the form of the Online Harms Bill, designed to increase the protection of young people.

However, despite ongoing lobbying by the NSPCC and various other charities and child protection advocates, the minister of state for digital and culture, Caroline Dinenage, has said she could not commit to bringing a draft of the bill to parliament until 2021.

While the shape of the bill continues to develop, the NSPCC has issued six tests that it will use to determine whether it will genuinely protect young people from online harms. A successful

Online Harms Bill, the organisation insists, must be predicated on an expansive, principles-based duty of care and set ambitious targets for tackling online child abuse.

The bill must also address legal but harmful content, such as suicide and self-harm, and grant Ofcom investigatory powers and the ability to level criminal and financial sanctions. Finally, to earn NSPCC approval, the bill must include support for a civil advocacy counterpart to the legal repercussions, funded by a levy on the social media industry, to ensure that civil society can stand up to powerful industry actors.

## Uniting teachers behind the bill

I believe teachers can play a crucial role in moving the Online Harms Bill forward. We know safeguarding is a crucial part of a teacher's job and this legislation would make meaningful contributions to that end. The bill will form another layer of safety, reinforcing

boundaries that teachers and parents want to enforce and making it harder for young people to access inappropriate or dangerous material – in school, at home and beyond.

There are currently over half a million full-time teachers in the UK, and together they have incredible pester power, influence and leverage and huge potential to apply pressure to the government. A unanimous push could break through the logjam and drive action.

Creating awareness is a prerequisite to creating pressure, and the simplest thing that teachers can do is to learn about the bill and spread the word. Teachers can lead discussions about the bill online and influence campaigns to pressure MPs: this could involve lobbying their unions to push for action on the bill, or simply circulating existing petitions pushing for it to be enacted in law by July next year.

## Legislation for the online era

As the amount of time children spend isolated online increases, so too

does the importance of eliminating online harms. At a recent safeguarding roundtable in which I participated, chief constable Simon Bailey, the National Police Chiefs' Council lead for child protection argued that the bill is the bare minimum we should have in place to protect our children and that such a bill should have been in place years ago.

In spite of the coronavirus and parliamentary stagnation, we must redouble our efforts to advance this bill, ensuring that it is fit for purpose as it moves through the legislative process. Behind parents, teachers are the group most invested in protecting children, and I feel a concerted effort to increase the pressure on the government to pass this bill will certainly yield results.



### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Charlotte Aynsley is safeguarding advisor at Impero Software.



**CRESST**

PSHE Association  
Quality Assured  
Resource

**What if...**  
your students knew  
**HOW TO HANDLE  
CONFLICT  
WELL?**

**Youth  
Resolving  
Conflict**

Curious about conflict is a series of 6 lessons that enables KS3 students to explore and understand what conflict really is, how conflict affects our brains, conflict styles and how to de-escalate conflict.

**EQUIP YOUR STUDENTS  
WITH THE KNOWLEDGE AND  
SKILLS TO BE ABLE TO  
HANDLE CONFLICT WELL.  
LESSON 1 IS FREE ON  
OUR WEBSITE**

Contact:  
**admin@  
cresst.org.uk**  
for more  
information

**The 6 lessons cost £150 - available from:  
[www.cresst.org.uk/resource/ks3-curious-about-conflict-pshe-lessons/](http://www.cresst.org.uk/resource/ks3-curious-about-conflict-pshe-lessons/)**

**REGISTER  
TODAY**

**to see what business  
young people can  
create with £10**

Young Enterprise's **FREE 10X Challenge** helps young people to take their first step into the world of business as they see what they can create with just £10 over 4 weeks.

**Reasons to sign up your school?**

- › Engaging activities
- › Fun competitions
- › Simple to follow resources
- › Key skill development
- › Easy online platform

The challenge will run from  
**22nd February -  
17th March**

**REGISTER TODAY online:  
[www.10XChallenge.org.uk](http://www.10XChallenge.org.uk)**

**10X  
CHALLENGE**



**Artsmark**  
AWARDED BY ARTS COUNCIL ENGLAND

# Put **creativity** and **wellbeing** at the heart of your curriculum

**Artsmark, the only creative quality standard for schools, can support you to:**

- Maintain and build upon your school's commitment to arts and culture
- Build young people's confidence, character and resilience through creativity

Artsmark's flexible framework allows you to embed arts and culture across the curriculum, so whatever new challenges come your way, you can stay committed to creativity.

**Register at  
[artsmark.org.uk](http://artsmark.org.uk)**



© Jack Spicer-Adams for Arts Connect / Students from Ellesmere College



© Mark Savage / Durham Sixth Form Centre

@Artsmarkaward  
 /Artsmark1



# LEARNING LAB

## IN THIS ISSUE

- + Graphic design and visual CVs made easy
- How to talk to your class about social media
- Online safety knowledge at your fingertips
- Master the potential of collaborative learning
- Rethinking the research around class sizes
- Help your students become better literary critics
- The benefits of online CPD
- Maximise the use of revision cards

## CONTRIBUTORS

### ANDREW FINDLATER

Faculty head of business and design technology at Inverness Royal Academy.

### RUBBI BHOGAL-WOOD

Social media educator and consultant and founder of Wild & Form Digital

### ADAM RICHES

Senior leader for teaching and learning

### MR E

Secondary English department lead and published author with a YouTube channel for teaching tips.

### ZEPH BENNETT

PE teacher and school achievement leader with 25 years' teaching experience.

### SIAN HARRIS

Global director for TES Institute.



## Ideas for...

# MANAGING PARENTS' FEARS

Parents may feel scared of teachers, with such fears stemming from experiences in their own education or a genuine belief that teachers are intellectually superior and potentially judgemental.

We are aware of one secondary school that informed parents during their very first 'meet and greet' to stay back, not interfere or question how children were progressing in their learning and generally leave things to the 'experts'.

Such assertions set the wrong tone from the beginning and devalue parental engagement, cutting off an important means of support for student learning from the get-go. The opportunity for the school to learn more about individual students is also lost, and important information not passed on. Who would dare to challenge the scary headteacher?

Parents' fears may be unfounded in your school, but what can you do to alleviate such fears?

- Build rapport with parents at the first opportunity. (Transition always provides a fruitful point at which staff

can convey warmth, rapport and commonalities with families.)

- Use plain language with parents; they don't need to use school terms or words that require pedagogical knowledge.
- Ensure that parents know they should always feel comfortable to ask questions, no matter how basic.
- Collate FAQs that parents ask the school every year; these can perhaps live on the school website and be easily accessible to parents. This sets a healthy, transparent tone that suggests they aren't the first parent to ask that question. It can be edited as and when new questions get submitted.

**Teaching tip** – Try to see effective leadership from the parents' perspective. They are more likely to work with school leaders who are warm, kind and honest than those who appear unnecessarily abrupt and cold.

**Bonus idea** – Ask the Y8 parents what they wish they'd known before they started, and use that information to create the FAQs. (Or better still, let the parents create it!)



**TIPS TAKEN FROM 100 IDEAS FOR SECONDARY TEACHERS - ENGAGING PARENTS BY JANET GOODALL AND KATHRYN WESTON (BLOOMSBURY EDUCATION, £14.99)**

## WHAT WE DO



**A**s a teacher of D&T, traditional graphic design lessons feel fairly familiar. Canva has been our platform of choice on several occasions to allow my students to create posters, presentations, and infographics to present their learning. When the Deputy Rector at my former school (Kingussie High School, Scotland) asked me to deliver an employability skills enrichment programme for a group of approximately 80 S3 students, however (equivalent to Y9), I knew it would be a challenge.

A focus of the employability skills programme was to raise student aspirations, so it was important for them to develop this through everyday experiences in lessons, their wider

achievements and by

pursuing their own interests. Developing organisation and timekeeping when getting up early to feed the animals on the family farm, for example; communication and teamwork when representing a school sports team, or leadership when delegating tasks at Army Cadets. Once students clarified their own examples by structuring a skill sentence, they profiled their employability by creating a 'visual CV' using Canva.

Digital technology in the classroom – in this example, Chromebooks – usually leads to engagement with the devices themselves (and their ability to connect to social media), but not always with the intended learning. For this particular task, Canva provided a key piece of the learning puzzle. Students

typed up their skills sentences onto a new canvas, and demonstrated their creativity by designing around them.

The end results were better than I could have imagined. Engagement in the task was high, due to the accessibility and ease with which they were able to create striking and appealing visual CVs. They uploaded pictures of themselves alongside quick shapes and other pre-existing elements to make something personal and impactful. Most importantly, the activity served to demonstrate just how employable our students were – and by the end of the programme, they could see it too.

When a task next requires students to present their learning visually, educators should definitely consider using Canva – it's approachable, easy to use and free to access.



**ANDREW FINDLATER, FACULTY HEAD OF BUSINESS AND DESIGN TECHNOLOGY AT INVERNESS ROYAL ACADEMY**

## 3 ways to ...

### TALK ABOUT SOCIAL MEDIA



**Rubbi Bhogal-Wood**, social media educator and founder of the consultancy Wild & Form Digital

(wildandformdigital.com), offers some advice on integrating social media into classroom conversations

#### ● GET THE BALANCE RIGHT

Young people will switch off if constantly presented with the downsides of social media at school and at home. Engage them by presenting a balanced view of social that's less binary and keeps the conversation going.

#### ● INVOLVE PARENTS

Children often feel their parents don't 'get' social media, so reduce that gap by empowering the students to host termly social media know-how sessions for their parents, either digitally or in-person. Topics could include 'how to' sessions on using popular platforms, or lessons in content creation.

#### ● UNCOVER THE SOCIAL DILEMMA

As explored in the Netflix documentary *The Social Dilemma*, social media platforms employ addictive design elements. Young people often engage with social media through fear of missing out, but it can just as easily be used as a wonderful discovery tool to support a hobby, career aspiration or friendships. The more we challenge established narratives around social media, the more likely it is that young people will control their social media use, rather than let it control them.



# 46%

**of education staff report their work-life balance as being poor or very poor**

Source: Hays Wellbeing in Education Report 2020 ([bit.ly/ts101-hays](https://bit.ly/ts101-hays))

**The online safety training provider National Online Safety has launched a free iOS and Android app, aimed at helping educators and parents respond to the dramatic increase in children and young people's screen time in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.**

The National Online Safety app enables parents to access an online safety course delivered by Mylene Klass, as well as a wide assortment of short guides and introductory videos to popular apps, games and devices used by children, plus advice on responding to cyberbullying and mental health issues.

Other features include the option to be notified when content is added that concerns a new online trend, the ability for users to vote on subjects they would like the app to cover in future and the facility to 'favourite' key resources.

National Online Safety member schools will additionally be able to access a large selection of online courses and lesson plans that span early years to secondary, and are aligned with the latest statutory online safety requirements for school leaders, educators, support staff and governors.

According to National Online Safety co-founder James Southworth, "As a dad myself, I know how difficult it can be to stay savvy to developments in the online world – it can seem like a mammoth task, but by creating this app we hope we can make your job a bit easier."

## YOUR GUIDE TO ...

### COLLABORATIVE LEARNING

Collaborative learning is a tool that, if utilised effectively, can amplify learning and confidence in the classroom. Given the current climate, such approaches might take a different form to usual, but they should feature in your lessons either in the classroom or online.

Learning is social in nature. In Ancient Greece, scholars would impart knowledge and share ideas in groups. Our mediums might now be very different, but that concept of sharing remains strong. While group-based working is an acquired taste, there's no denying that collaborative student activities – be it in pairs or larger groups – can have a positive impact on knowledge retention. In less tangible terms, collaborative learning when set up correctly can boost confidence and engagement, especially when it comes to questioning. Research suggests that students who have the opportunity to work collaboratively show higher outcomes. In addition, students who demonstrate lower levels of achievement improve when

working in diverse groups.

#### The buy-in

Collaborative learning relies on some buy-in and some specific training from the teacher, since students need to respect and appreciate each other's viewpoints for it to work. Model what successful collaboration looks like, and scaffold the stages of team building.

Give students time and opportunities within activities to develop leadership, decision-making, trust-building, communication, and conflict-management skills. Establish routines and expectations for working together, use talk frames to help with handling any disagreements and teach students active listening skills.

With effective planning, collaborative learning can be a formidable tool – but teachers overlook the complexities at their peril...



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

# 81%

of 14-to-18-year olds are 'somewhat' or 'very' concerned about the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on their education

Source: Representative sample of 1,000 UK 14 to 18-year-olds by the British Science Association

## Need to know

**Most teachers will be quick to assert that larger class sizes have a negative effect on their students' learning, but the link has long been a contested one among the research community.**

A new open access book by academics Professor Peter Blatchford (UCL Institute of Education) and Dr Anthony Russell, *Rethinking Class Size*, comes down on the teachers' side, noting that previous research in the area has focused predominantly on the learning of maths and students' first language and neglected other subjects. Drawing on over two decades of observations, surveys and case studies, the authors go on to argue that class size interacts in complex ways with differentiated teaching, classroom management and assessment, and the behaviour of low attaining pupils and those with SEND.

According to Professor Blatchford, "Across the world we need to rethink the class size debate – and rethink research on class size. We do not need any more reviews of associations between class size and academic attainment. In order to reliably interpret the correlation between class size and attainment, we have, as researchers, to understand what is going on in classrooms."

Download the book via [bit.ly/ts101-class-size](https://bit.ly/ts101-class-size)



## ONE FOR ENGLISH TEACHERS IMPROVE RESPONSES TO LITERATURE

Getting tone and style right in literature essays is often a sticking point for even the brightest students. Here are seven ways in which you can empower your burgeoning literary critics...

### 1. Read to succeed!

Keep a stockpile of accessible critical essays on texts your students will know. They can magpie strengths – phrases they like, how the critic links ideas and uses quotations – and use them in their own responses.

### 2. Structure up

Each exam task will lend itself to an individual way of planning and structuring. Developing rigid paragraph-by-paragraph templates gives students confidence. Encourage more able students to tailor these to their own strengths.

### 3. Take the 'I' out of 'critic'

Help students develop an 'impersonal' style and find alternative ways of writing 'I think that...' or 'In my opinion...' so they can assume a more mature, academic tone.

### 4. Ditch 'This means that...'

This perennial students' favourite is

the bane of English teachers everywhere. Get students to replace 'this' with the writer's surname. 'Means that' can then be replaced with a whole variety of apt verbs – 'argues', 'portrays' and 'conveys' to name but a few.

### 5. Use evaluative adjectives

Good critics aren't afraid of praising beautiful writing. Help students find opportunities to slip appreciative adjectives into an essay, thus creating a more dynamic and perceptive response. "This haunting poem..." reads far better than "This poem..."

### 6. Stockpile evaluative words for texts studied

Students can curate adjectives and adverbs for texts they're reading. If studying the AQA Power and Conflict poems, for example, how about 'haunting', 'poignant' and 'harrowing' for Wilfred Owen's *Exposure*?

### 7. Encourage quality 'bookending'

Strong introductions and conclusions leave a great impression, so help students perfect dynamic phrasing for essay introductions. Similarly, encourage conclusions that make powerful final points that pull everything together.

MR E LEADS A SECONDARY ENGLISH DEPARTMENT AND IS A PUBLISHED WRITER; DISCOVER MORE WRITING TIPS AT HIS 'MR E'S ENGLISH HACKS' YOUTUBE CHANNEL VIA [SHORTURL.AT/IOAB2](https://shorturl.at/IOAB2)





## The benefits of... *online CPD*

CPD has long been something of a Cinderella in schools, which have historically spent just 1% of their budgets on professional development of staff.

It's a false economy, because research suggests CPD makes a huge difference. A 2018 survey by Tallis, for example, showed that 82% of secondary teachers believed that CPD had a positive impact on their teaching practice.

Since then, the pandemic has drastically changed the way in which CPD is perceived and delivered in schools, and wider thinking around how its impact

can be measured. With online now the predominant delivery vehicle for CPD, it's become a necessity in an emergency situation.

The flexibility of online CPD allows a multitude of courses and content to be brought together, giving teachers the chance to create pathways that blend personal professional development objectives with whole school requirements.

Online delivery can also make collaboration and networking with other practitioners as easy. Collaboration is a key part of effective CPD, because it fosters a culture

of continuous learning and allows for the sharing of ideas on how to apply that learning in the classroom.

The networking opportunities created by online CPD discussion forums can additionally enhance and support professional learning communities by breaking down silos and geographical barriers.

In essence, these discussion threads and forums allow teachers access to a global network of educators, all reflecting on their own and others' practice as they work through the content.

Online CPD may have come of age in the pandemic, but it's surely here to stay.

**SIAN HARRIS IS GLOBAL DIRECTOR FOR TES INSTITUTE; FOR MORE INFORMATION, [TES.COM/INSTITUTE](https://tes.com/institute)**

## TRENDING

Our pick of recent posts and launches that teachers might find useful...

### VITAL STATISTICS

Ahead of next year's national census, the ONS is inviting secondary schools to sign up for a learning programme that includes access to a series of free, curriculum-linked lesson plans that can be taught online. [censuseducation.org.uk](https://censuseducation.org.uk)

### ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

The UN has launched a new online resource by the name of Mission 1.5 In Action, which aims to present 54 important policies governments can enact to address global warming. [mission1point5learn.org](https://mission1point5learn.org)

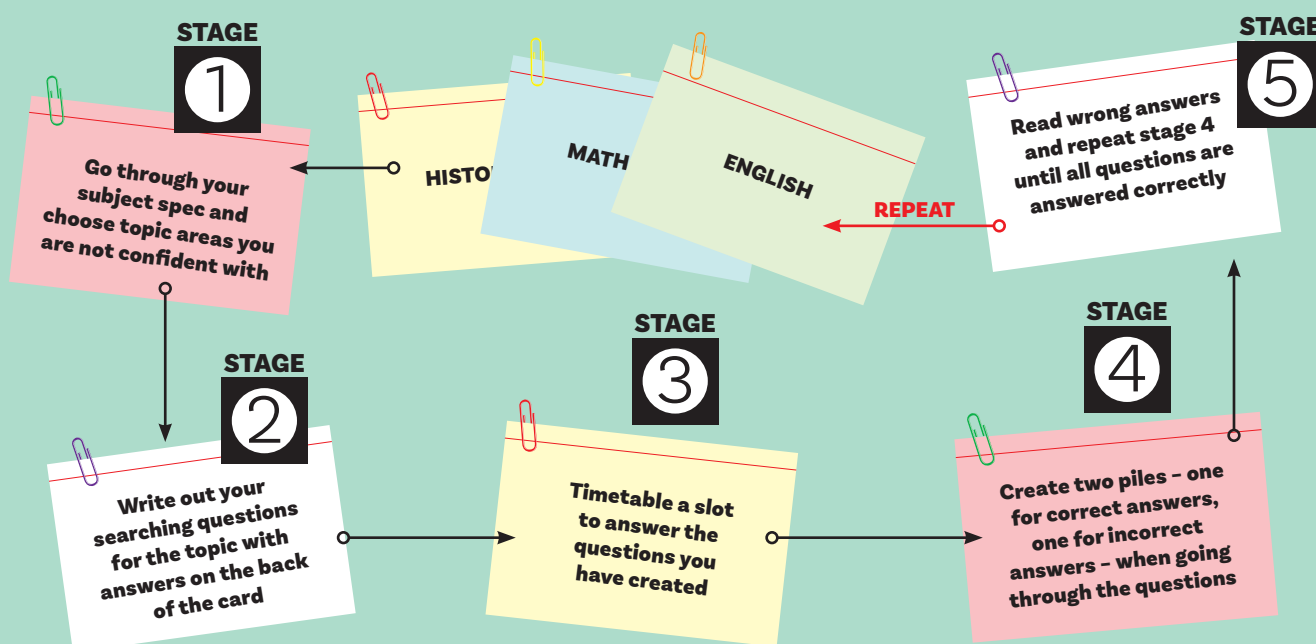
### LITERACY FOR ALL

Marcus Rashford MBE has partnered with Macmillan's Children's Books on a literacy initiative that's set to launch in May 2021 with the publication of a Rashford-authored children's book aimed at ages 12+ titled *You Are A Champion*.

## STUDENT WALKTHROUGH

### HOW TO UTILISE REVISION CARDS

HELP YOUR STUDENTS BECOME BETTER LEARNERS WITH ZEPH BENNETT'S VISUAL EXPLAINERS...



ZEPH BENNETT IS PE TEACHER AND SCHOOL ACHIEVEMENT LEADER WITH 25 YEARS' TEACHING EXPERIENCE; YOU CAN FIND MORE OF HIS EDUCATIONAL ILLUSTRATIONS BY FOLLOWING @PEGEEKSCORNER

Got a great learning idea? Email [editor@teachsecondary.com](mailto:editor@teachsecondary.com) or tweet us at [@teachsecondary](https://twitter.com/teachsecondary)

Download your FREE copy of

# TECHNOLOGY + INNOVATION

NOW on  
[www.teachwire.net/edtech](http://www.teachwire.net/edtech)



Is your school making the most effective and economical use of its learning technology?

Which of the many innovative learning solutions out there can deliver great outcomes for your students?

These are the questions we seek to explore in **Technology & Innovation** – a specialist publication by The Teach Company aimed at teachers and school leaders working across primary and secondary settings.

## Inside this issue...

- Why schools should embrace personalised learning
- Making use of digital devices, minus the distractions
- How to get a good deal from your tech spend
- Is artificial intelligence really coming after your job?

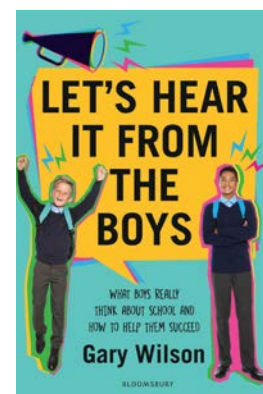


CPD



# Let's Hear It From The Boys

An excellent insight into how boys view school, with practical actions teachers can take to raise achievement in their classrooms



## AT A GLANCE

- A 'how to' raise boys' achievement resource from one of the country's leading experts
- Packed with insights and thinking from the real-life testimonies and perspectives of boys themselves
- Confronts head-on a range of relevant teaching, learning and assessment issues
- Brimming over with acumen, advice and punchy practical strategies for addressing the achievement gap

REVIEW BY JOHN DABELL



What do boys really think about school and how can we help them to succeed? That's the subtitle of Gary Wilson's new book - a key resource that focuses on the underachievement of boys and what, as change makers, we can do to support them.

The first part of the book is devoted to the author's own experiences as a white, working-class boy and the challenges he faced leaving school without any qualifications, before eventually becoming a teacher. Gary shares some of the techniques he used to get boys' achievement on the local and national agenda, how we can do the same and how to listen to boys themselves.

Part two is the meat of the book and looks at secondary schools from the point of view of boys, highlighting 15 specific features such as what makes a good teacher, what makes a good lesson, seating plans, peer pressure, how teachers talk to boys and girls, punishments, reading, and homework. There are some enormously valuable insights into what it's like to be a boy at school and the nitty gritty of what matters to them - rather than what academics might think matters to them.

The end of the book then brings everything together and goes further by challenging us to

think about the influences of street culture, social media and mental health.

A clever structure supports the reader with various pedagogical pit-stops, during which we can take a few minutes to ponder the issues raised, and there are reflective questions dotted throughout to gently push us into thinking about how our own teaching might need to change (short quotes from boys to which the author has spoken are particularly good for getting us to think about what happens in our settings).

To take us beyond theory there are action points to complete in school and longer-term practical exercises;

there are no quick fixes or off-the-peg solutions though because the issues are far too complex for that.

Gary Wilson's book is a down-to-earth, hard-hitting and honest account of the plight of boys that is caring, compassionate and challenging. Full of hope and energy, it gets us thinking about the relationships between engagement, self-efficacy and academic aspirations and how we can change the deficit narrative of low achieving boys living precarious lives on the margins of school.

Boys will be boys? Forget that. Boys will be brilliant, thanks very much.

**“Helps us truly understand boys' underachievement”**

**teach  
SECONDARY**

## VERDICT

- ✓ Firmly places the needs of boys on the whole school agenda
- ✓ Helps us really get under the bonnet of why boys underachieve and what we can do to break down the barriers and improve their chances
- ✓ Promotes a caring masculinity and prompts deeper reflection about gender and education
- ✓ An important resource of solid advice, thought-provoking ideas and proven strategies tailor-made for CPD and sharing widely across the school
- ✓ An asset rich book to inspire teachers to help boys to “unclench their hearts”

## UPGRADE IF...

You are looking to bring about change in the achievement of boys in your setting and how to make a significant impact and real difference.

Find out more at [bloomsbury.com](http://bloomsbury.com)

[teachwire.net/secondary](http://teachwire.net/secondary)



#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

John Lawson is a former secondary teacher now serving as a foundation governor and running a tutoring service; for more information, visit [prep4successnow.wordpress.com](http://prep4successnow.wordpress.com)

## THE LAST WORD

# The 7 signs of great teaching

If you want to distinguish the truly great teachers from the merely competent, there's certain criteria that will tell you all you need to know, says **John Lawson**

Lewis Hamilton's seventh World Championship win late last year made him one of the greatest ever Formula 1 drivers. Few could question his brilliance in the field of motorsport, nor those of other sporting legends like Mohammed Ali, Roger Federer, or Diego Maradona (RIP).

The process of recognising success in sport is relatively straightforward, but it's much harder to do in other professions. How do we identify great educators? Teachers will often be judged – unfairly – on their students' exam results, or contribution to their school's standing in the league tables. Devotees of the film *Dead Poets Society* may cite John 'Carpe Diem' Keating as a pedagogical exemplar, albeit a fictional one. He's shown to be charismatic and a gifted communicator, but when a student enamoured by Keating's romanticism takes his own life, he seems a mere fool who deserves to take his fall – a teacher of Shakespeare who should have sensed that particular tempest brewing.

Having taught and mentored in secondary schools for many years, this is the seven-strong criteria I've devised for identifying excellent teachers.

### 1. Subject knowledge

The greatest gift we can give our students is authentic knowledge. The more authoritative and erudite we are, the more comfortable we'll feel and the more effective we'll be. When we give our best, we tend to draw out the best in others.

Students will rarely forgive their teachers two things: 1) not being twice as smart as the student and their classmates are and 2) acting as if they are twice as smart as they actually are. Pomposity, arrogance and ignorance are instant turn-offs.

### 2. Passion

As the late Sir Ken Robinson once observed, "When we are passionate about something, an hour passes like it was five minutes. When we lack passion for what we do, five minutes seems like an hour." Teachers need to inject their specialisms with some spark. Chemistry teachers couldn't survive without their Bunsen burners, and biology would be nothing without dissections. Passion is infectious, but if a teacher doesn't convey any excitement around their lessons, their students will soon turn restless or sleepy.

### 3. Clarity

I recently watched a production of *Hamlet* with a colleague. Having not studied the play before, I solicited

a quick guide and she kept it brief: 'Is Hamlet mad, bad, or plain sad?' That curt one-liner provided an excellent framework with which to evaluate the absorbing drama of the play. The colleague in question, Jeannie, takes the view that her learners need everything explained in its simplest form. If she wants them to settle down and take notes, she can't afford to mumble, equivocate or use words like 'equivocate.'

### 4. Love

Ancient Greek has four words for love, and the greatest of these is 'agape'. To agape another person is to want what's best for them. When my students act up, I don't appreciate their behaviour, but I will still search for that divine spark that remains in every child. We never step into the same rivers or classrooms twice. To paraphrase a former firebrand from Tarsus in one of his missives to Corinth, 'If we have not agape, we are merely making noises.' If we don't care about our students, why should they care about learning?

### 5. Labour

The hairdresser, Vidal Sassoon, once cautioned his stylists, "The only place where success comes before work is in the dictionary." Teaching back-to-back classes all day to precocious teenagers will never be easy. Those seeking to become real 'A-Team' teachers will know that doing so takes time, talent, patience, know-how, and self-belief, plus sheer grit and graft.

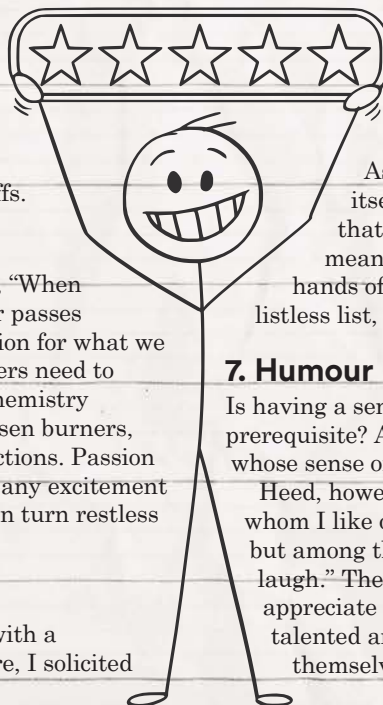
### 6. Creativity and imagination

Aspiring to be an inspirational teacher is, in itself, a triumph of imagination. We must believe that what we impart isn't merely stimulating and meaningful, but in its own way 'sacred'. In the hands of a great teacher, there's no such thing as a listless list, or a flat formula to memorize.

### 7. Humour

Is having a sense of humour genuinely a pedagogical prerequisite? After all, there are plenty of excellent teachers whose sense of humour isn't exactly their strongest suit.

Heed, however, the words of W.H. Auden: "Among those whom I like or admire, I can find no common denominator, but among those whom I love, I can: all of them made me laugh." The majority of children and young people will appreciate and love those teachers who are seriously talented and dedicated, but who also don't take themselves too seriously.





# MAKE YOUR MARK

## BECOME AN EXAMINER

Why not enhance your knowledge in your subject area and boost your income for 2021?

There are a range of other benefits including:

- Enhanced subject knowledge
- Career progression
- Networking with other teachers and experienced professionals
- Comprehensive training and support
- Flexible working
- Boost in income



# BECOME AN OCR EXAMINER

Join our team of valued Assessors

Mark A Level and GCSE exams:

**English Literature,  
Chemistry, Physics  
and Law**

- Build confidence supporting your students with assessment
- Enhance your subject knowledge
- Great for your Professional Development



**JOIN OUR TEAM:** [ocr.org.uk/assessor](https://ocr.org.uk/assessor)