VISIT TEACHWIRE.NET/SECONDARY

teach SECONDARY

Outstanding advice from the UK's top education experts

teach co

INTERVIEW

ROMESH RANGANATHAN:

"Comedy's less stressful than teaching"

INNER STRENGTH

How to give teachers the support they need

RAPID RESPONSE

Take the unexpected in your stride

HOME LEARNING

Why character education can help

PARENT OUTREACH

What works and why

LOUISE MINCHIN:

"I wanted to prove my school wrong!"

Plus

GCSE exams | Diverse histories | Financial education | Teacher trainers | Learning motivation | Flexible working

£3.99 | Issue 10.2

02

9 772049 278016

aceville

The **FLEX**™

Flexible Personal Range
Storage & Charging Lockers

ClassBuddy™

Cost Effective Charging
Trolleys & Lockers

0800 130 3456

sales@lapsafe.com

lapsafe.com

LapSafe®

FROM THE EDITOR

"Welcome...

As I write these words, the country feels frozen – both literally and figuratively. There's snow on the ground and a chill in the air. The town centre where I live is all but deserted – so I'm told, I've not visited in weeks – and there's been a noticeable drop-off in the number of cars and pedestrians passing by outside my house which, like many others, I can now refer to as both my home and place of work. So it goes in lockdown number ... three, is it? It's getting harder to tell.

And yet, there are hives of feverish activity behind the gates of schools up and down the land – which, as any education professional will tell you, are very much STILL OPEN, albeit with significantly diminished pupil populations – at least for now.

Teachers and school leaders are nothing if not adaptable, but the momentous snap decisions many have had to make of late are more than any SLT should have to reasonably cope with. And yet, what alternative is there? All they can do is do what they can.

From the trust that's worked hard to bolster its COVID response plans (p43) to the headteacher determined to maintain his staff's happiness levels (p40), what we've tried to do in this issue is highlight how the ominpresent pandemic threat is being met, managed and coped with via a range of different approaches, as unique as the schools and local communities that are pursuing them. As Dr Matt Easterbrook points out on p48, appreciating the full enormity of what's happening means paying attention to the many ways in which some are having to weather a considerably worse storm than others.

By foregrounding this hard-won wisdom and reflection on past experiences, we here at *Teach Secondary* hope that we can make a small contribution to helping out. My email inbox is always open, and I'd be delighted to hear from any of you with perspectives that you'd like to share.

Otherwise, for now – you're doing great, everyone. We'll get through this.

Until next issue,

Callum Fauser
callum.fauser@theteachco.com

On board this issue:

Nicola Brooks is a professional development co-ordinator for Reach South Academy Trust

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

Emma Turner is research and CPD lead for Discovery Schools Academy Trust

Nick Hurn is CEO of the Bishop Wilkinson Catholic Education Trust

Gemma Hargraves is a history teacher and A Level examiner

Lucy Scott is the CEO of Eastern Learning Alliance

KEEP IN TOUCH!
Sign up for the weekly TS newsletter at **teachwire.net/newsletter**

Essential reading:

44

From classroom to green room

Romesh Ranganathan reflects on the career move that took him from teaching into TV

48

COVID and class

Why families are very much *not* all in this together

Warts and all

Why it's time for school history to broaden its horizons

64

FEB/MAR '21

CONTENTS

THE teach COMPANY

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: Adam Barford, Ben Kemp, Luke Rogers

Photography: CLiQQ Photography cliqq.co.uk

Accounts: 01206 505995

Design & reprographics: Ace Pre-Press 01206 508608

Customer services: aceville@dctmedia.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

Lit in Colour

Become a Lit in Colour Pioneer

Together with Penguin Random House UK and The Runnymede Trust, we want to highlight the importance of a diverse English Literature curriculum. That's why we're offering 100 schools and colleges the chance to join the first ever **Lit in Colour Pioneers programme**.

The programme will include free access to:

- **Copies of the set texts** for every student in the relevant year group
- A **programme of work** and series of **free resources** including CPD training
- **Creative content from authors** and a range of **resources to support the specification**
- A Lit in Colour **mini-library including 300 free Penguin books** by Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic writers
- A **student ambassador** programme

To find out how you can get involved, visit **go.pearson.com/litincolour**

Pearson

RUNNYMEDE

B0114

The newsletter

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

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

K-POP STANS

Devotees of Korean pop music whose passion borders on the zealous – hence the 'stan' bit, derived from Eminem's gloomy 2000 chart smash of the same name about an obsessive fan. So far, so straightforward. The post-social media popularity of K-pop among teens around the world has been a thing for a while, though, so why bring it up now?

Because K-pop stans are apparently super-savvy online manipulators with a fondness for torpedoing right-wing rhetoric and messaging wherever they find it. It's the wildest topic module your media studies department could wish for.

Their latest brush with the headlines came with their sabotaging of a briefly trending '#ImpeachBidenNow' Twitter hashtag disseminated by supporters of Donald Trump. In no time at all, the hashtag's users couldn't move for TikTok fan videos and photos of BTS. K-pop stans have previously meted out similar treatment to the hashtags #BlueLivesMatter and #MAGA.

Is it heartfelt activism or simply larking about? Probably a bit of both...

DON'T SAY

Our message is really resonating, it's ... oh.

DO SAY

Which ship is the most superior in kpop and why is it TaeWon?

BEAT THE BUDGET

What are we talking about?
Ignition – a free course provided by the company EVERFI

What is the targeted age range?
11- to 14-year-olds

What's on offer?
Seven lessons with accompanying online and offline resources, lesson plans and pupil worksheets, all linked to the KS3 National Curriculum.

How might teachers use the resource?
To teach pupils how to safely navigate their lives online and spot fake news. Through a series of interactive scenarios, students are shown how to behave responsibly and manage friendships in virtual

spaces, and how to protect their data and privacy

Where are they available?
everfiteachers.co.uk

DON'T QUOTE ME...

"*"We have to leave no stone unturned in making sure that we can help young people catch up from the lost education.""*

Schools Secretary, Nick Gibb, addressing the Education Select Committee

Think of a number...

10%

of teenagers have tried hard drugs by the age of 17

Source: UCL Centre for Longitudinal Studies

63% of the general public would be happy for a teacher to be vaccinated before themselves
Source: Survey of 5,000+ people by Find Out Now

38% of young people believe other young people would prioritise self-interest over compassionate values
Source: Research by Persil and Global Action Plan

ONE FOR THE WALL

"To put our future first, we must first put our differences aside"

Amanda Gorman, The Hill We Climb

Road to recovery

The DfE has appointed Sir Kevan Collins to the newly created government role of Education Recovery Commissioner. The role will entail advising Ministers on matters relating to education recovery in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, focusing in particular on helping students catch up on lost learning.

Sir Kevan has previously worked as a teacher and director of Children's Services, and most recently as chief executive of the Education Endowment Foundation.

As Education Recovery Commissioner, he will report directly to the Education Secretary and Prime Minister, and be responsible for seeing how curriculum content and levels of teaching time may be adjusted in order to minimise the learning disruption caused by the pandemic. The role will also include regular consultation with parents, teachers and schools.

Education Secretary Gavin Williamson said of the appointment, "Sir Kevan brings a wealth of experience in education policy that I know will be invaluable in supporting all the young people who have been impacted by the pandemic.

"He will be a tremendous asset to those young people, their families, and everyone working in education who have my lasting gratitude for their efforts to support young people throughout the pandemic."

KEYNOTES AND CORRESPONDENCE

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

THE HEADLINE:

ASCL comments on speculation regarding extended school days and summer term

WHO? Geoff Barton, general secretary of the Association of School and College Leaders
WHAT? Commentary on media reports that school days may be extended and the summer holiday reduced to address learning gaps stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic
WHEN? 9th February 2021

The speculation about extending the school day and summer term to help children catch-up with lost learning is misconceived and unhelpful.

Many schools already run after-school activities and holiday clubs but this is totally different from a blanket requirement to grind out more hours of learning from tired children with the likelihood of diminishing returns.

Mandatory attendance in the summer holidays would have to be enforced with fines for non-attendance and we doubt this would be supported by families after a year of coronavirus restrictions.

The essential element of catch-up support is quality rather than quantity, and schools are very good at identifying learning needs and putting in place the appropriate support.

What they need from the government is sufficient funding to enable them to do this as effectively as possible rather than policy gimmicks.

THE HEADLINE:

Guidance concerning use of school buildings for polls on 6 May 2021

WHO? Nick Gibb, Schools Minister, and Lord True, Minister of State for the Cabinet Office
WHAT? Letter to school headteachers and election returning officers
WHEN? 11th February 2021

We are sending this letter to Returning Officers and Headteachers this year because we recognise there are particular concerns about the use of schools as polling stations.

We know that Returning Officers are acutely aware of this and are seeking to avoid using schools as polling stations. We support this approach of avoiding schools where it is practically possible to do so.

We know that it will not be possible in all cases to avoid use of schools. Where there are no alternative premises, we know that schools and Returning Officers will, as usual, work together to minimise any disruption.

SAVE THE DATE

18-19 MARCH Youth Sport Trust 2021 Conference | 22-25 MARCH World Education Summit | 22-27 MARCH Connected by Autism

18-19 MARCH

Youth Sport Trust 2021 Conference
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 can in turn enable adults to give their best to the students in their care.

22-25 MARCH

World Education Summit
worldedsummit.com

Shaping up to be one of the largest online education events of the year, the World Education summit takes place over four days and will be showcasing over 250 high profile international speakers across eight virtual stages. This year's event will be focused around 10 themes, including Values, Impact, Culture, Curriculum and Assessment and Talent Development – tickets are available on an individual, group or school basis.

22-27 MARCH

Connected by Autism
jkpautism.thinkific.com

This online conference devised by Jessica Kingsley Publishers will be serving up a series of presentations and conversations aimed at learning about, understanding and celebrating autism. Each of the six days will have different theme – including diagnosis, mental health and wellbeing and intersectionality – and promises to give those tuning in unprecedented access to the expertise and lived experience of JKP's authors.

Pearson

Remote teaching and learning support

At Pearson we are fully committed to helping schools continue to manage the ongoing impact of COVID-19, and to keep learning going throughout the school year.

Find out how we're supporting schools across the UK who are planning and providing blended learning and remote education, including:

- Online support hub, including free on-demand lessons and advice for delivering lessons remotely
- Free 30 day trial access to ActiveLearn online learning
- PD and teaching support
- Wellbeing and safeguarding resources

Discover our full range of support, top tips and guidance to help teaching and learning continue anytime, anywhere.

Visit: **Go.pearson.com/RemoteEducation**

Illustration by Lucy Vigrass
PEUK B0122

MATHS CORNER

Intriguing problems to inspire curiosity

Factors and multiples chain

Wild Maths Pathway: Exploring our number system

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

Choose a starting number from a 1-100 square and cross it out.

Then choose a factor or multiple of that number.

Keep crossing out factors or multiples of the last number in the chain.

For example, Charlie started with 60, 30, 6, 96, 16, 32, 8, 56, 7, 21, 42...

What's the longest chain you can make?

We hope that your students enjoy 'factors and multiples chain', but beware – it's really addictive! The NRICH office record is 70...

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

You can find more maths problems like this at NRICH's Wild Maths website – visit wild.maths.org; your students can easily share their thoughts and solutions; email their work to wild@wildmaths.org and it may even feature as part of the regular Wild Maths showcase!

A FEW MINUTES OF DESIGN

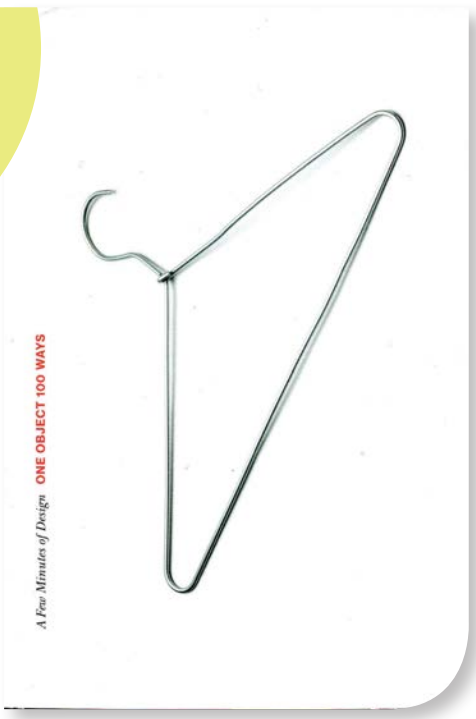
#13 ONE OBJECT, 100 WAYS

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.



Get Into Film

120 BPM (BEATS PER MINUTE) (2017, 15, 143 MINS)

CURRICULUM LINKS:
French, film studies, history

In the early 1990s, the Paris branch of activist organisation ACT-UP regularly meet to decide upon and plan protests which will cause maximum disruption, as well as campaigns which will capture the most media attention.

Newcomer Nathan throws himself into some of the most hardcore activities, risking arrest, and soon develops a romantic relationship with HIV-positive Sean – one of the organisation's most outspoken members. Tensions escalate within the group at their sessions due to conflicts between various members and the differences they express in how best to tackle the AIDS epidemic facing them.

The film is a riveting examination of activism, debate and democracy, asking difficult questions of its lively protagonists who reflect the urgency and energy of the crisis itself.

Discussion questions:

- What are some of the conflicting viewpoints held by members of the activist group? What are the benefits and setbacks of some of their ideas?
- What is the effect of the narratives shifting from the activism group, to the personal lives of some of its members?
- How did the film's ending make you feel? What emotions do you think the director aimed to convey in this ending and why?

Head online to intofilm.org to discover more inspiring films

Retweets

Who's been saying what on Twitter this month?

Binks Neate-Evans @BinksNeateEvans
There is a lot of postulating abt what children need post pandemic with different motivations. Tell them every day IT WILL BE OK. Show them every day IT IS OK. Guess what ... IT WILL BE OK.

Phil Beadle @PhilBeadle
Just asked my class why 'name of student' wasn't attending on-line sessions expecting to hear tales of woe. "He don't like learning, Sir" was the response.

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

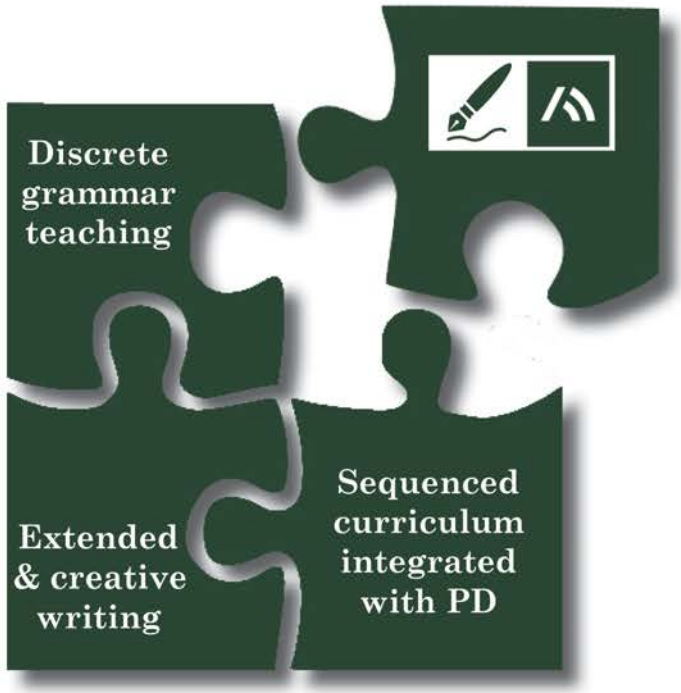
Writing
Mastery

Mastering the challenge of declining writing skills

A recent study* shows Year 7 students writing skills are **22 months behind age-related expectations**.

Introducing **Writing Mastery**, a KS3 writing programme that helps teachers develop strong young writers.

- Embedded opportunities for extended and creative writing
- Discrete grammar teaching that improves accuracy in students' writing
- Student workbooks to support blended learning
- Integrated bite-size professional development to support non-specialists target misconceptions



Sign up for a FREE trial of our Writing Mastery resources

https://bit.ly/36JTy9x

Visit our website to find out more: https://bit.ly/2LgkZ3c

@english_mastery

ArkCurriculum+

* Baseline Secondary Writing: have Year 7 pupils gone backwards? by Daisy Christodoulou

[MATHS PROBLEM]

PERCENTAGE CHANGE

Understanding how successive percentage increases and decreases work can be tricky – try using these activities to help students comprehend what's happening

Students often get confused when one percentage increase or decrease follows another. Each change takes place relative to the *current* amount, rather than the *original* amount, which can lead to misunderstandings and errors in students' calculations.

THE DIFFICULTY

This task helps make these difficulties more visible:

*Qayla thinks of an amount of money. She **increases** her amount by 10%. Then she **decreases** her new amount by 10%. Does she get back to the amount that she started with?*
Why / why not?

Many students will initially think it's obvious that Qayla must get back to her original amount, since a 10% increase and a 10% decrease seem clearly to be opposites.

If some students think that she doesn't, ask them the following:

Does she get back to a higher amount than she started with, or a lower amount than she started with? Why?

THE SOLUTION

These tasks will help students figure out what's going on and further develop their understanding.

1. Try some numbers

Pick an easy amount of money, try what Qayla did and see what happens. For example, students might pick £60.

£60 increase by 10% £66

£66 decrease by 10% £59.40

10% of £60 is £6, so that's how much we have to *add on* in the first step. But 10% of £66 is £6.60, so *this* is how much we have to *deduct* in the second step.

Students may be surprised that the overall result is that they've lost 60 pence.

Students could try other starting amounts to see if the same thing happens – will the final result always be less than the starting amount? Will it always be 60 pence less?

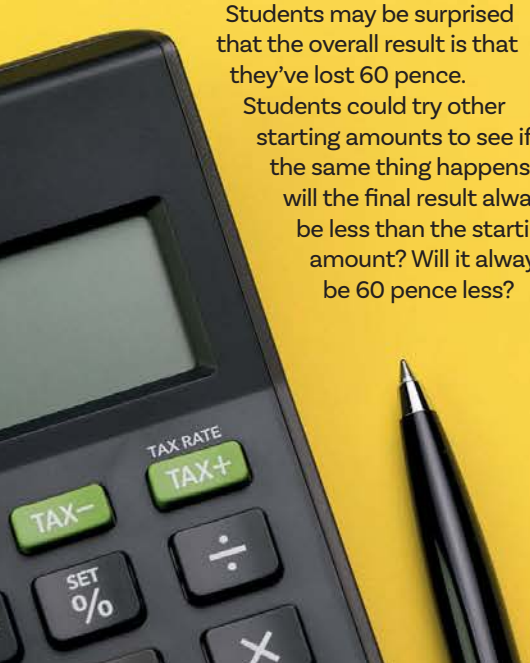
2. Draw a picture of what's going on

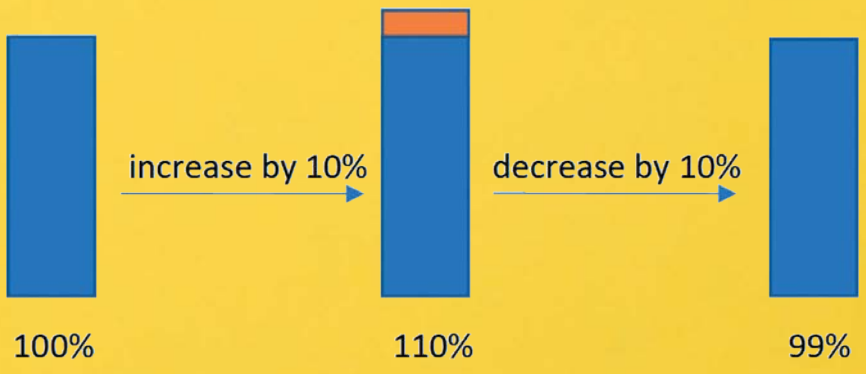
If students are familiar with bar models, they might be able to represent the situation visually, as shown below.

The key insight is that the 10% decrease is a larger 10% than the 10% increase was, because it's 10% of a larger (increased) amount. Relative to the original amount, the decrease is 11%, meaning that the final amount is 1% less than the starting amount.

Check for understanding

- What would happen if Qayla did the 10% decrease first, and then the 10% increase?
- What would be the overall effect of a 10% increase followed by a 20% decrease?
- What would be the overall effect of a 20% increase followed by a 10% decrease?
- Can you generalise what would be the overall effect of an *a*% increase followed by a *b*% decrease?
- What would be the overall effect of ten 10% decreases, one after the other? Would this take the final amount to zero?
- What would be the overall effect of ten 10% increases, one after the other? Would this end up doubling the original amount?





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

TEACH SMARTER WITH ICDL SMART DIGITAL

Equipping pupils with the skills to work safely and productively across their online devices has never been so important.

Our brand-new **BCS Level 1 Smart Digital Award in e-Safety** addresses ubiquitous device use in 2021 giving pupils the tools they need to build themselves a responsible digital footprint and a solid foundation for their digital learning journey.

Aligned with the ICT curriculum, it's ideal for KS3 delivery and receives ESFA-funding for 14 to 16-year-olds.

bcs The Chartered Institute for IT

ICDL The Digital Skills Standard

Find out more at
bcs.org/esafety-award

The Vocab Clinic

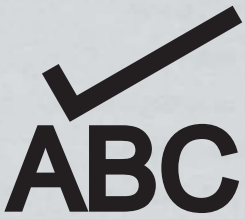
Support your students towards better language use, with the help of our resident word-wizard, **Alex Quigley...**

TRY THIS TODAY: ENGAGING ETYMOLOGIES

A common strategy for all learning is to tell memorable stories. As the cognitive psychologist, Professor Dan Willingham, states, "Stories are psychologically privileged in the human mind." Given this fact, telling the story of the history of academic vocabulary – using 'Engaging Etymologies' – can make for great teaching.

If, for example, you were teaching relationships and sex education, a better understanding of the origins and changing history of the word 'gay' can prove revealing and powerful. Equally, to better understand social attitudes to sex, you can help pupils explore contentious words such as 'slag', and how this industrial term became a label for promiscuous women.

Cracking the academic code



Perhaps one of the most visible problematic flaws in pupils' writing is inaccurate spelling. Alas, the weekly spelling test rarely addresses personal spelling issues, and relying on a spell check can prove equally flawed.

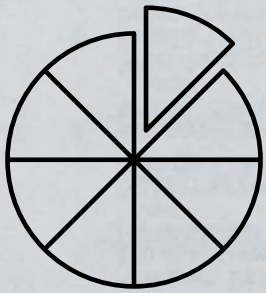
A key issue with relying on spell checkers is that they routinely fail to address spelling errors made as a result of 'horrible homophones'. Homophones are words that are pronounced the same but spelled differently; for example, 'their' and 'there', 'hoarse' and 'horse', 'fare' and 'fair'. As a result, explicitly teaching common homophones is necessary in every subject area.

DO THEY KNOW?

The now standard QWERTY keyboard was originally created to slow typists down by being awkward to use.

ONE FOR: MATHS STUDENTS

FRACTION



Derives from: Latin *'frangere'*, meaning 'to break'
Means: A numerical quantity that is not a whole number
Related terms: Fracture, fractal, infraction, fragment, fragile
Note: It was Arabian scholars who devised the crucial line separating the numerator above from the denominator below

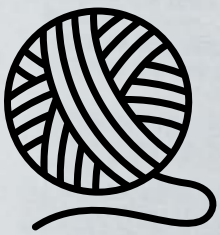
I DON'T THINK IT MEANS WHAT YOU THINK IT MEANS...

SCRATCH

In computer science = *a computer language frequently used in KS3 that utilises colourful characters*

All other subjects = *scratch means what we all think it means*

One word at a time



'Clue' has a more enigmatic history than most words in the English language. It's now taken to mean a piece of evidence or information that helps bring something to light, but its origins lie in the Greek myth of Theseus and the Minotaur. The ball of thread used by Theseus to find his way out of the Labyrinth was called a 'clew'. Around the 16th century, the spelling of this term shifted to the 'clue' we know today. The origins of the word were gradually forgotten, and the meaning of the word broadened far beyond the myth whence it came.

Alex Quigley is a former teacher and the author of *'Closing the Reading Gap'* & *'Closing the Vocabulary Gap'*. He also works for the Education Endowment Foundation as National Content Manager.

“Secondary education has somewhat lost its intrinsic purpose...”

After decades of neglect, educators and policymakers are belatedly realising just how important – and costly – the teaching of practical knowledge actually is...

When I trained to be a physics teacher in the mid-1990s I never imagined that 25 years later I'd be working from a makeshift classroom at the back of a hair salon, surrounded by sinks and blow-dryers.

I've spent the last couple of years out of schools, mainly teaching hairdressing apprentices basic numeracy and literacy for Functional Skills qualifications in a work-based learning setting.

It's been a privilege, allowing me to meet many fantastic people who, despite struggling with the basics of primary-level learning, possess the acumen and skills needed to run very successful, fast-paced businesses. And yet, I so often hear these people describe themselves as 'failures' at school.

When I've asked my apprentices what they mean by this, they invariably give an answer along the lines of, “I wasn't academic. So I'd sometimes get into trouble. I was just good with my hands. So I didn't leave with many qualifications.”

Practical versus conceptual

These conversations have made a deep impression on me, given my classroom background, and I soon came to realise that such narratives contained several PhDs' worth of research questions. How can someone spend over a decade in formal education, yet leave barely able to read or multiply? What do we actually mean by the word 'academic'? Are teachers and students even talking about the same thing?

Above all, to what extent is practical knowledge – that 'being good with one's hands' – different from abstract, conceptual and propositional knowledge? Is there enough room for this approach to making sense of the world within the field of academic knowledge?

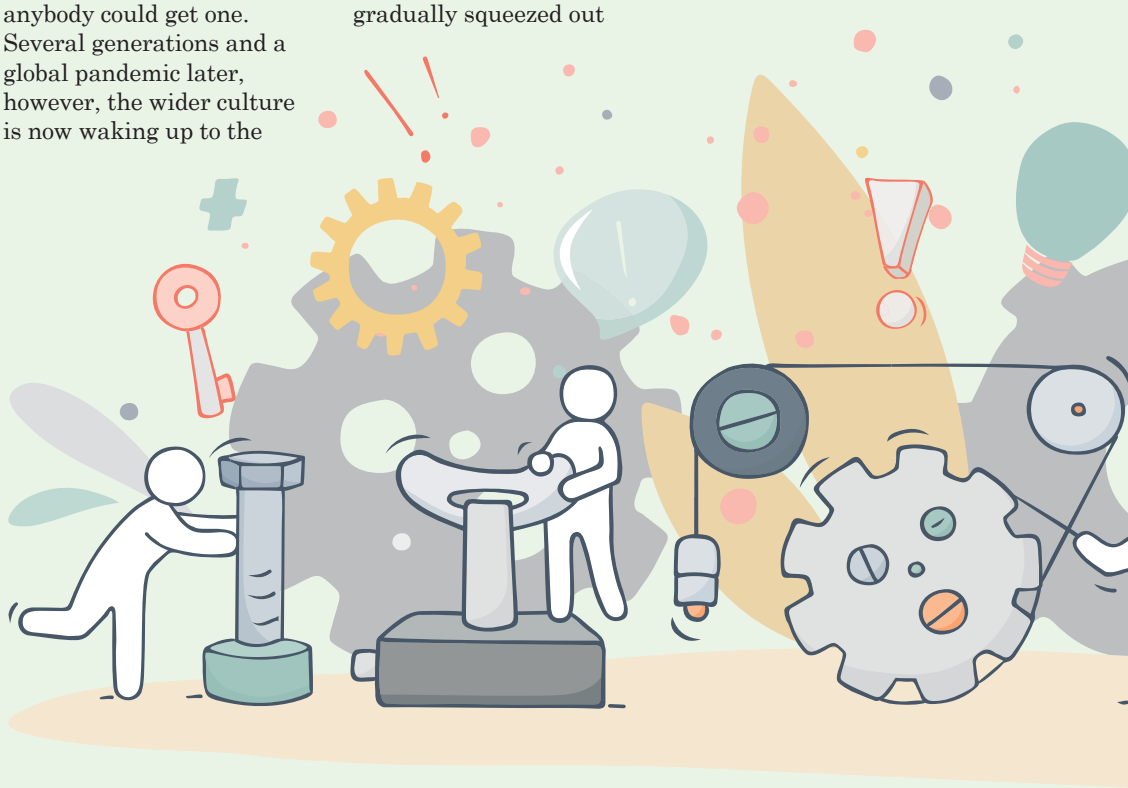
When I was at school, an O Level in woodwork was a byword for low achievement or lack of intelligence; as if anybody could get one. Several generations and a global pandemic later, however, the wider culture is now waking up to the importance of practical knowledge, and belatedly realising that the smooth running of society rests at least as much on tradespeople as it does on office drones typing on computers.

Squeezed out

But there's a problem, in that it's also become apparent that practical knowledge isn't as cheap and easy to acquire as the old jokes led us to believe. Moreover, whenever the issue is raised, the discussion tends to focus to post-16 further education.

I believe the issue warrants attention at an earlier stage, in secondary schools. Our curriculum has gradually squeezed out room for acquiring the kind of knowledge Michelangelo alluded to when he said, “I saw the angel in the marble and carved until I set him free”. If children aren't given opportunities to explore the nature of craft in a systematic, disciplined fashion early in secondary education, why should they suddenly be expected to make wise choices about vocational training and education at 16?

The social commentator David Goodhart addresses some of these themes in his latest book *Head, Hand, Heart: the struggle for dignity and status in the 21st century*, which we recently discussed at the Academy of Ideas Education



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

Forum (a film of the discussion can be viewed via **bit.ly/ts102-aoi1**).

Goodhart isn't an educationalist, and his book is principally a work of sociology. However, it concerns the intersection between different kinds of knowledge and their place in schools and beyond. It examines the instrumental purposes to which education – particularly higher education – is put in our society and the 'credentialing' role of exams. It questions the function of education in creating democratic citizens, and the part played by education in creating a new type of elite – all of which I believe are important issues for those working in schools.

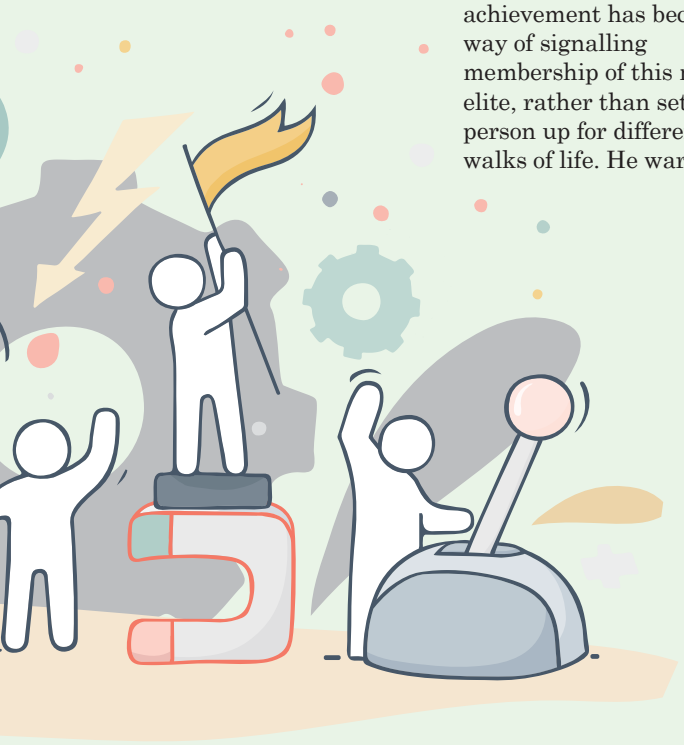
Head over hand

Goodhart's central claim is that "smart people have become too powerful". By this, he means that the abilities needed to pass exams and handle information efficiently has become "the gold standard of human esteem". Those possessing such aptitudes have subsequently formed a new class – a 'mass elite', as he calls it – which is shaping society in its own interests.

For those employed in manual work or the caring professions, it's another matter entirely. "It is becoming harder to feel satisfaction and self-respect living an ordinary, decent life, especially in the bottom part of the income spectrum," writes Goodhart.

In the process, secondary education has become largely predicated on getting as many people into university as possible, thus placing a disproportionate focus on the 'head' (the cognitive-analytical), to the detriment of 'hand' (the practical and somatic) and 'heart' (the social). Those taking non-graduate paths are getting increasingly left behind.

In this way, says Goodhart, one's educational achievement has become a way of signalling membership of this mass elite, rather than setting a person up for different walks of life. He warns that we are now reaching a period of 'peak head', whereby increasing automation driven by artificial intelligence, combined with an oversupply of the analytically trained, will most likely lead to a collapse in the status of these 'head workers'.



Restoring dignity

One could read the 'progressive' child-centred, discovery-based learning educational theory of the last 40 years as a pro-hand, pro-heart and anti-head, movement, while the school reforms of the 2010 instigated by Michael Gove might be seen as a pro-head, anti-hand reaction. Goodhart, however, observes the situation as being more complex than this.

Progressive education has done little to improve the prospects of those inclined towards the trades, while the caring professions – notably nursing – have seen an increased demand for academic qualification, all of which has taken place against a backdrop of ever swelling numbers of undergraduates.

So what to do? How might we create a more rounded, liberal education that restores the dignity of hand and heart, according equal status to each? This is perhaps where Goodhart's book is at its weakest, but one interesting proposal he makes is to require for every child to learn at least one practical skill during their secondary education.

He also touches on the difficulties that arise when post-16 vocational education tries to make up for the numeracy and literacy deficits that too often occur earlier on in pupils' education.

One solution currently being discussed among some educationalists, though Goodhart doesn't mention it, is for schools to approach the development of numeracy and literacy differently from the rest of the curriculum, by adopting a 'driving test' proficiency model of assessment – a system whereby pupils may take tests as often as necessary, which they must pass eventually.

Difficult questions

Whatever the way forward, there's much in Goodhart's diagnosis of our contemporary problems that rings true. Secondary education has somewhat lost its intrinsic purpose, and is too often used as a proxy for other aims.

The urge to routinely send young people to university is neither necessary nor to be desired, either individually or socially. The role this plays in distorting the whole system is worthy of scrutiny, Moreover, practical and non-abstract knowledge continues to be sidelined in schools, with subjects such as art, music and dance all facing difficulties. Even the practical aspects of science – a core subject, no less – are in decline.

These are issues that should force all sides in the education debate to ask themselves some difficult questions. Learning as a balanced combination of head, hand and heart is one way of framing the present situation, but the key point is that teachers should continue to think deeply about the wider purpose of what they do, hour-by-hour and day-by-day – and what the wider implications are likely to be for society as a whole.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Gareth Sturdy is a secondary science advisor and teaches mathematics and English to apprentices; he also co-organises the Academy of Ideas Education Forum and can be followed at @stickyphysics

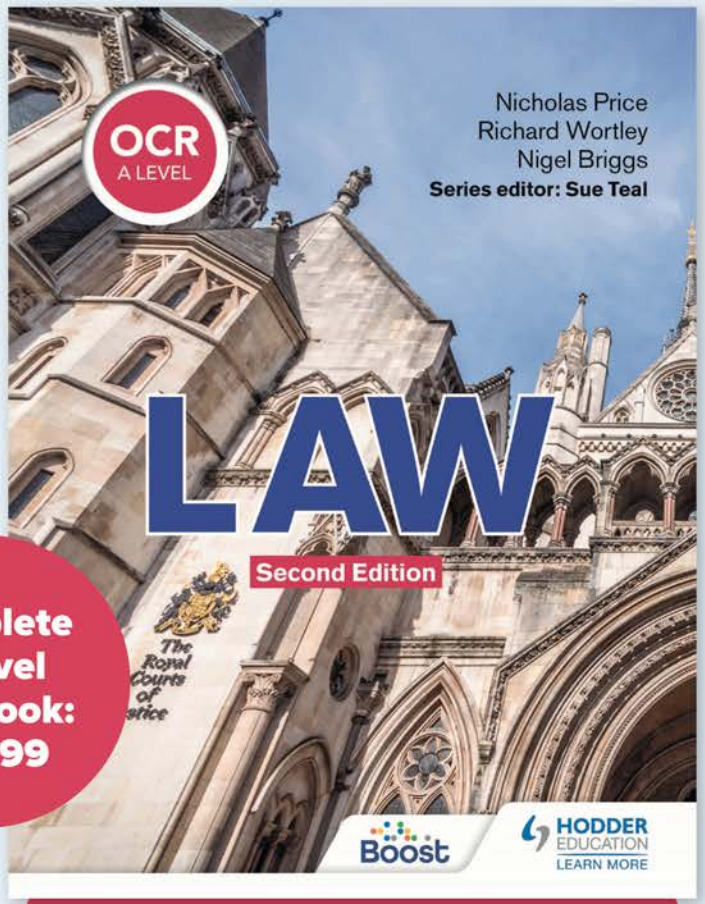
OCR A LEVEL LAW SECOND EDITION

ENDORSED BY OCR

This brand-new edition, publishing in June 2021, incorporates the feedback from teachers we've received in the past four years in order to bring you an OCR A level Law textbook you and your students can trust.

This student book is fully updated and accessible. It combines Year 1 and Year 2 content for the refreshed OCR specification with brand new cases, activities and features to provide comprehensive support for the A level course.

- Develop a conceptual understanding with full coverage of all topics in the OCR A level specification in one book.
- Establish a firm understanding with key term definitions and tables of relevant cases and legislation for each topic.
- Build sound knowledge and analysis throughout the course with knowledge-based questions and revision summaries at the end of each chapter.



Complete A level Textbook: £39.99

Features

This updated edition is packed full of features to ensure students get the most out of this textbook.

- Tables of key cases and legislation for each topic.
- Close specification links and increased accessibility.
- Focus on material to assist with evaluative content.
- Revision summaries at the end of each chapter.
- Knowledge-based questions to test understanding.
- Updated high-profile cases throughout.
- Study Skills section, including tips on studying and revising and how to prepare for the exams.
- Target skills questions addressing the Assessment Objectives.
- Expansion activities to explore further issues and cases.

Endorsement

This Student Book has been submitted to OCR's endorsement process to ensure it:

- **Fully supports the specification**
- **Passes OCR's rigorous quality assurance programme**
- **Is written by curriculum experts**

This updated edition will also be available as an eBook in our brand-new platform, Boost.

For more information visit the series page at www.hoddereducation.co.uk/OCRLaw

Boost

To pre-order your copy, visit www.hoddereducation.co.uk/OCRLaw

Boost

HODDER EDUCATION
LEARN MORE

WHAT I LEARNT AT SCHOOL

Louise Minchin loved school, but believes the most long-lasting lessons were learnt outside the classroom...

I went to a Catholic girls' boarding school from the age of 10, and it was a complete joy. I loved sport, enjoyed the academic work and have wonderful memories of spending time outside with my friends.

From the very first term, I embraced every sport on offer and looked forward to the turnaround of activities each season. With the exception of hockey – which I avoided after an unfortunate encounter with a stick to the head – I was in the school team for everything. I was obsessive about swimming, and the hours I spent ploughing up and down the school's freezing outdoor pool laid the foundations for my later love of triathlon.

Sport underpinned classroom lessons for me. One advantage of going to a single-sex school was that there were no 'male' or 'female' subjects, but as a voracious reader I always preferred English and languages to science and maths. One of my regrets is not taking Biology O Level, which left a gaping hole in my knowledge that going to a convent school did nothing to fill!

I ended up taking an unconventional academic path, largely thanks to my brilliant, charismatic Spanish teacher. At the time, there was a feeling that

university was either Oxbridge or nothing, but having taken Spanish O level as an extra in the sixth form, I fell in love with the subject and applied to do a Spanish degree at St. Andrew's University. Looking back, it was a brave decision to start a degree without an A level – the school was good at making us believe there were no limitations.

Having said that, one of my most important learning experiences came about because I wanted to prove the school wrong. Told that we were heading for D grades in our economics A Levels, my friend and I got up early every morning to work our way through the syllabus and exam questions. We both ended up with As – an important lesson in the power of knowing what you want and working hard. The early starts also prepared me for 3am wake-up calls as a BBC Breakfast presenter!

Looking back, much of the most significant learning I did at school was outside the classroom. I helped to look after a little girl with disabilities for the Duke of Edinburgh's Award, and spending time with her and her family made a real impact on me.

Even more influential was the death of one of my friends when we were just 14. She was taken ill playing tennis – she had a brain haemorrhage – and I was with her before she went to hospital. People were far less open at the time, and I wish I'd been able to talk more about how I felt and understand better what happened. I still think about her most weeks, and it's been a lifelong sadness – although remembering her also makes me intensely grateful for all the things I have had the opportunity to do.

It's because of experiences like these that I've supported Red Nose Day from the start. Comic Relief does amazing work for people who are struggling with issues that are particularly important to me, including education, nutrition and mental health. There's no doubt that as the impact of the pandemic continues to be felt around the world, help is needed more than ever.

As a parent of a secondary student, I have enormous respect for what teachers have achieved over the past year. My daughter is lucky; we have the resources at home to support her learning, and she's developed resilience and determination that will stand her in good stead. However, I really worry about the digital divide and the long-term impact on many children.

Against this backdrop, I see Red Nose Day as an opportunity for us all to have a bit of fun while making a real difference. I'm certainly looking forward to a bit of silliness come 19th March. Whether students are in school or still learning from home, Red Nose Day is just a great thing to be part of.

Louise Minchin is a journalist, broadcaster, TV presenter and GB Team triathlete for her age group. A long-time supporter of Comic Relief's work, Louise is looking forward to raising money for Red Nose Day on Friday 19th March – readers can download some free resources for secondary schools by visiting comicrelief.com/secondary

The difficulties headteachers have had to contend with in the face of COVID-19 should result in a dramatic reappraisal of the expectations and demands currently placed on school leaders

Melissa Benn

With all the terrible uncertainty over school closures, online learning, assessment and exams since last March, there can't be many of us who won't have asked ourselves, 'Just who would want to be headteacher right now?'

That feeling surely extends beyond just the past year of crisis. School leadership has felt like a tough job for a long time now – certainly for at least the past 10 years of severe budget cuts, summary inspections and constant top-down reforms.

Challenge and reward

And yet, after talking with a number of headteachers in recent weeks, I'm left with a more complex, and in some ways more positive, impression of what school leadership in 2021 is actually like.

Maybe I just happened to chance upon a small, unrepresentative group of especially optimistic leaders, but I was struck by how many insisted that even in these pandemic conditions, 'It's the best job in the world.'

On reflection, it makes sense that the most challenging of periods might also prove to be the most professionally rewarding. The hugely important role that thousands of local schools play in our communities has been clear since the start of the pandemic – particularly through the ways in which they've provided continuity from the past and hope for the future.

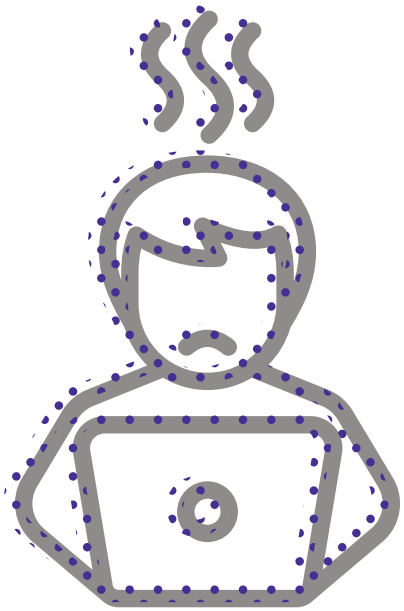
In poorer areas, and for pupils from deprived or disturbed homes, schools have the performed the practical, even life-saving functions of keeping children fed and connected, both on- and offline. Even among more affluent and settled families, schools have similarly provided lifelines of reassurance and encouragement.

Autonomy and accountability

Headteachers feel this renewed sense of purpose and collective appreciation very sharply. They talk of how long periods spent at home have made many pupils realise how much they love coming to school. Home schooling has in turn shown most parents just how hard a job teaching actually is.

Hopefully, the ever growing awareness of mental health across wider society will make headteachers themselves more willing to embrace the emotional support they all need to perform well in what's a tough job. However, when you consider other other long-term changes we've seen in the role of headship, two words regularly come to the fore – 'autonomy' and 'accountability'.

One head told me a story of how, when he began teaching in the early 1970s, a colleague who wanted the school to purchase some electronic calculators was told that they had to 'Check with county', meaning the local authority. Today, for good or ill, heads have far greater freedom on the operational side, with much quicker turnaround on most day-to-day decisions.



But countering this freedom has been a gradual tightening of the screws courtesy of Whitehall, on everything from exam results to summary inspections. Too often, failure to produce the 'right metrics' has resulted in heads unfairly losing their jobs, with such burdens frequently falling more heavily on those leading schools that serve disadvantaged pupils.

Beyond the metrics

It's a vicious cycle that works to scare away generations of future leaders from those very communities that are most in need of need strong, stable education provision – but it's perhaps here that the lessons of the pandemic might yet yield positive changes.

As one head put it to me, if this past year has proved anything, it's that the real value of a school – and indeed education itself – goes 'way beyond the metrics'. School leaders have long known that; it's the rest of us, and government in particular, that's needed reminding.

You can't run a public service well if you're not prepared to listen to those working on the ground. Establishing and sustaining such a dialogue is a fundamental element of good governance.

So far, it's too early to say how this renewed recognition of schools' civic importance will translate to the national or political stage. But I'd happily bet that once the coronavirus is finally under control, headteachers will be keen to play a greater role in future national education reforms, and that politicians will be more willing to listen to them.

They'd be fools not to.

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

The impact of the pandemic on this year's exams should prompt educators everywhere to take a clear-eyed look at grading in schools – why we do it, whom it helps and the numerous problems it can cause...

David Didau

Grades are so much a part of the educational landscape that it's hard to imagine what schools would be like without them. In the debate over whether or not we should retain exams this year, little thought has been given as to whether we should retain 1-9 GCSE grades.

We know that grades can have a toxic and distorting effect on behaviour, which is precisely why Ofsted (and most schools) stopped grading teachers. However, we still appear to think that grading students is a good idea.

The inescapable, grinding focus of raising students' ranks has had a warping effect on the school curriculum. We don't just teach the syllabus – we drill students in test performance in order to ensure they get the best possible results. Inevitably, this means there's far less time to think about meaning, less time to develop taste and judgement, and less time to explore and digress. In fact, there's less time to do all those things that probably drove you to become a teacher in the first place.

Who benefits?

Whatever you think education is for, there's scant evidence that grades are likely to help. If we believe the purpose of education is to make children happier, healthier, safer, more creative, better critical thinkers and so on, it's not obvious how grading students helps us in these aims.

When we consider the effort we put into feeding the grading machine, it seems clear that the actual purpose of education is to sort students into distinct groups – those capable of going to university and entering high-status careers, and those who aren't.

Essentially, grading only benefits *someone else*. GCSE grades help post-16 providers sort students into academic or vocational pathways. A Level grades are useful for universities, and university classifications are in turn considered useful by employers.

Why should it be the job of schools to make it easier for universities to recruit those students they'd rather have at their institution? If universities want to know who'd be most suitable for their courses, can't they organise their own grading system? For that matter, why should it be universities' responsibility to provide gradings for employers? If employers need grades to help them decide whom to employ, shouldn't they organise grading systems of their own?

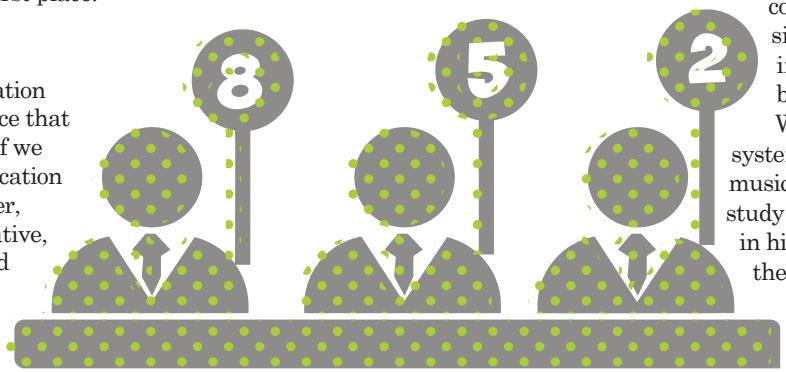
Perverse incentives

Beyond that, *are* there any other upsides to grading students? Well, grades are popular with (some) parents, and make it (superficially) easier to hold schools and teachers to account – but high stakes accountability systems inevitably produce perverse incentives, making it increasingly hard for everyone in the system to have scruples. If we're being honest, there's huge pressure to scour examination reports for hints and tricks, pay examiners to provide training and replace broad curriculums with ones focussed on maximising test performance. I don't think anyone – teachers, students or parents – really wants this.

If grades produce so many net negatives, then we need a better justification for retaining them than the fear that schools and teachers are so untrustworthy that there's no other option. If we really are that untrustworthy, it's probably sensible to look at the systemic pressures that might be driving this.

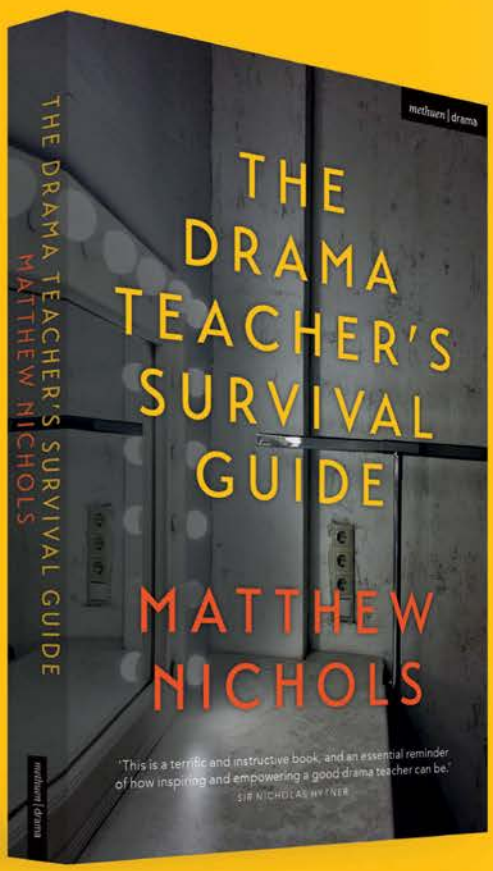
Getting rid of grades certainly doesn't mean getting rid of assessment. Assessment is the life-breath of teaching; without it, teachers and students are left to fumble entirely in the dark. We could perhaps mitigate the negative effects of grades by introducing driving test-style pass/fail certifications in different subjects, which students would be allowed to retake as many times as necessary. This could be used to demonstrate a basic level of competence, which would signal to employers that an important threshold had been passed.

We could also introduce a system like the one used in music grades, where students study for, and take examinations in higher levels as and when they're ready to. If we really want to grade, let's at least not make it an all-or-nothing, one-shot attempt.



David Didau is senior lead practitioner for English at Ormiston Academies Trust; his new book, *Making Meaning* in English, is available now, published by Routledge

NEW INSPIRATIONAL BOOKS FOR ALL DRAMA TEACHERS



The Drama Teacher's Survival Guide

Matthew Nichols

"This is a terrific and instructive book, and an essential reminder of how inspiring and empowering a good drama teacher can be. I hope it's read widely and that new generations of pupils and teachers benefit from its wisdom and its verve."

– Nick Hytner, former Artistic Director of the National Theatre

The Drama Teacher's Survival Guide provides support, inspirational ideas and rock-solid guidance for secondary drama teachers. Written by Matthew Nichols, drama teacher for 12 years, this book offers a range of strategies, case studies and methods that really work.

Chapters include:

What is a Drama Teacher?
Building a Curriculum
Creating, Performing, Responding
Surviving: The Pressure Points
Engaging with Contemporary Work
The Bits in Between

9781350092679 | £19.99

100 Acting Exercises for 8-18 year olds

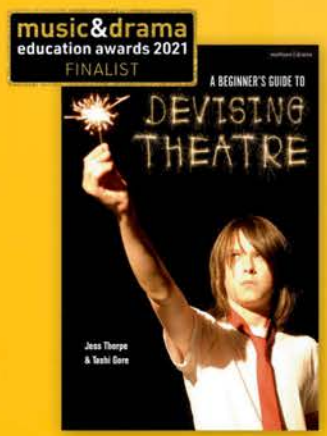
Samantha Marsden

"An ambitious book which will surely become a classroom staple ... Its breadth and the detail [is] invaluable."

– Drama and Theatre

A comprehensive guide to teaching acting exercises that will unleash the inner creativity of your students. These exercises have been tried and tested in the author's own classroom, and are guaranteed to inspire, ignite imagination and encourage confident performances.

9781350049949 | £15.99



A Beginner's Guide to Devising Theatre

Jess Thorpe and Tashi Gore

"This book demonstrates just how much drama can contribute to educational development."

– Ink Pellet

Aimed at students or teachers new to devising theatre, this book offers a structure within which to approach the creative process. It includes ideas on finding a starting point, generating material, composition and design, and explores creative ways to create original theatre from a contemporary stimulus.

9781350025943 | £21.99

Order before 31st March for a **20% discount** on all these titles, using online code TEACHSEC21

Sign up for new English and Drama titles, discounts and author Q&As at **bloomsbury.com/newsletter** (select English and Drama for Schools)

www.bloomsbury.com/drama

BLOOMSBURY

Our priority should be to help students learn and succeed, despite an uneven playing field – but we shouldn't neglect the anxieties and concerns that affect our colleagues...

Vic Goddard

I have to admit that these lockdowns are starting to feel like the *Police Academy* film franchise. One was okay, but surely it was time to stop after two...?

Don't get me wrong – having a purpose at a time of national crisis is a privilege, but the requirement to meet needs that have been way beyond us previously has been really difficult. The challenges we face have never seemed greater, and yet at the same we're subject to more scrutiny and criticism than ever before.

In lockdown 1, we took the decision at Passmores to not make online lessons part of our core, 'compulsory' offer. There were lots of reasons for doing this, but ultimately it was because we couldn't do it fairly, in a way that ensured everyone had sufficient access to them.

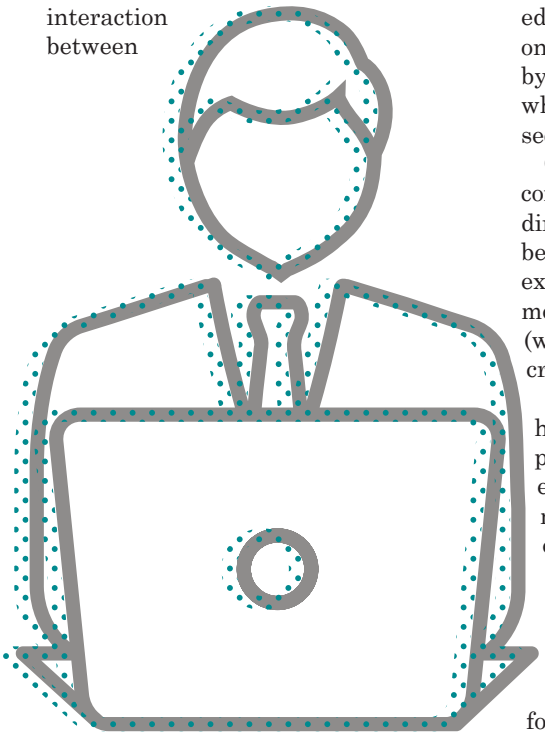
This time has been different on many levels. The impact of the weather on the general mental health of the community has been very clear. Being at home was a great deal easier when the sun was shining, as reflected by the communications we're now receiving. Like most headteachers, I've resigned myself to not being able to please the whole community, because people have strongly held views that are so disparate as to make that impossible.

Competency and confidence

The parent/carer responses we've received regarding our current online learning offer highlight that spread of views. Since deciding to use technology as our primary delivery tool, I've had a fairly equal number of emails saying '*It's too much*' versus '*Every moment should be a live lesson*', which probably means we're getting it broadly right. This uneven technological playing field isn't just confined to our students, though; the spread of tech competency and confidence is similarly wide among staff, but barely remarked upon.

We could discuss the merits and impact of live online lessons versus working from textbooks forever. The fact remains that schools have taken the best approach for their communities, once all other factors have been taken into consideration. However, I do wonder how many of us have thought to factor in staff confidence as a major influence – or did we simply presume that all staff would be okay?

The use of technology in lessons is far from being the 'default' setting. For most, the interaction between teacher and students in order to share knowledge and develop skills lies at the core of what they do. It's in their ability to react to what they see and hear that a skilled teacher will really shine, and when the best learning often happens.



Once that's removed, and we're forced us to rely on third parties for even basic communication with our young people, is it any surprise that edtech can become a source of great anxiety for many teachers?

Leading learners

I believe we should be celebrating all the teachers out there who are learning new skills and developing new pedagogy. Apologies to my friend Stephen Tierney for borrowing his Twitter moniker, but we really are the 'leading learners' in our communities.

I've actively encouraged staff to be honest with students about their own edtech journeys, because I can't be the only teacher who's had to be bailed out by a student when using an interactive whiteboard or similar – after all, they see them used all the time.

Of course, a teacher's level of confidence with using edtech isn't directly linked to their age, but let's be honest – it's often the more experienced teachers who feel the most concern about using technology (which is in no way meant as a criticism – just an observation).

As we approach the end of what will hopefully be our last lockdown in this pandemic, we should reflect on the extent to which we've served as role models to our young people in terms of acquiring new knowledge and skills. I've seen the amazing effort and earned success of our teaching staff, and hope that we can all find the time to stop and celebrate our own learning – just as we would for our young people.

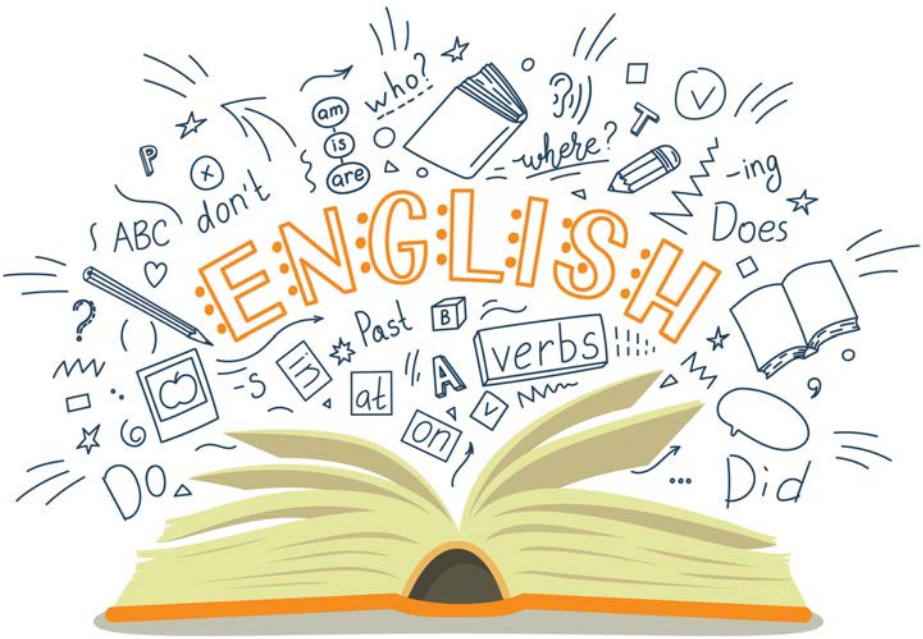
Vic Goddard is headteacher at Passmores Academy – as seen on Channel 4's Educating Essex – and author of *The Best Job in the World* (Independent Thinking Press, £14.99)

LEXONIK

Award-winning company based in the North East of England, working with teachers globally to raise attainment and supercharge literacy skills.

literacy at the speed of sound

Based on decades of research and experience in phonology, literacy and dyslexia, our **'literacy at the speed of sound'** programmes are unique, giving teachers and students the skills to make **dramatic improvements in reading, spelling and vocabulary.**



"Students' reading ability is impacting their progress across the curriculum"

Lexonik Advance rapidly improves reading and comprehension, with average reading age gains of 27 months in just 6 sessions

"Gaps in phonics knowledge, but we don't know how to identify and close the gaps"

Lexonik Leap includes a diagnostic assessment, allowing you to personalise the phonics intervention pathway

"We don't have a strategic approach to the teaching of vocabulary whole school"

Lexonik Vocabulary is a cloud-based resource to facilitate and enhance the teaching of vocabulary in every classroom

Lexonik's reading and vocabulary programmes secure the foundations of learning for any age of learner.

We're here to help you close the gaps

enquiries@lexonik.co.uk | www.lexonik.co.uk

LEXONIK

Keeping drama alive

Sarah Eastaff finds out how drama teachers are ensuring their students get to experience the magic of live theatre with help from the National Theatre Collection

Students will often experience their first live theatre performance through school, via a theatre trip or a visiting theatre company. Whilst many theatres remain closed, however, drama teachers are adapting their delivery and helping to keep the spark of theatre alive, both in the classroom and when teaching remotely.

The National Theatre Collection, available on Bloomsbury Publishing's Drama Online platform, provides a gateway to live theatre performance, with recordings of 30 world class productions that teachers can stream direct into their classrooms or share with students studying at home. The Collection is free for all state schools and colleges UK-wide, and comes with a range of accompanying learning resources that includes teaching guides, workshop ideas and rehearsal diaries to aid students' understanding of play texts and theatre-making.

With over 3,000 state secondary schools currently registered, we asked drama teachers across the country how they're using the Collection to give their students the best seats in the house.

The teachers

Layla Taylor – *St Ambrose College, Altrincham*
Elizabeth Ransome – *Chorlton High School, Manchester*
Glyn Juliff – *The Wellington Academy, Wiltshire*

How have you found using NT Collection?

LT: The NT Collection has been really helpful. It's great that young people can watch quality theatre productions and learn about theatrical styles and techniques in the classroom.

EB: We've enjoyed watching the productions in school – they work as both an educational tool and an end of term treat.

GJ: Invaluable – it's a priceless treasure that every teacher should be tapped into. It's jam-packed with so many resources that help me with planning and exposing my students to a plethora of theatre and the arts.

What topics have you been exploring?

LT: Y7 are watching *Peter Pan* and learning how to critique a production for the first time, whilst Y8 are learning about theatre history. Not only did they roar with laughter at *One Man, Two Guvnors*, it was also a perfect example of Commedia Del Arte, and helped them analyse what makes comedy successful.

ER: Our BTEC performing arts cohort have learnt about design, lighting and costume with *Treasure Island*, which has also helped with students' knowledge and understanding of English literature, storytelling and creative writing skills.

GJ: We've been looking at stage design skills and technical aspects, such as lighting. The striking production of *Treasure Island* highlights the spectacle of what theatre can be, and everything that encompasses this.

How useful has the Collection been for you?

LT: When you're watching productions you can pause to offer explanations or raise questions, which wouldn't otherwise be possible.

ER: It's absolutely a great resource for drama teachers, especially since we're finding it more and more costly to take students out to see live theatre.

GJ: It's a priceless service, and so cross curricular – there's something for everyone, including other subjects. The NT Collection has helped bridge strong links with our English department, particularly in A Level with *A Streetcar Named Desire*.

What tips would you give to other teachers?

LT: There's a great network of drama teachers, theatres and theatre companies on Twitter, all supporting each other with competitions and resources.

ER: We've adapted to teaching classes in base classrooms, in place of our usual studio spaces. We've had local theatre companies in, such as Odd Arts (oddarts.co.uk), which have led workshops and performances on knife crime. We're managing to get students to experience theatre as practically as is physically possible.

GJ: I've been holding workshop-style lessons where I give students the autonomy to shape their own acting pathway. My Y9s are undertaking a performing arts industry project, where they're given stimulus and delegate roles within the sector in groups to bring it to life!

National Theatre

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

Sarah Eastaff is secondary and further education programme manager at the National Theatre; to find out more, visit nationaltheatre. org.uk/learning or follow @NT_Schools

"Recognise your Best Professionals"

SSAT's Andy Williams explains how Lead Practitioner Accreditation can supercharge your professional conversations, staff interactions and learning discoveries

ABOUT ME:

NAME:
ANDY WILLIAMS

JOB ROLE:
CONSULTANT

ORGANISATION:
SSAT

Having been instrumental in training hundreds of Lead Practitioners, moderators and in-school trainers, Andy continues to delight in hearing about the impact SSAT Lead Practitioners have made in their schools

TALKING ABOUT: LEAD PRACTITIONER ACCREDITATION

What is an SSAT Lead Practitioner?

This is an exercise we do in training – and it's a tough one! Just some of the descriptors are a 'leader of learning', a 'change agent', a 'brilliant communicator', a 'researcher', a 'negotiator', and 'coach'. In short, they're the ones who effect positive impact on school priorities – making a difference!

Through their efforts at extending their reach – carrying out small-scale action research and nurturing colleagues' professional development – Lead Practitioners provide tangible insights into 'what works' in context, producing learning portfolios that inform and educate others. They help other teachers perform their roles better, more confidently and more professionally than ever before.

Why Lead Practitioner Accreditation?

Any school leader will tell you that the very best professionals in your school need to be recognised, valued and celebrated, and SSAT's Lead Practitioner Accreditation does just that. The programme improves the professional skills and expertise of all those involved in educating children and young people, offering an accreditation that validates the absolute best practitioners who are embedding and extending teaching and learning; who inspire and develop others.

Accreditation is the quality mark of excellent practice and of a school's commitment to professional learning, delivered through a blended approach of training and coaching online and offline.

Contact:
To learn more about SSAT Lead Practitioner Accreditation and its whole school impact, visit **ssatuk.co.uk/lpa**

How does it benefit the individual?

The Lead Practitioner standards framework guides participants in the questions to ask of themselves and others. They see each interaction with colleagues as a professional learning opportunity.

As Lisa Hamilton, Lead Practitioner in English at Bristnall Hall Academy, recalls, "I became involved in a staffroom discussion about deepening students' responses to marking. Before I knew it, we were researching approaches to marking – critically evaluating each one, and planning a pupil voice workshop. What could have been a fleeting conversation became a moment of deep thinking."

Why should a school or trust introduce the programme?

The beauty of the programme is that it's a scalable and sustainable model that tracks school improvement projects and develops individual leaders.

SSAT's Lead Practitioner Accreditation is transformational, and leaders should take the time to investigate how it can benefit their school or trust.

SSAT LEAD PRACTITIONER ACCREDITATION PROVIDES...

+ A standards framework with a focus on impact for benchmarking in leadership of learning

+ A professional development online tool and learning portfolio to identify and set professional targets

+ A formative process that encourages evaluation, critical reflection and collaboration

+ Training to develop skills and attributes to lead learning across all contexts

3 things we've learnt about... TEACHERS' PREDICTIONS FOR 2021

Teachers now have far more confidence when it comes to livestreaming lessons, but also rather less in the way of optimism compared to last year, observes **Laura McInerney**...

1 What a difference a year makes!

During the first lockdown, most state secondary schools struggled to offer livestreamed lessons. Online platforms were used regularly; but live videos were impractical for a range of reasons – including a lack of laptops for students, as well as concerns over safeguarding and teacher privacy.

This time round, over 90% of secondary schools are offering at least some livestreamed lessons. Those schools sticking to non-synchronous lessons are almost invariably in the country's poorest areas and more concerned about students' lack of access to devices. Teachers have also flagged that they're not necessarily 'teaching' every lesson online. Some are livestreaming their registration sessions at the start and end of the day, so that there's always some daily face-to-face interaction – a good compromise!

2 Online teaching induces anxiety

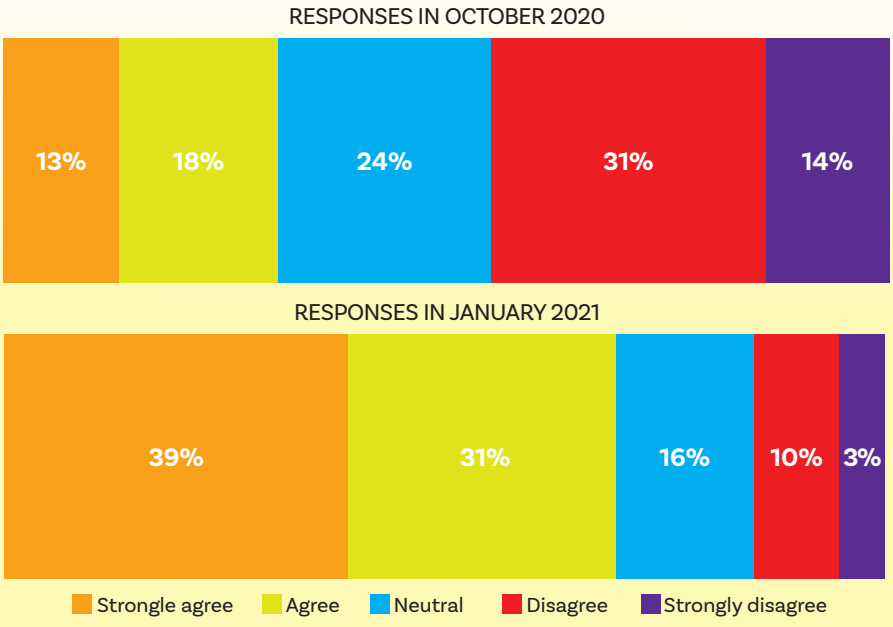
During the first lockdown, secondary teachers experienced especially high anxiety levels around the switch to remote learning. These later dropped back to more typical rates throughout the summer (but not for heads, nor those in private schools).

Heads have experienced unrelentingly high anxiety since the start of the crisis. By the start of 2021, a full half scored at the top end for work-related anxiety (typically it's around 12%). For private school teachers, switching instantly to livestreamed lessons added a huge burden, with most recording extremely high workloads throughout the summer term. With state schools now matching the private sector for online learning, teachers' workload and anxiety will likely remain high throughout lockdown and beyond. Watching out for each other's wellbeing is therefore even more important than usual.

3 Should exams have been cancelled?

Mostly, yes. Hearing that this year's exams were cancelled came as a blow to many secondary teachers, but most were in favour of the announcement when it was made. Last October, only 30% of teachers felt that the 2021 exams should be cancelled; optimistic, perhaps, that a second wave wouldn't materialise.

Come Christmas, however, some parts of the country had been under strict measures for the whole of the autumn term. One in three schools had sent their Y11s home for at least one two-week quarantine spell. Some had to do this three times! So, when we asked again about exams – just 24 hours before the government's announcement – 70% were in favour. As difficult as it will be to award grades, the government did follow the profession's majority view.



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

teachwire.net/secondary

CLASSROOM LIFE

A warm welcome

Victoria Hearn reflects on how a deep commitment to inclusion helped Impington Village College address a unique set of challenges during an extraordinary year

Impington Village College is a genuinely comprehensive school, in that we're not selective in any way.

We teach students who are the children of academics from nearby Cambridge University, students from fairly disadvantaged backgrounds and a large number of students with SEN. Around 90 of our students have EHCPs, which is more than some special schools.

As an International Baccalaureate World School, our ethos and mission are tied around the idea of being 'inclusive', 'inspirational' and 'international', which we try to keep at the heart of everything we do. A number of our students have physical disabilities, who came to us because of the specialist provision we're able to offer. We're also a Stonewall Champion School, and were the first school in our area to win a Carnegie Gold Award for excellence in mental health. Inclusivity in every sense is really important to us.

Curriculum breadth

Our 'inspirational' component involves us recognising the importance of academic excellence, but not at the expense of extracurricular opportunities and a positive all-round learning experience. Year on year our students will earn grade 9s, despite us being completely non-selective. Our International Baccalaureate outcomes in sixth form are similarly strong, but for us, the opportunities students have to develop outside of the classroom and beyond those exam grades are hugely significant.

We run an enrichment programme called ICAS – Impington Creativity, Activity and Service – which runs as part of our timetable. Tuesday afternoons would ordinarily see our students 'off timetable', with staff delivering around 60 different experiences. Students get to pick one activity, one creativity task and one service role each term – we then run everything from fencing to Portuguese language lessons to baking, you name it. Pre-COVID, we would also have had over a hundred students volunteering in the local community each week, in primary schools and care homes, for example.

Something that sets us apart from state schools, and even some independent schools, is the breadth of the curriculum we offer. There aren't many schools that can offer five languages at GCSE (10 at sixth form), and we're similarly passionate about the arts. In all, we offer over 30 courses at GCSE, and around 35 choices as part of the IB Diploma programme.

IN NUMBERS

Date established: 1939
Age range: Y7 to Y13
Student population: 1,400
Staff: 200
Of note: Impington Village College was recently chosen as the top non-selective secondary school in East Anglia by the Sunday Times' Parent Power 2021

Learner profiles

At the heart of our pastoral system and behaviour policy is the IB learner profile. The philosophy of the IB is centred on developing students who are knowledgeable and inquiring, but also caring, principled and open-minded.

We'll remind students when they might not be demonstrating those attributes, but also recognise when they are. A big part of the IB philosophy focuses on reflection; making sure that students are reflecting on

STUDENTS GET TO PICK ONE ACTIVITY, ONE CREATIVITY TASK AND ONE SERVICE ROLE EACH TERM – WE THEN RUN EVERYTHING FROM FENCING TO PORTUGUESE LANGUAGE LESSONS TO BAKING, YOU NAME IT.

VICTORIA HEARN, PRINCIPAL

their actions, and that they understand the consequences of those actions.

If a student does something that results in some form of sanction, there will often be a restorative meeting where they sit down, reflect on their behaviour and are given an opportunity to talk things through with a member of our pastoral team.

We operate a vertical house system, with each house having a deputy head who predominately supervises Y7 and Y8, and a head who looks after Y9 to Y11. They're given a fairly generous allocation of time, so that at different points throughout the year, when different year groups might need additional support, that time and knowledge is available from the house team.

Screen breaks

At present, we have around 60 students in school – a small number of key worker children, our EHCP students, plus a handful of vulnerable students. Those students are accessing the same provision as their peers at home, however, since we're delivering lessons scheduled to our normal timetable.

That said, we have shortened the length of lessons slightly, so that they're around 45 to 60 minutes. That's designed to give our staff and students screen breaks, since we're conscious that sitting in front of a screen all day isn't especially conducive to general wellbeing. Staff are otherwise delivering fully live lessons using Microsoft Teams, setting assignments and giving students feedback on their work, just as they would normally.

All students still have tutor time, and are continuing to take part in ICAS sessions from home on Tuesday afternoons, where they get to choose from various enrichment opportunities. We've endeavoured to set up an arrangement that's pretty much as close to normal as we can get.

Upfront and honest

Student wellbeing is obviously important to us, but so too is looking after our staff. Where they've needed to, be it for mental health reasons or technology issues, staff been able to come into college, but on the whole they've been encouraged to work from home. We've also switched to using remote software for events like parents evenings.

Where we've had students needing to self-isolate, or year groups that have had to be sent home, we've looked to deliver live or streamed lessons. Where some students have been at home and some in college, we've delivered in-college lessons to student groups while simultaneously streaming them to students dialling in from home.

During this time, we feel that our standard of communication has been one of our real strengths. We've had a great deal of positive feedback, particularly in the last few months, from parents regarding our communication arrangements, which I see as the result of us being very transparent and honest about the situation we've found ourselves in, and the subsequent uncertainties.

We've explained carefully how we're dealing with those, what we're planning to do, and the limits of what we can provide. I've been sending regular updates to parents at least once a week, and sometimes daily or even hourly, depending on the situation. Throughout, we've attempted to show why we're doing the things we're doing, and why we've made the decisions we have – all of which has been hugely important.

Professional lessons

I first joined Impington in September 2014 as assistant principal, and became principal of the school in 2020. The main professional lesson I've learnt since then is the importance of being able to remain calm, and the impact that has on the wider staff body. I've also learnt lots about the importance of professional honesty, and the need to be upfront with people – staff as much as parents – about what leadership decisions are being made and why.

The two things that remain most important to us as a school are the wellbeing of our staff and students, and the teaching and learning experience. What we've endeavoured to do throughout the pandemic, as much as we can, is make sure that our students and staff are well looked after, and that they receive the best possible experience.

What we've been doing

Helen Turner, lead for international education, describes how the school's international exchange activities have taken on a rather different form this year...

Despite overseas trips currently being off limits, this academic year we've still been extremely keen to continue with our programme of cultural exchanges.

Throughout November, our Sixth Form International Baccalaureate Japanese Ab Initio and Year 7/8 enrichment groups took part in a number of virtual exchanges and live lessons with our partner school in Morioka, Japan. The aim of these short lessons was to engage both sets of students with different cultures and classrooms, widening their understanding of the languages and allowing them to put their hard work into practice.

It was 5pm in Japan and 8am in the UK, and the lessons kickstarted the day with a bang. The students thoroughly enjoyed themselves, and were thrilled to even make it in to the Morioka local newspaper!

Jigsaw®

The mindful approach to PSHE 11-16

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

Comprehensive coverage of PSHE/Health and Well-Being

- Fulfils 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

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
23rd February 2021 4-4.30pm
See www.jigsawpshe.com for details and how to book your place

office@janlevergroup.com | +44 (0)1202 377192 | www.jigsawpshe.com

CLASSROOM VOICES

What students can learn from Stoicism

Character education informed by a philosophy of Stoicism can do much to help our students confront the challenges presented by the pandemic, says **James Baggaley**

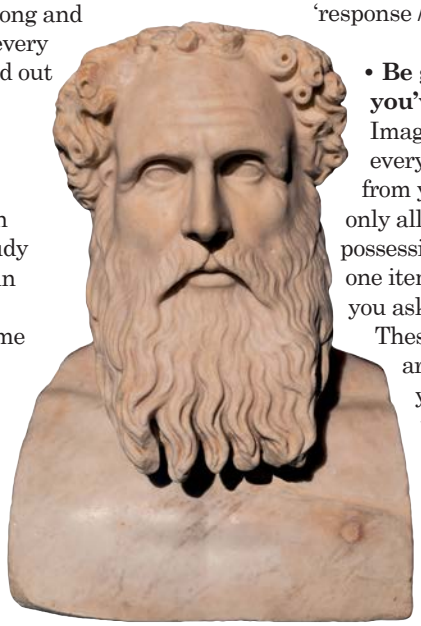
At every school I've worked at, I've clearly seen how pupils are affected by different learning environments. As a teacher, I see how they fare in a classroom environment; how some thrive, whilst others simply endure it. As a rugby coach, I've seen how much some students enjoy being on the pitch, and how amazing it is when children who have struggled in the classroom can contribute to the fortunes of the school team.

Finally, as a housemaster, I've seen groups of pupils demonstrate outstanding generosity and leadership within the boarding environment – whether that be through organising events, or comforting those who might be homesick.

CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT

Seeing how differently pupils can respond to different environments has shaped the way I approach the fundamentals of education. To me, education is about helping to develop strong and reliable character in every individual, both in and out of the classroom.

I've long been fascinated by the idea of 'character', and in 2016 was given the opportunity to study for a Masters degree in character education. During this time I came to appreciate that there was a deeper, more philosophical dimension to character development, beyond the more obvious (but perhaps less helpful) 'macho' conception of character education I'd held previously.



I've since explored ideas relating to character that span Eastern and Western traditions of thought – everything from Taoist and Confucian philosophies, to reconstructed Virtue Ethics and a modernised Stoic approach. Following the chaos unleashed by the pandemic, however, I've found that the simple messages contained in the Stoic philosophy have proved especially relevant to both myself and my students.

PEACE OF MIND

Core to the Stoic philosophy is the notion that the search for tranquillity involves choosing how best to respond to challenges – and it's proved to be just the tonic many of my students have needed to help keep them grounded. Some of them have been able to find a greater peace of mind when trying out some of the following Stoic-inspired 'response / ability' techniques:

- **Be grateful for what you've got, right now**

Imagine you've had everything taken away from you, and that you're only allowed to have your possessions returned to you one item at a time. What do you ask for first? And second? These are the 'things' that are most important to you, so respond by being thankful for them.

- **Only control what you can control**

Students are currently caught in the middle of numerous arguments relating to education, and increasingly aware that they don't control many of the decisions being made on their behalf. This can cause great anxiety, and it's difficult to know how students should respond.

I've found that discussing the metaphor of an Olympic archer can be very useful here. Archers will work to practise and perfect every element of their art, but they'll never be in control of the arrow once it leaves the bow string, since at that point other forces take over. All archers can control is their *attempt*.

- **Take time to reflect**

This is perhaps the most important response technique of all. In some ways, stoicism is very closely related to journaling. I've previously talked with my students about the important of taking time to reflect on how things have gone from one day to the next, and encouraged them to write their reflections down. Writing our thoughts down allows us to better organise and process our responses to the situations we find ourselves in. Once we've taken time to reflect, the result will often be that we end up making better choices in future. As Stephen Covey would say, we become more '*response-able*'.

Once all this is over, and our students have returned to school, we'll need to encourage and support them with their post-pandemic lives. The school closures and exam fiascos of the past year have shown how dispensable some parts of their existing education are; in response, we should use this opportunity to focus on the one thing that can never be taken away from them, but only grown – their characters.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR
James Baggaley is a teacher of geography and housemaster at St Luke's Ellesmere College

YOU SPOKE. WE LISTENED.

Live • On-Demand • Bespoke

ACCESS AND ENGAGE ANYTIME, ANYWHERE

Our programme of Professional Development events for Spring / Summer 2021 has been produced closely in collaboration with teachers around the UK.

Thank you to everyone who provided ideas and shared feedback on our new line-up of live and on-demand events.

Here's how 2021 is shaping up...

ON-DEMAND

- Guided Assessment Practice Packs
- Downloadable CPD Resource Packs
- Webinars for Students

LIVE

- Online Teacher Workshops split across two afternoons
- Twilight 90-min Teacher Webinars

BUILD YOUR OWN PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Design a bespoke teacher training webinar (or a series of webinars) to meet the needs of your department.

It's simple.

You decide what you want to focus on. We'll work with your school and a leading expert speaker to create an agenda.

Discover today our suite of **live** *and* **on-demand training events**, *as well as our* **student-focused** *opportunities that will inspire and boost confidence.*

For further details, please visit us at
HODDEREDUCATION.CO.UK/EVENTS
or email **events@hoddereducation.co.uk**

HODDER EDUCATION
LEARN MORE

CPD MEMBER
The CPD Certification Service

THE TS GUIDE TO... CPD

Our experts find out how CPD is becoming less directed from above and more driven from below – and why now is the ideal time for making new professional connections

IN THIS SECTION

HOW EFFECTIVE IS REMOTE CPD?

"Evidence is mixed as to whether remotely-delivered personal development is more or less effective than face-to-face PD, but specific benefits include lower costs and time incurred through travel."

"Coaching and mentoring can improve skills and knowledge of professionals when delivered remotely and may reduce feelings of isolation in professionals."

"More interactive content tends to increase the time practitioners take to complete PD and is associated with better completion rates, knowledge and skill acquisition."

Source: Education Endowment Foundation (2020) Remote Professional Development, Rapid Evidence Assessment – see bit.ly/ts102-eef-cpd

3 FREE LESSON PLANS FOR YOUR SCHOOL

8 IDEAS FOR GREAT CPD POSTER
When teachers improve, more pupils succeed. The Teacher Development Trust works with the entire education sector to promote the principles of good CPD; harnessing research in order to drive school improvement and create an environment where teachers truly want to work, thrive and stay. This poster includes eight ideas from David Weston that underpin the Teacher Development Trust's work with hundreds of school leaders.

DOWNLOAD AT: bit.ly/102special1

9 EVIDENCE-BASED FEEDBACK TECHNIQUES FOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS POSTER
Feedback is an essential element in an effective teaching and learning cycle, helping students to understand the steps they need to take in order to deepen their knowledge and improve their skills and motivating them to apply the effort required to take those steps.

DOWNLOAD AT: bit.ly/102special2

OBSERVED LESSON PLAN TEMPLATE FOR PRIMARY (ADAPTABLE FOR SECONDARY)
A useful lesson plan template to help you remember everything you need when planning for an observation. Suitable for any year group in primary and adaptable for secondary, it includes helpful tips and higher-level thinking questions to help structure the lesson and ensure that everyone makes progress.

DOWNLOAD AT: bit.ly/102special3

COLLABORATION AND CREATIVITY

Alex More considers how the profound disruptions endured by schools have helped pave the way for more positive attitudes around staff development and educational technology

I may be alone in saying it, but from my perspective, this has been perhaps the most creative time in education I've ever encountered in the 19 years I've been teaching.

When I'm in school, most days are busy and I don't get much time to stop. Now, however, on the two days I'm at home I have valuable time between lessons, where normally I'd be pulled from pillar to post.

In just one recent seven-day period, for example, I spoke to people in Dubai, Finland, New York and Australia on different timescales. Connecting with educators across the world to discuss the problems we're all having to manage has been fascinating. How are they doing in their settings? What technologies are they using? What 'hacks' have they found that are useful, and which we might be able to share with the schools in our trust?

It's been a really interesting time for collaboration and creativity. There's currently a lot of content out there, thanks to many educators using their own extra time in creative ways. Not all of it is great, but some of what's available is genuinely groundbreaking.

Phenomenal technology

At the same time, some of the technology we've seen emerge to help with online learning has been phenomenal. An example we've recently used ourselves is a platform called Mosaic 3D, which allows users to render a virtual 3D model on a screen and interact with it.

> ***"This has been perhaps the most creative time in education I've ever encountered"***

For example, a biology teacher can 'dissect' a heart, zooming in on the aorta and pulmonary vein. The effect is really 'in your face' – it's a powerful technology that's had a hugely positive impact on students' engagement with the content I've been teaching.

An online service that's perhaps not on many people's radar is WaterBear. This is a streaming video platform that's free for educators, and which hosts a large selection of feature-length and short films focusing on the natural world, all shot really well and in high definition.

Google have meanwhile launched a new service called Earth Studio, which is essentially Google Earth taken to the next level. I teach a lot of sport, and when I was recently covering the Japan 2021 Olympics, I was able to show my class the process of zooming in from the stratosphere, all the way down to where the events will be hosted from a street-level view.

Habitual practice

When it comes to making use of these and other ideas across the whole school, however, there can often be some resistance. The way in which teaching has been structured for the past decade has, I believe, encouraged teachers to become quite habitual in their practice. They have their classes and their classrooms, and that's just the way things are. It's sometimes difficult to get staff to look beyond that, because they're comfortable with the day-to-day practice of what they're already doing.

We've been able to introduce some new ideas at Shaftesbury School that have been fairly effective over the years – one of which was to organise trios of working groups. We have 60 teaching staff in our school, and around 15 TAs. We placed every member of staff in a group of three, being very careful as to which groups each individual was assigned to.

We would often start with a lead expert – someone with a real passion for an idea like growth mindset or knowledge organisers. We then partnered them with someone a little less enthusiastic about those notions – but in the context of a trio, having added a third person to the group, there are fewer places to hide. The idea is for every member of staff to be exposed to new ideas, whether they agree with them or not. For us, it's intended mainly as a nurturing environment for new ideas, rather than an INSET activity where staff are explicitly instructed in the workings of a new initiative.

Another practice we've adopted is to film our teachers teaching, either via Teams or in physical classes. We'll then produce six-minute snippets of these lessons for distribution across the trust's Sharepoint site, which teachers can dip into at the direction of their line managers.

For example, I may have someone who, in my view, isn't questioning very well in their lessons – it may be that I can signpost them towards a certain video. That can serve as a small nudge for them to rediscover their mojo, because teaching is hard. Teachers have targets to meet and lots of content to get through, so it's natural for them to sometimes silo themselves away from their colleagues.

Bouncing back

Once the dust settles, post-pandemic, I think educational technology will be one of biggest beneficiaries. Teachers have now had to embrace it, and been given little choice in the matter. As a result, they're naturally going to have more confidence in using educational technology in a better, more creative way than they may have done in the past.

I also think we can expect to see a bit more awareness of how difficult teaching is as a profession, and greater awareness around how mental health can affect staff and students. Recovering from what we've been through is going to be an involved process that staff will be at the forefront of. Our students, as actors in the learning, will have to be resilient and bounce back themselves.

I do, however, believe that education will change in some positive ways as a result of this – with more flexibility perhaps being built into the system, and technology ultimately driving forward that positive change.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR
Alex More is assistant headteacher at Shaftesbury School; follow him at @Alex_MoreEd

Atif Mahmood, founder and CEO of the lesson planning platform Teacherly, shares his thoughts on how schools can foster a culture of collaboration

What can be some of the main obstacles preventing schools from building effective cultures of collaboration?
Schools will rarely collaborate with other schools, even in the same chain or group, because of a lack of leaders who truly understand how to embrace a more collaborative approach to teaching and learning. Time is a constraint, and the need to constantly deliver lessons, deliver results and climb league tables is one of the reasons why there isn't a greater culture of collaboration. The English curriculum itself is a barrier to developing a culture of collaboration

What are some of the most novel or innovative strategies you've seen teachers and schools use to address the challenges of COVID?
We've seen may adopting social tools to promote collaboration, through which teachers can share ideas and have space to support one another. Teachers have gone to websites like Udemy and Coursera to learn more about remote teaching or remote working, while headteachers have taken advantage of platforms like Teacherly and WhatsApp to encourage staff to support each other both online and offline.

What do you see as the most encouraging, and most damaging, impacts of the pandemic across the teaching profession?
The most damaging long-term effect of the pandemic on the teaching profession may be the large numbers of teachers choosing to leave the profession because they want more of a work-life balance. Similarly, some students, particularly those with additional learning needs, may be worse off following the pandemic, because remote learning and teaching platforms aren't necessarily geared towards catering to those needs.

In terms of more encouraging effects, we may start to see schools developing more of a hybrid/blended learning model in future, and doing more to embrace flexible working and learning. There's an opportunity now to reinvent the way we assess pupils and change legacy systems that have been in place for many years.

For more information, visit teacherly.io

Teachers are doing it for themselves

The desire among teachers to forge their own professional training path is inspiring, but that enthusiasm must be properly co-ordinated if they're to succeed, says **Nicola Brooks**...

We live in a golden age of professional development. Never have there been so many opportunities for teachers to share, learn and grow. From #BrewEd to #WomenEd, the leadership of professional learning is changing. Gone are the days of listening to consultancy firms running through PowerPoints in hotels; teachers now talk from their classrooms, having taken up the mantle of providing professional development for themselves.

Arise then, the 'teacher educator' – those among us who see supporting teachers as synonymous with supporting children. To put it another way, if I teach a class of 30 children I change 30 lives. If I teach a room of 30 teachers, I potentially change 900 lives.

But how different is teaching adults to teaching children? What skills do I need and how do I start?

Determine your training needs

You may already have a development plan in place to help structure your school's professional learning. If not, or if you're looking to supplement your existing programme, then it's best to start by carrying out a needs analysis. As well as providing a useful starting point for content, this will increase the likelihood of engagement, since you'll be giving practitioners what they actually need.

You might begin by thinking about specific groups. Early career teachers, for example, may need more exemplars and time between sessions to apply their learning. Don't forget to consider wider staff groups too, such TAs, ancillary staff and governors. *All* school staff contribute to the development of children, and therefore deserve access to effective training programmes that will allow them to further develop their skills.

Having identified your training needs and audience, you'll then need to consider who will actually deliver the training. A common misconception is that CPD leads should plan and lead all training sessions. Whilst CPD leads do love delivering training, and are often very happy to spend their time creating content from scratch, they won't always be the best person to do so.

For subject-specific CPD, you'll likely need a subject expert. Knowing the skills and strengths of your team will allow you to identify the person with the right knowledge. This can be included in your needs analysis – instead of just asking people about their favoured areas for development, also enquire after their areas of strength and what they can offer.

Develop your teacher educators

Transforming teachers into teacher educators isn't always easy. Put a teacher in front of 30 teenagers, and they're right at home; ask them to speak to 30 of their peers, and their confidence can seem to evaporate.

Teachers are often modest creatures – quick to praise others, but less inclined to turn that positive lens on themselves. If you're looking to develop a team of teacher educators, you need to do so in a way that increases teachers' confidence in training their peers.

Like most things, practice makes perfect. Make it commonplace for people to reflect on and highlight their areas of outstanding practice. 'Bring and share' teachers' meetings that employ a speed-dating format can provide a quick and easy way to build confidence whilst sharing expertise and success.

You could also consider sharing forms of writing, such as blogs or newsletters, and following these up with question and answer sessions with the authors. Studies into self-efficacy suggest that if we see our peers being successful, we're more likely to give something a go ourselves.

Just like team teaching for NQTs, new teacher educators may find it useful to deliver training together, or alongside more experienced colleagues. Some may find it easier to deliver training remotely, as this minimises the presence of an audience. Pre-recorded training is another great way of building confidence, providing as it does the reassurance of knowing you can always start again.

Get the logistics right

Despite the rise in weekend CPD, your training is unlikely to be successful if it's offered at the end of term on a Friday night.

Regular routines will help staff create a healthy habit of professional learning. If you're looking to establish a regular programme, then try to keep the days and times that you offer CPD consistent – for example, midweek between 4pm and 5pm. This also lets people plan ahead, since they can anticipate when training opportunities are likely to occur. Small variations are, however, advisable. Most people will have some fixed commitments, and rotating the day and time can allow more people to attend.

Don't be disheartened if the number of attendees is small to begin with. This can

often be the case at first, particularly with voluntary CPD. Remember that small groups can still be useful for building confidence, trying out new things and getting honest feedback.

If you need to keep registers, set yourself a reminder to do so. Registers can help track engagement and identify trends over time, and be particularly helpful when working across groups of schools or offering open access events.

Ice-breaker activities provide good opportunities for learning about your participants, but for every person who enjoys sharing what they had for lunch, there'll be another who instantly wishes to depart. Take time at the beginning to try things out and see what works for your new teacher educator identity.

Long-term learning

Teachers are often so busy that despite being enthused during the professional learning itself, it's all too easy for them to return to the classroom and not give their training another thought.

For meaningful learning to happen, some element of reflection and identification of next steps needs to occur.

Therefore, think about how to build evaluative elements into your sessions and what element of follow-up will occur. Evaluating is good for your participants and will give you valuable feedback.

As well as thinking about the learning of others, it's also useful to think about your own. As a teacher educator, it's good to be familiar with the DfE's 'Standard for teachers' professional development' (see bit.ly/ts102-teach-train) and the Teacher Development Trust – a charity devoted to teacher education that offers assorted publications, events and webinars.

Finally, think about the long-term aim of your training, since having goals and aspirations will help you stay motivated. In the same way that leaders view creating other leaders as a sign of success, inspiring others to begin their own teacher educator journey is a worthy goal.

TEACHER TRAINER TAKEAWAYS

DO:

- Consider the needs of all staff groups, including non-teaching colleagues
- Explore people's areas of expertise to help identify potential teacher educators
- Use a booking system such as Eventbrite to help with logistics and registers
- Provide opportunities for people to build their skills as teacher educators
- Secure the support of senior leaders

DON'T:

- Be disheartened if numbers are small to begin with
- Feel you have to lead all training sessions yourself
- Worry if people don't initially volunteer – it takes time to build people's confidence and foster an ethos of sharing
- Be afraid to take risks as you develop as a teacher educator
- Let attendees leave without an evaluation or providing feedback

However, creating a culture of professional learning – where staff are seen as teacher educators, as well as classroom teachers – will take time. Gaining the support of senior leaders is crucial. Senior leaders can help you establish an ethos of learning, while providing the crucial time needed for staff to engage in training.

For those passionate about a particular area and keen to connect with like-minded peers, there are plenty of grassroots education networks, charities and professional associations that can support you, such as the Chartered College of Teaching. Whichever path you choose, contributing to the development of other teachers benefits everyone – from our children and schools, through to our wider profession and – and is something we very much need to keep on doing.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Nicola Brooks is a professional development co-ordintor for Reach South Academy Trust, a founding fellow and network lead for the Chartered College of Teaching and lead trainer for the Wiltshire Autism Education Trust Schools Programme.

The what, when and why of CPD

Adam Riches looks at how pacing, time management and content considerations are likely to inform the timetabling of your staff CPD across the academic year

It's no secret that being a teacher is a non-stop experience. With so much needing to be done, any additional burdens are rarely welcomed.

As such, there's a fine balance to be struck when it comes to CPD – between that which is helpful and necessary, and that which is tiresome – as well as a number of other considerations to bear in mind when deciding what your school's CPD offer should be. Compared to the timetabling of student lessons, the timetabling of CPD needs to be much more fluid, albeit with some constants in place.

For CPD to be effective, leaders must be clear as to when staff training is expected to take place, and ensure that sufficient time is allowed for it to be implemented. If your CPD offer is to be relevant, allowances must be made for the participants and style of delivery to vary.

How much is 'enough'?

Regular, relevant CPD will keep teachers engaged in improving their practice and ensure that the quality of teaching in school remains a priority.

When deciding on the timing of CPD sessions, leaders ought to consider what the aim of those sessions will be. There needs to be a good balance between individual, departmental and whole school CPD if your teachers are to continue their professional development in a sustainable way. Not every teacher will be interested in all the different elements on offer, but by spreading your content across those three areas, you should be able to deliver meaningful progress and support at both a whole staff and individual level as needed.

When setting the frequency of your CPD, wider factors will need to be considered. Basing your CPD on a regular cycle can be helpful for achieving that crucial balance across different areas. Setting whole school CPD every week will quickly become overwhelming for staff, but there's also the risk that time set aside each week for individual development may end up going to waste. Dedicating one night per week to CPD would be a good approach to take.

Of course, just as important as the CPD's frequency is your communication. Staff will need to know what's happening and when, but they'll also need to know your expectations of them during dedicated CPD time (if indeed there are any). The clearer your instructions, the higher the chances of success. That doesn't mean having to be totalitarian when it comes to the format of your CPD; just that staff have to know what they need to do.

What to offer

Making CPD relevant is the most effective way of increasing its impact, which will in turn heighten the quality of teaching and motivation of teachers at your school.

To ensure that CPD is relevant, leaders must be both aware and responsive. Outside of compulsory training, avoid planning CPD session topics and specifics across the whole year in advance – leaders should instead use their observations of teaching, listen to the needs of those in the school and provide CPD that will support development accordingly.

Communicating the thought processes behind the selection of your school's CPD focuses is crucially important. Staff need to be clearly informed as to why they'll be looking at a specific area – there's no reason for leaders to be secretive regarding their reasons for covering a particular topic.

Effective QA and high value discussions with middle leaders will yield exceptional results when it comes to ascertaining what your whole school priorities are. Demonstrating a keen awareness of issues affecting the school and being present will build staff trust in the decisions being made about their CPD, but whole school focuses are just one part of the puzzle.

Departments need the time and freedom to explore pedagogy in their own subject-specific areas. This can play a hugely important part in translating whole school incentives into department-level approaches, but it's important to remember that departmental CPD time is exactly that – *CPD time*. It's easy for supposed CPD meetings to get bogged down in discussion of administrative matters if they're not effectively run. Whether they are or not will come down to that clarity (or otherwise) of instruction and expectation.

It's also important that people are given some freedom to explore their own interests. Some schools may facilitate this through setting up cross-curricular pedagogy groups, allowing staff to take personal research time or by offering an online course. Regardless of the approach used, the individuals in question will benefit from being given time to explore what's important to them. This is what makes us all individuals, after all; you certainly don't want your CPD to produce robots who all teach the same.

Who should deliver?

The responsiveness of your CPD is important, but so too

is the person who'll actually be delivering it. Using specialists in certain areas who can talk staff through best practice is a great way of getting buy-in.

I'm personally a great believer in a transaction model, in which numerous individuals contribute something to your CPD from different areas. By themselves, these individual contributors may not necessarily be the most experienced members of the school or even their own department – but they should absolutely be experts at what they're delivering in class.

There's a lot to be learnt here, and the opportunity itself can serve as a great avenue of development (and confidence booster) for different members of staff. Pursuing this type of approach will rapidly build your collective efficacy and immediately make your CPD offering seem much more inclusive in nature.

There will, of course, be times when an instructionalist approach is more effective and therefore necessary. When it comes to improving schools collectively, or addressing issues around some difficult topics, it might not be possible for training to be facilitated by others outside of a small group. This doesn't mean that a sense of community can't be forged – just that the way in which staff are engaged will need to be different.

How much is 'too much'?

There can be a fear of 'overdoing it' when it comes to CPD. There will always be those who actively and endlessly seek opportunities for self-improvement, versus those who only turn up to sessions because they have to.

CPD becomes burdensome when staff can't correlate the purpose of the sessions with what they're doing day-to-day. CPD providers must always consider the end user – classroom teachers – and their daily practice if the CPD in question is to ever become a part of a school's ethos. If the sessions laid on aren't helping in any way at all, then they'll simply add to your staff's workload and subsequently turn them off completely. Your CPD attendance may even be good, but bums on seats doesn't necessarily equate to learning by themselves.

Striking that balance and ensuring your CPD is relevant for as many staff as possible is a tough task, but it's vitally important to communicate where the school CPD offer fits in with the ethos of the school.

CPD should form a part of your culture, and if planned effectively, become a seamless part of what the school does.

"There's no reason for leaders to be secretive regarding their reasons for covering a particular topic"

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Adam Riches is a senior leader for teaching and learning and author of the book *Teach Smarter: Efficient and Effective Strategies for Early Career Teachers* (£16.99, Routledge); follow him at @teachmrriches

5 REASONS TO TRY... NAHT Discovery Education Pathway

Support teacher wellbeing and career progression with this holistic programme

30 SECOND BRIEFING

The NAHT and Discovery Education Pathway programme offers a blend of personal and professional development courses for teachers and leaders. It is a holistic programme that supports the continuous professional empowerment of teachers and leaders in today's schools.

1 EXPERIENCE ON-DEMAND CPD

We don't think CPD should be 'done at you'. We think it should be an enjoyable and empowering experience that develops self- efficacy through constant reflection.

Pathway's courses are like no other. We've worked with leading practitioners and subject experts to develop courses that take on issues or topics and present a variety of roundtable discussions, interviews and reflections, asking three questions throughout: what are your thoughts and feelings?; what action could you take to improve?; what positive impact will this have on you and your pupils?

2 LOOK AFTER YOURSELF

Maintaining positive health and wellbeing should be a priority for teachers but it often isn't. We sometimes forget our own wellbeing as we seek to support those around us. Written and presented by leading wellbeing experts Professor Tim O'Brien and Dr Dennis Guiney, Pathway's unique and in-depth wellbeing programme helps you develop a better understanding of wellbeing and the importance of critical reflection. Take proactive steps to stay positive, healthy, motivated and reflective in your work.

3 EXCEPTIONAL ADVICE

A constant source of anxiety for many teachers and leaders is how to find the right policy, the latest guidelines or accurate dates for submitting data. Staying organised and abreast of the latest changes and requirements will help you to feel positive and in control. Powered by NAHT experts with many years' experience in talking to teachers and leaders, the Pathway Advice Hub provides high-level information on news and changes, keeps you up-to-date with the latest policies and procedures and includes a powerful FAQ section.

4 FIND YOUR MOTIVATION

We all know that motivation is important, but to engage motivation we first have to understand exactly what it is, and is not. Our Guide to Motivation helps you to understand its nature and what motivates both you and those around you. It helps you to recognise your unique desires so you can stay inspired and build motivation across your team. With this knowledge the plan becomes your starting point for change in both your personal and professional relationships.

5 IDENTIFY YOUR AMBITIONS

Having a clear sense of direction can help us stay focused and aspirational. Pathway's bespoke Career Map, designed with the help of experienced educators, helps you to identify where you are now and where you would like to get to – not only in terms of your professional goals, but also your wider interests and health and wellbeing goals. Then self-assess your strengths and areas that may need further development using our Skills Audit mapped against the Teachers' Standards. Pathway also includes an audit based around leadership competencies.

NAHT | Discovery Education | PATHWAY

Contact:
discoveryeducation.co.uk/pathway

KEY POINTS

- Pathway comprises a virtuous cycle of three main stages, Orientation, Navigation and Reflection, all designed to keep teachers and leaders on course in their careers
- Courses are authored by the UK's leading education experts, including Andrew Hammond, Hywel Roberts and Debra Kidd
- The Pathway programme is delivered online so you can progress through the materials at a time and pace that suits you and your needs
- A licence is £395 per person, per year (excl. VAT). Discounts are available for multi-user school subscriptions and NAHT members

"Your colleagues are human beings"

Headteacher **Chris Deller** reflects on the lessons learned from his efforts to manage practical concerns and staff wellbeing over an extraordinarily difficult year...

One of lowest points for me this past year came during that first week of lockdown. We were in uncharted territory, unsure as to what was happening or what we were meant to be doing. I remember the near-constant stream of guidance coming out, which seemingly changed from one day to the next.

The hardest point of all was in September 2020. By that stage, myself and my colleagues at Bedford Academy thought we'd done well throughout lockdown. We'd communicated effectively with parents, families, students and staff. We'd put good plans in place, ahead of reintroducing our Y10 and Y12 students, and we'd done a good job of managing their online engagement.

Then, during that first week, we identified four cases of COVID-19 in the school. Having done so much to build up our students' confidence, those four cases meant that around 60 of our students had to go into immediate self-isolation. We weren't sure if the school would need to be shut down It felt as though we'd let our families and staff down by telling those kids to stay at home, but there was little we could practically do, aside from trying to follow what we were supposed to be doing from the guidance we'd been given.

Many moving parts

From there, we were put in regular contact with Public Health England, and proceeded to have weekly review meetings as more cases appeared within the school. This didn't reflect the pattern seen across the rest of Bedford, which caused us to question whether there we'd done something wrong in terms of our health and safety. Were our risk assessments lacking? Was there a particular protocol we'd neglected to enforce?

But then things started to improve, to the point where we were going up to eight days without seeing any new cases. Throughout, there had been no sense of right or wrong, no clear reason for what was happening to us.

It feels as though the past year of my headship has consisted of me saying to colleagues "Right, this is what we think we're going to do – but we're not entirely sure, since there are so many moving parts."

As a headteacher, you have to be conscious at all times that your colleagues are human beings. Some will have little ones at home, others might live with a partner who's not working, or perhaps be grieving the loss of a close relative. We've tried to be as clear as we can with staff that if they can do what we're asking of them, great; if they can't, they should let us know and we'll try and support them.

In the loop

We've had colleagues who have been in and out the building since March 2020 due to various medical or family complications. In each case, we've been as flexible as possible, because we know that if we treat our staff well, they're likely to stay with us in the long term and be more productive and positive when back in work.

We've tried to be fair to everybody, no matter what their role, and have offered staff opportunities to contribute to our wider plans. We've regularly invited teachers and support staff to submit any questions they have through their line management, assembled these into a series of Q&A pools and then distributed our responses, by way of a 'You said, we did' exercise – though our message tends to be, 'These are the concerns you've raised, these are our solutions – but they may change, depending on wider circumstances.'

Keeping people in the loop has been the most important thing for us throughout the pandemic. Deadlines and consultation windows have always been clearly stated, and all presentations we've made via Teams have been recorded and archived, so that colleagues can view them at times convenient to them.

I firmly believe that if you have happy staff, you'll have happy kids and a happy school. The results come later – it's only when you've achieved those three things that you'll see substantially better staff outcomes and retention. People can spend around 40% of their lives at work, so they need to be in an environment where they can flourish, be nurtured, build confidence and feel supported. It's our job as senior leaders to do that.

DOWNLOAD

a document detailing Bedford Academy's catch-up funding plan at

teachwire.net/bedford-plan

We've been allocated government catch-up funding to the tune of around £80,000, and have put in place a structured plan for utilising it fully (see 'Download' panel). The school's SLT has already allocated some of the money, and our middle leadership has spent a portion on catch-up interventions.

However, we've also allowed our staff to bid for the money themselves (albeit

"If you have happy staff, you'll have happy kids and a happy school"

with a rigorous sign-off process). It might be that there's an exciting project our history department wants to use with their GCSE groups, or a new English literature resource we want to use. One example that comes to mind are the six SLR cameras recently purchased by our media department – because we needed some, and because they'll help the kids improve their grades once they return.

Honesty first

What the past year has impressed upon me most is that everyone's an individual – and that if you look after the individuals, everything else falls into place. You have to put yourself in others' shoes to understand what they're going through, and as a school community, we need to look after each other.

One of our approaches in school is that if a member of staff hasn't heard from an individual for a few days, they contact them. This applies as much to their colleagues as it does to our students through our pastoral care. When everyone's going through such a tough time, those social links are vital.

Having begun my career as a PE teacher, I'm fortunate to have a really strong team around me who I trust, and will happily tell me when we're not getting it right. Being able to draw on the resources you have and play to people's strengths is hugely important, so there's a real need to listen to everyone around the table. You might have what you think is the best idea in the world, but if four of those people disagree with you, it probably needs revisiting.

It's perhaps too early to tell what I'll be taking forward on the basis of our experiences over the past year, other than the need to be honest with people. I'll always admit to what I think are my mistakes and what I need to improve on. When I when I took over as head in September 2018 we had 175 kids in Y7; last year we had 230. Next year we're full, with around 60 on the waiting list. This demonstrates how we are viewed in the local community, and is something we are very proud of.

The confidence people have in us as a school is building, which is encouraging. All we can do for now is continue doing what we're doing – being consistent, being concise, keeping our communications going and thinking about the longer term as best as we possibly can.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS
Chris Deller is the headteacher of Bedford Academy; for more information, visit bedfordacademy.co.uk or follow @c_deller

FINGER ON THE PULSE

Staff Pulse is a wellbeing survey we use to check in with staff on a fortnightly basis. It goes out to all staff on Fridays, and usually gets a hit rate of around 50%.

It allows you to assemble a survey from up to 20 subcategories, which might include leadership, communication, vision, behaviour, relationships and so forth.

Staff are then able to grade the school's leadership performance in various areas out of 10, after which Staff Pulse will give you your calculated score. At the moment we're scoring 8.1 out of 10, which is apparently 3.2 above the measured national average.

Staff can ask questions or make comments anonymously and I can respond to them. If someone says they don't 'trust' the leadership team, I can respond directly to that person and they remain completely hidden to me, which helps to facilitate honest and helpful exchanges.

As a result of these good conversations, we are looking at the possibility of providing specialist CPD for support staff and leadership opportunities for middle leaders.

Further information about the Staff Pulse staff wellbeing tool can be found at bit.ly/staff-pulse

4 REASONS TO TRY... British Army Employability

Available for Careers Week 2021, The British Army Employability resources can equip students with a range of useful skills

1 EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS

The Employability digital resources for KS3 and KS4 capture everything students should focus on in job interviews, from body language to final statements. It also highlights the importance of the essential skills they'll need for the job market, with advice on writing applications and developing an interview strategy.

2 THE NEW NORMAL

Employability is set to become a huge concern for young people this year, as job opportunities become increasingly limited and competitive due to the pandemic. These resources offer simple and effective advice for students on how to best prepare themselves for the next big step in their lives; sample interview questions and scenario briefings can be used by students both in the classroom or via remote learning.

3 ARMY EXPERTISE

The British Army is one of the biggest employers in the UK. With these resources, students can gain valuable insight into what the British Army looks for in prospective employees and familiarise themselves with its detailed selection process – useful preparation ahead of any future applications.

4 CAREER OPTIONS

The resources showcase a range of potential careers that span STEM, the arts and humanities. From Army Comms Engineer to English Language Teacher, students will learn lots of useful information about the entry requirements of their chosen profession.

Contact:
0345 600 8080
(Ask for the 'Outreach Team')
rg-nrcoutreach admin@mod.gov.uk

At a glance

+ These resources support first-time applicants with expertise from one of the UK's biggest employers

+ Employability skills can help young people tackle new challenges, such as remote interviews and increasingly competitive job vacancies

+ To learn more about employability, check out the free downloadable resources at bit.ly/army-employability

"We sprang into action"

MAT CEO Lucy Scott explains how her Trust's experiences during last year's lockdowns prompted she and her colleagues to approach the early weeks of 2021 rather differently...

When the announcement of the latest lockdown was made, it prompted very different feelings this time round compared to the lockdowns of last year.

There wasn't the shared uncertainty, anxiety and stress as to the best route forward. Instead, the senior leaders at each of the schools within our Trust were able to spring into action, immediately deploying the plans for transition and continuation of learning that we'd modelled, tested, analysed and improved during each prior lockdown, making this one our most successful yet.

The cornerstone of our thinking and approach to the January / February 2021 lockdown has been to adopt one core principle – for the experience of remote learning to be as close to the in-school experience as possible.

Critical reflection

What we'd learned previously was that vast uncertainty, coupled with the lack of any roadmap, could lead to paralysis in decision making. Through critical reflection, we identified that just because there were multiple new remote learning options and technologies available, we shouldn't completely change our recipe for successful learning in order to use them.

Instead, we were able to deliver a better continuation of learning – one more reflective of our core principle – via the following methods:

COVID testing underway at Downham Market Academy, one of the schools within the Eastern Learning Alliance

Using our existing tools

This lockdown saw us switch our remote learning provision to Teams for the first time. The decision to do so was led by our remote learning co-ordinators, who evaluated the remote learning experiences of our students and staff and reported back to the Trust. Of course, no platform is perfectly suited to every teacher and every lesson, but their recommendations did enable our leadership team to make quick decisions on the best format for delivering the type of remote teaching and learning we wanted, confident that this would be the best available option for all students.

Prioritising staff and student relationships

When assigning staff to both our in-school learning and remote provision, we prioritised the maintenance of existing relationships. In our community, those students continuing to attend school are those most in need of progress support. Once each school knew who those students were going to be, we assigned senior leadership and progress support team members with whom these students had already established close and trusted relationships.

Our schools have also gone to great lengths to maintain their timetables in their entirety. Classes are taught by their usual teachers as far as possible, and all lessons are kept live, so that students and staff can rely on consistent contact time throughout the school day.

We've also created a 'virtual staffroom' for our teachers, enabling colleagues who are teaching remotely to come together in the same informal way that they would in school, while enabling those supportive peer-to-peer relationships that are so important.

Clear and engaging communication

As a leadership team, we decided that the current situation made it impossible to over-communicate with staff. We thus opted to scale up the communications flowing directly from the leadership team to each of our schools, and gave the schools themselves more opportunities to participate in peer-to-peer conversations. We also diversified our communication methods, and are now regularly using more video when sharing knowledge. This not only helps keep everyone more engaged, but can also serve as a reference tool in future.

The way in which the schools across our Trust have risen to the challenges of the latest lockdown is nothing short of heroic. The feedback we've received from parents, praising both the collective and individual efforts of our staff, has been fantastic and served as a real motivator.

We're confident that our approach to our remote learning timetable, and the safety measures we now have in place for continuing face-to-face learning, are providing our students with the best possible education that current circumstances allow, while minimising disruption. Our hope now is to share what's worked for us, so that it might help other schools at this difficult time.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR
Lucy Scott is the CEO of Eastern Learning Alliance; for more information visit easternlearningalliance.org.uk or follow @ELA_Trust

"You never felt on top of it"

Adam W Hunter catches up with comedian and broadcaster **Romesh Ranganathan** to discuss his previous role as a teacher, and why he believes the job remains 'one of the most valuable in society'...

Image © Rich Hardcastle

Romesh Ranganathan is home-schooling his three children once more. It's a nightmare he thought was over last July, and a regression of sorts, back to the nine years he spent as a maths teacher during the 2000s. His hope now is that the lockdowns of the past year will help the public at large recognise just how valuable the teachers we all depend on really are.

"I have to engage three children across a morning during lockdown and it's impossible," he says. "Meeting the needs of 30-plus kids across a day – that takes a lot out of you. The public are very appreciative for what NHS workers do, but weirdly, it's taken a global pandemic for us to have an appreciation for what teachers do."

Romesh himself left the profession in 2011, as his stand-up comedy 'hobby' began to take off. Throughout our interview his wit is obvious, but he's serious with it – speaking in the way of an old colleague with plenty to say.

"I really thought I'd found what I was going to do for the rest of my life," he now says of his former career, "But if I'm honest, there were teachers who were fantasising about leaving. They loved teaching, but something had made them think it wasn't what it used to be."

Swift promotion

In recent years, the conversation around teacher retention has assumed a bleak tone, with talk of the sector being in 'crisis' and unsustainably high training costs. "At the time I got into teaching they were throwing a lot of money into recruitment; I'd argue that they'd forgotten about retention," Romesh observes. "The advertising, the training – it felt amazing and exciting, but I [also] remember seeing teachers who were a bit f***ed off, for want of a better phrase. I'm thinking, *'What's up with these guys, man?'*

Romesh's career advanced quickly, and took in a swift promotion to head of sixth form. I offer up two sayings – *'Cream rises to the top'* and *'Sh*t floats'*. Which was he? "I think I'm sort of like a creamy sh*t," he replies. "I'd like to think I was good at engaging kids and dealing with parents – but when it came to having a long-term overview of where the sixth form was going, I really was dreadful."

The extra recognition that came with the role was motivating at first, but he soon came to see what had caused some of his colleagues to become so jaded.

"I'd been encouraged the whole way, and it was all very exciting, but I've never had a day in my entire comedy career that was anything like as stressful as teaching." he reflects. "As a comedian, I do an hour and a half in the evening. Teachers deliver five or six quality, different hours every single day, and then have to assess how well it's gone. People don't realise."

Mixed messages

School leaders have made some progress in improving workload demands and expectations – but when the government and Ofsted are able to pile further demands on teachers almost overnight, the messaging remains very mixed.

"I think schools do the best they can," Romesh concedes, "but as a maths teacher, we'd just about mastered what we were doing, then they'd have a change of focus and you'd have to relearn everything. It just felt constant. You never felt on top of it."

"I've never had a day in my entire comedy career that was anything like as stressful as teaching"

He also wasn't a fan of the creeping quantification. "You're constantly told you're going to be judged on this or that, because 'We're analysing the value you're adding to your classes,'" he says, "and all that's great. But you've got to accept that it's human beings you're dealing with.

"Most of the teachers I encountered were working at their full capacity. You'd say to them, *'You know you're absolutely pushing it; you're absolutely at the top level of what you can handle? Well, you've got to do this thing as well, and there's absolutely f*ck all we're going to do to compensate you.'* I found that unreasonable."

But then there's that refrain so often used to counter teachers' claims that they work hard – '*What about the holidays*?'. It's a battle that Romesh used to wage as a school union rep, and still does among his friends.

"I'd get in 7:30, leave about 5:30 and then work into the evening," he remembers. "I basically started to accept that as normal. The idea you get six weeks off in the summer is b*llocks, it's a fallacy, and you simply don't have evenings and weekends. It upsets me that people still have these false perceptions."

A sense of vocation

Pay soon emerges as a recurring topic during our conversation. Though something of an outlier given his subsequent career, Romesh understands very well why those teachers who leave often do so for less pay, coupled with shorter hours.

"Nobody gets into teaching for the money," he says. "You have a sense of vocation and you're dedicated, both of which contribute to stress, so you're relying on teachers' goodwill to keep them. In [my previous] jobs, literally the moment I switched off my computer I stopped thinking about it. Teaching just wasn't like that – so I can understand why someone might take a bit less money in exchange for a social life."

Romesh's hope now is that lockdown might change public perceptions around the profession for the better: "This sounds stupid but I'd just like a little bit of f***ing appreciation for how hard it is, you know what I mean?"

What ultimately keeps teachers going back for more is that sense of vocation, the perfectionism and those opportunities to do good for good people. With luck, lockdown will convince more people of that – but sadly, only Romesh's own kids will get to learn from him.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR
Adam W Hunter is a former teacher turned writer, journalist and musician; follow him at @adamwhunter

The latest series of *The Ranganation* is currently airing on BBC2 (Sundays 9pm) and available via iPlayer; you can also catch Romesh alongside Rob Beckett in the latest series of *Rob And Romesh Vs* via Sky One, and download the new comedy podcast series, *Wolf and Owl*, which he co-presents with fellow comedian Tom Davis

PERSONAL BEST

Romesh reflects on the lessons where the stars all seemed to align...

Encouraged by the idea of getting students to set their own study questions, Romesh once experimented with a Y8 project on quadrilaterals. "They started asking questions they thought I wanted to hear, and I was thinking, 'Man this is great!" he remembers. "Then one kid said, 'Which one would make the best parachute?' Obviously, as soon as he asked that, none of the kids gave a sh*t about any other questions."

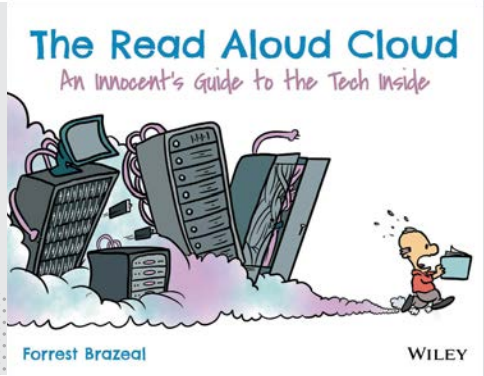
Despite initially fearing that he had completely lost control, Romesh spent three successful lessons dropping Blu Tack paratroopers out of the classroom window attached to different quadrilaterals.

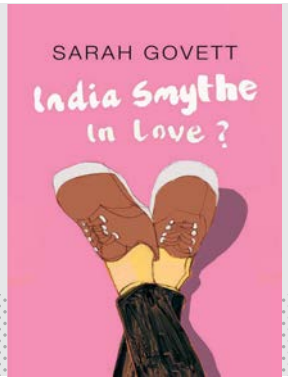
"I kind of panicked and thought I was going to get some sort of warning," he recalls, "but the kids were properly engaged. I'm so lucky, because it really could have gone more tits up than it did!"

- According to DfE statistics, around 40,000 teachers – 10% of the workforce – leave each year, with a third leaving within five years of qualifying.
- A recent study by the National Foundation for Education Research, comparing teachers' roles with that of nurses and police officers, found that on average, teachers work more hours per year, receive lower hourly pay and are more likely to leave mid-career.
- The Institute for Fiscal Studies and Nuffield Foundation have meanwhile found that training new teachers costs the government and schools more than £38,000 per teacher still in post after five years.

Off the Shelves

Brilliant titles for you and your students to explore





Science Fictions: Exposing Fraud, Bias, Negligence and Hype in Science

(Stuart Ritchie, The Bodley Head, £18.99)

When we talk of 'evidence-based education', how good is the quality of that evidence? This book doesn't focus on education specifically (outside of voicing considerable doubt over Carol Dweck's growth mindset theory), but it does contain plenty of observations to fuel our scepticism of those bold claims often made about some new 'discovery' in fields such as psychology and neuroscience. Ritchie shows how, even where there's no outright fraud involved, simple statistical errors, publication bias (the tendency for only positive results to be published) and perverse incentives can render so-called 'breakthroughs' rather less noteworthy when the relevant studies are looked at more closely. Well written throughout, *Science Fictions* also contains an informative final chapter with instructions for reading scientific papers, which should be read by all educators and those studying science subjects.

Reviewed by Terry Freedman

The Read Aloud Cloud: An Innocent's Guide to the Tech Inside

(Forrest Brazeal, Wiley, £18.99)

What a strange book this is! At first glance, it looks as though it's been written for 10-year-olds. Its use of large cartoons and rhyming script certainly seem intended for that purpose, and the overall childish appearance may well serve to put older students off – which would be a pity, since the topics it covers, from the evolution of the cloud to privacy concerns created by the internet of things, are very serious indeed. Moreover, the explanatory text presented beneath each cartoon is straightforward and clearly written. It covers a niche subject, but *The Read Aloud Cloud* could potentially be drawn on to cover the KS3 requirement to "Understand computer networks, including the internet ... and the opportunities they offer for communication and collaboration." It should suit non-techie teachers too. The odd Americanism is slightly jarring, but not a deal-breaker – in any case, it makes for a useful reference book.

Reviewed by Terry Freedman

India Smythe in Love?

(Sarah Govett, Marotte Books, £7.99)

Writing a genuinely funny book for teenagers is no easy task. Which is perhaps why they're seemingly in such short supply, leaving many Y9 and Y10 students still turning to the *Wimpy Kid* series for light relief between GCSE texts and the latest dystopian flavour of the month. Sarah Govett's comic creation India Smythe offers a credible, classy – and crucially, age appropriate – alternative to Greg Heffley and company. Her first appearance in last year's *India Smythe Stands Up* was a triumph, and this follow-up is, if anything, even better. Dealing as it does with adolescent issues that include relationships, embarrassing parents, school social politics and exams, the story would be relatable at any time. As it is, it's set in 2020, so that on top of the usual concerns she might be expected to face, our heroine also has the small issue of lockdown and a global pandemic to deal with. And you know what? It's going to be okay.

Reviewed by Helen Mulley

THE WORD

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

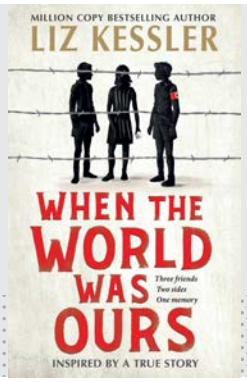
The Last Girl

(Goldy Moldavsky, Electric Monkey, £7.99)

In YA fiction, a protagonist's mundane school life will often be disrupted by the discovery of a secret society. Whilst Moldavsky's newest novel broadly starts out that way, it quickly transforms into a suspenseful, yet satirical read that mixes horror tropes and pop culture references into the established YA formula.

Following a traumatic event, Rachel moves away from home and into the most stereotypically upper-class school imaginable. There, she learns of a mysterious prankster and soon finds herself accused of masterminding one of their exploits. Determined to uncover the truth – and because she really likes horror movies – Rachel sets out to unmask the elusive figure, only to find herself swept up in a deadly conspiracy...

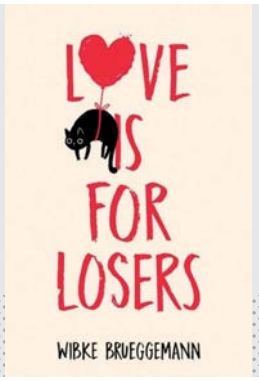
Moldavsky's appreciation for horror films and literature is on full display here. The elitist, gossip-fuelled high school setting gels perfectly with the many jabs against horror cliches, yet the book also rarely shies away from leaning into them, resulting in a devilishly enjoyable story that even non-horror fans will appreciate.



When The World Was Ours

(Liz Kessler, Simon & Schuster, £12.99)

A WWII-set story that explores the complexities, personal tragedies and horrors of the Holocaust, as told through the eyes of three schoolfriends – Elsa, Leo and Max. We first encounter the trio in 1936 Vienna, on an idyllic fairground visit to celebrate Leo's 9th birthday. Thereafter, the events of their increasingly tumultuous lives are shown in chapters written from each character's perspective, – told in the first-person in the case of Leo and Elsa (both of whom are Jewish), but rendered in the third person for Max – the troubled son of an SS officer falteringly following in his father's footsteps. The fates of Leo and Elsa are drawn from the real life experiences of Kessler's own father – a Czechoslovakian émigré to Britain – and great aunt, who was murdered at Auschwitz. There's a real urgency and pace to Kessler's storytelling, culminating in a bracing coda that starkly highlights the modern-day resonances of the novel's themes.



Love is for Losers

(Wibke Brueggemann, Macmillan Children's Books, £7.99)

After her best friend acquires a boyfriend and seemingly forgets her overnight, 15-year-old Phoebe decides that love might work for other people, but it definitely won't work for her. Determined to lead a life free of relationships, all seems straightforward at first – but then a chance encounter at a charity shop run by her godmother brings her into the orbit of Emma – a girl with '*The bluest icy-blue eyes I've ever seen in all my life...*' Following in the grand tradition of Adrian Mole and Bridget Jones, the story unfolds via a series of diary entries and Brueggemann uses the device to full effect, giving us highly entertaining glimpses into Phoebe's gossipy commentary on her vibrantly drawn friends and peers, half-remembered conversations rendered in script form and attempts at avant-garde poetry. A well-crafted, touching and frequently very funny coming of age tale.

Meet the author

WIBKE BRUEGGEMANN

What was it about *Love is for Losers* that made it your first novel to be published?
My protagonist, Phoebe. She's such an unusual and fun character – one that I think people have liked spending time with, listening to her ranting on and on about how much she hates stupid people and idiots in love.

How did your own adolescence compare to Phoebe's?
I wasn't like Phoebe at all. I found school really hard, didn't get good grades and had no positive adult relationships because I didn't get on with my parents – but most importantly, I was desperate to fall in love. Like, *desperate*. It didn't happen for ages, and when it finally did, it was an absolute disaster...

Were there any details about the book's very specific Wimbledon setting that you were especially keen to capture?
Having lived in different countries and having experienced different cultures has been one of the greatest gifts. When living somewhere as a foreigner – especially when you don't speak the language very well and nobody speaks yours – you observe everything so much closer. You learn to decipher body language and pick up on things that escape those who have been in that environment forever.

As far as the Wimbledon setting is concerned, I used to volunteer at a charity shop there with my best friend Luci, and it was so much fun – I really wanted to relay that environment, and all the weird and wonderful characters that are part of it.

What advice would you give to aspiring writers in terms of creating interesting, believable characters?
I always kind of know the character I want to write, but often they won't really show themselves until I've written 50,000 words or more. For example, at one point the character of Kate suddenly turned Scottish on me, and I was like, '*Great, let's just write all of her again from the beginning...*'

I think it's really important that you can hear a character, because if you can hear them, you can write them. I'll always start with dialogue, by writing a bit of a back and forth between characters, and just listen. I also love listening to other people's conversations – it's rude, but, you know, #research...

THE LOCKDOWN HAVES AND HAVE-NOTS

Dr Matt Easterbrook highlights the profound way in which socioeconomic circumstances continue to shape families' learning experiences during lockdown

Over the last few years I've been trying to understand some of the psychological factors contributing to inequalities in educational outcomes in the UK, with a particular focus on how these can vary across different contexts and between different schools.

Back in March last year, we didn't know much of what was transpiring in family households, following the switch to learning from home. All of a sudden, the vast majority of pupils were expected to be learning remotely, with parents expected to perform a supervisory role.

Schools were put in the position of having to offer support where they could, with some focusing on pastoral care and others prioritising the setting up of online resources. We didn't have a good sense of what was actually happening more broadly in homes, however – so that's what we set out to try and capture in the form of a survey we carried out between May and July 2020.

Admittedly, the situation is somewhat different now, with lessons having been learned from the first school closures as to the most effective ways of supporting parents and students working from home. Our hope, however, is that our survey results can help inform that response and contribute to getting schools prepared if and when they need to take similar steps again in future.

"One in five pupils from financially struggling families stated that a lack of food made home learning difficult"

Documenting the shift

When the first lockdown happened, one of my immediate worries was that school closures would exacerbate existing educational inequalities – particularly those around social class, which is often responsible for some of the largest achievement gaps we see up to GCSE level and beyond.

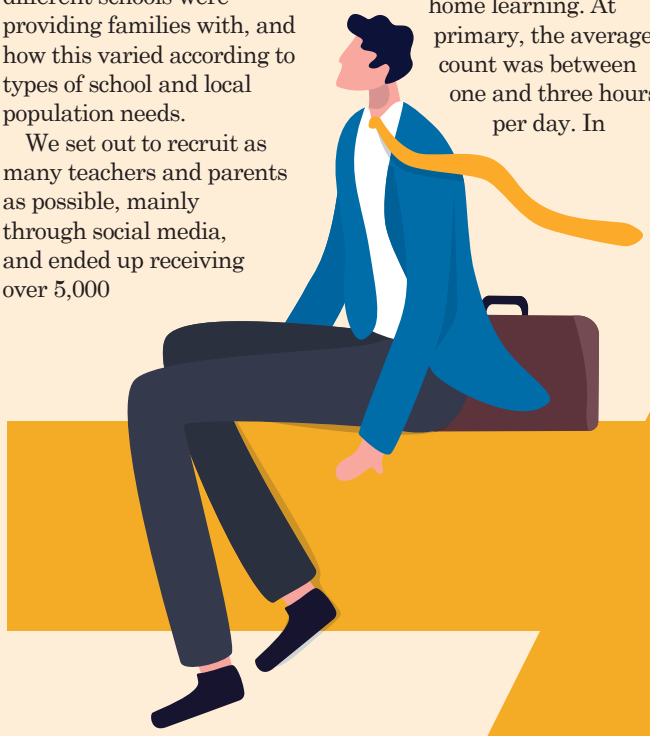
We'll usually measure this by analysing the attainment of pupils who are eligible for free school meals. It follows that pupils from deprived backgrounds are more likely to live in home environments less conducive to learning from home, where space is limited, noise levels are high and access to technology is limited. They may also have parents who don't feel confident, or believe they lack the knowledge needed to supervise their children's learning at home.

These factors all become considerably more important once children's education is entirely centred on the home, so we wanted to try and document that shift. We wanted to see what kind of support and resources different schools were providing families with, and how this varied according to types of school and local population needs.

We set out to recruit as many teachers and parents as possible, mainly through social media, and ended up receiving over 5,000 responses from teachers and parents nationwide, albeit with some 85% percent of those responses coming from England.

Wide variations

Based on parents' responses, we attempted to identify the main issues they've encountered with home learning, beginning with the time pupils were spending on home learning. At primary, the average count was between one and three hours per day. In



secondary schools, this seemed to rise at first to between two and five hours per day. Looking more closely at the secondary findings, however, we found that 10% of students completed 30 minutes' worth of work or less, while 15% completed an hour or less, leading us to conclude that there's wide variation in terms of how much time pupils are spending on home learning.

Myself and my colleagues expected to see some differences based on measurements of social class (eligibility for free school meals, parents' education levels, family finances, etc.). We thought that students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds would probably be spending less time on learning, be less engaged and encountering more obstacles to completing schoolwork. To some extent, we found that these students were indeed slightly less engaged, but mainly due to factors in the home environment that made it more difficult for them to complete schoolwork. They were more likely to experience difficulties with noise, lack of space, a shortage of learning devices and inadequate internet access. Rather worryingly, in some cases, families even cited a lack of food.

Help across the board

So what steps can help to address those difficulties? While we've yet to investigate this on a school-by-school basis, we can say at this stage that certain things have definitely helped with home learning across the board, such as giving students the ability to interact with teachers, while also retaining some form of interaction with their peers.

Providing a schedule for students to stick to during the day can do much to assist parents in managing their family's home learning more effectively — though this has seemed to be more common among wealthier and independent schools than state schools. We've further found that parents and students without adequate technology or internet access seem more engaged and able to cope with home learning when offline exercises and forms of support are provided.

For me, perhaps the most worrying statistic we uncovered in the survey was that one in five pupils from financially struggling families stated that a lack of food made home learning difficult. That's a huge percentage. The government has been trying to address this through home deliveries of free school meals, but there have been significant, widely publicised problems in getting those meals to the families who need them.

A de-levelled playing field

We need to try and iron out such problems, so that we can at least attempt to make the playing field a bit more level for pupils learning at home. The differences we've seen between state and private schools in the type of support they're able to offer their students is huge. We're seeing situations where the latter are twice as likely to be offering online pupil/teacher interactions than the former, despite these having assumed crucial importance for pupils' home learning experiences.

It could even be the case that the current school closures actually benefit the education of the most advantaged – they're at home, alongside parents who often have the ability, time and means to invest in additional education resources, such as one-to-one tuition. At the other end of the spectrum, you're more likely to see children's education simply become vastly disrupted. In effect, we're witnessing a de-levelling of the playing field.

Students come to school from many different types of home environment, with parents who don't necessarily engage to the same extent with their children's education. Any school will at least try to create a level playing field for its students in terms of access to resources and teachers on site – when that's removed from the equation, the issue then becomes one of being sensitive to different home environments, improving students' motivation and engaging productively with parents in order to drive those educational outcomes.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR
Dr Matt Easterbrook is a senior lecturer in psychology at the University of Sussex

THE 'SELF AFFIRMATION' INTERVENTION

We recently published an intervention called 'self-affirmation' – a brief writing exercise that's around 15 minutes long and designed to be completed by students three times per school year. All it asks is that students reflect on their personal values and those things that are most important to them in their lives.

We carried out the intervention among a group of 11- to 14-year-olds in an English secondary school. The theory suggests that performing a writing exercise like this is particularly helpful for students who feel additional pressure to perform well, because of group(s) they belong to. We predicted that students from lower class backgrounds would experience 'stereotype threat' – the sense that you're expected to do badly not because of who you are or your ability, but because of the group you're part of.

We found there to be a social class achievement gap in the school that saw pupils eligible for free school meals tending to do much worse. Yet after spending time reflecting on the most important things in their lives, the attainment gap between free school meals and non-free school meals pupils at the school was attenuated by 62%.

Simply reminding students that there are important things in their lives, and that they themselves are important individuals – with meaningful values and connections to others – actively reduced that stereotype threat, enabling to perform closer to their true ability.

What's New?

Our pick of the latest solutions and innovations for secondary education

1 Left to their own devices

Thought 2020 was a year like no other? Step forward 2021! With remote schooling once again the norm, how can you ensure pupils are working safely and productively across their online devices? Enter the BCS Level 1 Smart Digital Award in eSafety.

Ofqual-regulated and aligned to the Computing curriculum, this brand-new qualification addresses the ubiquitous device use of 2021, giving pupils the tools to build themselves a responsible digital footprint and a solid learning foundation. It's ideal for KS3 classroom and remote delivery, complete with teaching resources and automated testing, and ESFA-funded for 14 to 16-year-olds. What's more, pupils achieve a recognised certification. Want more information? Contact us on 01793 417 445, email bcssales@bcs.uk or visit **bcs.org/esafety-award**

3 Clarity on RSE

Jigsaw PSHE provides PSHE Schemes of Work for ages 3 to 11 and 11 to 16, with accompanying training and ongoing mentor support, to ensure that schools are compliant with statutory DfE guidance on RSE.

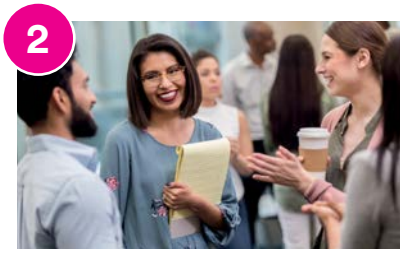
The whole-school approach includes comprehensive lesson-a-week planning, with all the resources needed to deliver high quality PSHE (including RSHE) in a spiral curriculum for ages 3 to 16. Priced according to pupil population, its free updates and free ongoing support package means that schools need never buy another PSHE Scheme again. We aim to improve children's and young people's emotional and mental health, underpinning all our programmes with mindfulness philosophy and practice in order to help them learn, be happy, healthy and make the most of their lives. For more details contact office@janlevergroup.com, and to download some FREE sample materials, visit **jigsawpshe.com**

4 Rapid sanitisation

LapSafe® offers an extensive range of mobile storage and charging trolleys – the safest available on today's market. Having specialised in safe power management solutions, enabling convenient charging and data transfer for laptops, Chromebooks, tablets and other mobile devices, LapSafe® has now introduced a new item for 2021 in the form of the UV-C sanitiser station.

This innovative product can be added to an existing LapSafe® self-service locker configuration or used as a standalone product. The semi-automated UV-C sanitising unit will sanitise in around 15 to 20 seconds, deactivating 99% of bacteria and some viruses exposed to its high-intensity UV-C light.

To find out more, contact sales@lapsafe.com or visit **LapSafe.com**



2 Personal development

The NAHT & Discovery Education Pathway programme brings a fresh approach to CPD by offering a blend of professional and personal development courses for teachers and leaders. Accessed online at a pace and time that suits you, the Pathway programme is designed to support and develop your motivations, career ambitions and wellbeing, as well as your professional skills and competencies. The Pathway programme is now available to order online! A licence to the programme is priced at £395 per person per year (excl. VAT); discounts are available for multi-user school subscriptions and NAHT members. For more details, visit **bit.ly/ts102-discovery**

5 A hub of heritage

MyLearning is a hub website that hosts FREE learning resources created by arts, cultural and heritage organisations from across England. Established for 16 years, we are a non-profit funded by Arts Council England, working with museums, galleries and archives to bring together high quality resources in one easy-to-use website.

MyLearning's mission is to get all the wonderful objects and the fabulous stories they hold out of museum stores and archives and into classrooms. Our content covers the whole curriculum, from KS1 to KS4, and includes accurate information, images, audio, video, downloadable resources and digital interactives. Explore more at **mylearning.org**, and feel free to contact info@mylearning.org with any feedback.

6

Practical physics at home

The Virtual Physics Laboratory is a collection of GCSE and A Level experiments that can all be performed on a PC or Mac, allowing your students to carry out practical science work while not attending school. They can also be used by teachers for ready access demonstrations.

30 lab experiments are included, covering topics such as electricity and magnetism; motion and Newton's laws; light; elasticity; radioactivity; heat capacity and conduction; Boyle's and Charles's laws and much more besides. The Virtual Physics Laboratory carries the Association for Science Education's Green Tick of approval – find out more at **virtual-science.co.uk**

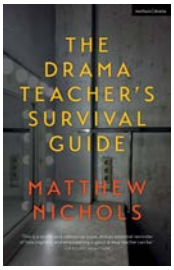
8

Dramatic inspiration

Drama teaching is at a critical juncture. With new qualifications in the market, changes in the government's approach to the arts in education and many thousands of students wanting to be part of the country's hugely successful performing arts industry, the pressures on drama teachers are enormous.

This new inspirational guide supports every secondary drama teacher, regardless of experience.

Written by Matthew Nichols, an experienced drama teacher, this book draws on his own advice and expertise to look at how teachers can deliver inspiring lessons to fulfil the potential of their learners. For more information, visit **bloomsbury.com/drama**; use the offer code TEACHSEC21 for a 20% discount until 31st March



9

Historical know-how

The Historical Association is the national charity for history, supporting the study, teaching and enjoyment of history at all levels. With over 6.000 members, ranging from established heads of history to trainees and NQTs, it offers a strong community of support and collaboration for all those involved in secondary history education.

Individual and school members can access guidance, resources, pedagogical development through the journal *Teaching History*, subject-specific CPD and digital resources that include curriculum briefings to support knowledge enhancement. For more details, contact 0300 100 0223 or visit **history.org.uk/secondary**

Quality RE

RE Today works nationally and internationally to support religious education in schools. It is committed to the teaching of the major world faiths in RE and non-religious worldviews, and to an accurate and fair representation of their beliefs, values, and practices in all its teaching materials.

It supports all schools across all Key Stages by producing RE resources and publications, such as *REtoday* magazine and curriculum books. It also provides professional development courses, offers consultancy services to LAs and supports the National Association of Teachers of RE in giving its members high-quality RE resources and support. Find out more by visiting **retoday.org.uk**

7

10

Star performer

Supported by research conducted by the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) and trusted by over 6,000 schools in the UK & Ireland, Renaissance Star Maths provides the perfect computer-adaptive online assessment tool.

Using sophisticated item calibration and psychometrics that adjust dynamically to each child's unique responses, Star Maths tests can be taken at any time throughout the year, 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 find out more, email ukanswer@renlearn.co.uk or visit **renlearn.co.uk/maths-gaps**

5 REASONS TO TRY... Online professional development

Free professional development resources from the Royal Society of Chemistry

30 SECOND BRIEFING

Whatever your expertise, the Royal Society of Chemistry's teacher development programme has a course that's right for you. Courses are free, remotely taught and cover 19 different topics in teaching chemistry, with no limit to how many you take.

1 LIVE ONLINE COURSES

The Royal Society of Chemistry's live teacher professional development (PD) courses are free to attend. Each session is led by an experienced teacher developer and represents a genuine opportunity for you to update your existing skills and gain in-depth understanding of key concepts in teaching chemistry – whatever your current experience level. You'll also get access to custom-produced resources to support classroom activities. Visit the RSC's dedicated education website (see edu.rsc.org/teacher-pd) to browse a list of all upcoming courses.

2 ON-DEMAND COURSES

Also available from the RSC's education website are on-demand PD courses that allow you to learn at the time most convenient to you. Each course – consisting of concept-focused sessions aimed at building confidence in every topic – can be completed at your own pace, allowing you to try out new strategies and activities in your classroom before progressing further. The RSC is committed to supporting PD during the pandemic, with all courses currently fully-funded; simply register your interest before the end of March 2021.

3 A COMPREHENSIVE ARRAY OF VIDEO RECORDINGS

It's not too late to catch up on any RSC live courses you may have missed. Its education website hosts video recordings of past sessions that collectively span the full breadth of chemistry teaching, with even more due to be uploaded this term. You'll also find a selection of standalone recordings, complete with downloadable companion sheets, which contain links to key resources and questions, and will be useful to both specialists and non-specialists looking to develop their expertise.

4 COURSE RESOURCES

The RSC's teacher PD courses are accompanied by custom-produced resources, featuring activities for your classroom. These resources will be most valuable to you after you have attended a course and wish to put some of the ideas and activities learnt into practice with your students. The resources available span the subjects covered in the 'Teaching chemistry' series of courses.

5 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ARTICLES

You can also access an online curated collection of CPD articles from Education in Chemistry – the RSC's dedicated magazine for chemistry teachers. These articles cover topics spanning the breadth of chemistry, following the 'Teaching chemistry' course series. You may not think that reading an article qualifies as PD, but it can, in fact, be a highly effective way of staying on top of advances in your field.

Contact:
education@rsc.org
edu.rsc.org/teacher-pd

The Royal Society of Chemistry believes everyone should have access to a high quality chemistry education that's engaging, stimulating and relevant. They are a not-for-profit organisation that exists to nurture future generations of scientists, and to support the teachers who inspire them.

KEY POINTS

- The RSC is an internationally renowned, not-for-profit knowledge provider that's working to support teachers to inspire future generations of scientists
- At the RSC's education website you'll find a wide range of PD resources to suit your needs – from courses to classroom tools, books, and magazines
- RSC teacher PD courses will expand your skills, knowledge, expertise and confidence, whatever your current ability level or experience
- Each CPD course focuses on subject specific pedagogy, including the effective use of lab-based and non-lab-based practical activities

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

T: 0800 904 7000

Quote: 9220

*Terms and conditions apply. See online for details.

Let's talk about flex

Amid an ongoing recruitment crisis and the uncertainties of the pandemic, the time has come for schools to properly embrace flexible working, argues **Emma Turner**...

As the DfE prepares to launch a national flexible working strategy in the spring, and as the ongoing pandemic continues to reshape our traditional working practices, it would seem that flexible working is having something of a moment.

For many, flexible working remains inextricably associated with parental leave, or roles up to a certain level of responsibility. Yet for those willing to embrace new ways of thinking, it can provide innovative solutions, agile responses and an effective way of addressing difficult recruitment and retention issues.

Flip the narrative

Teaching is haemorrhaging talent at all levels of responsibility across multiple demographics, just as a headship recruitment crisis looms large on the horizon. We can't afford to continue ignoring these factors and simply plough on with our outdated models of working, while refusing to offer our workforce the degree of flexibility they might otherwise find in the wider world of work.

There's still relatively little awareness of what actually constitutes flexible working. It's not just for colleagues who work part time, but can be applied to those in full time roles too. Its aim is to ensure that colleagues can contribute to the needs and requirements of an organisation, whilst simultaneously being able to work in a way that helps them to balance their commitments outside work, as well as their continued career development.

Individuals' reasons for wanting to work flexibly naturally vary. Parenting is the most frequently given reason for flexible working requests, but caring commitments, additional study and health challenges are common too. Whatever the reason, we need to flip the narrative from a 'Full time is best' way of thinking – where colleagues are encouraged to work as close to full time as possible – to one where different working patterns are actively encouraged. That way, we can ensure that our organisations include the widest possible range of voices, rather than just those who are able to work full time.

Having formed part of one of the UK's first all-female co-headships over 10 years ago, I remain a passionate advocate for applying this type of flexibility within leadership. Unless flexible working is visible in *all* roles, we'll never debunk the myth that flexible working and senior roles are incompatible.

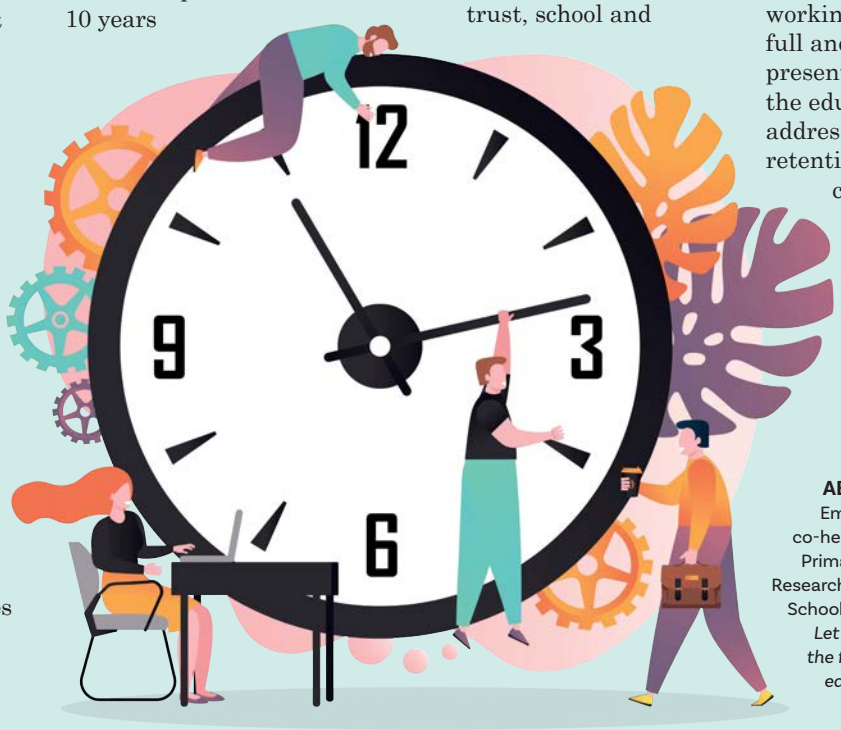
A red herring

Flex works well when the leadership of an organisation is committed to making it work; when said leaders actively encourage flexible working, from initial advertising and recruitment, right through to equitable career development and progression opportunities.

The are some schools and trusts that haven't let issues such as timetabling derail their commitment to flexible working. Through researching my book *Let's Talk About Flex: Flipping the flexible working narrative in education*, I talked to multiple senior trust, school and department leaders, as well as many secondary timetablers, and it appears the timetable is something of a red herring when cited as a reason for not embracing flexible working.

Using flexible ways of working can, in fact, be a key strategy when seeking to build capacity within organisations. The recent pandemic and associated periods of staff absence have vividly highlighted how fragile our staffing structures are. Building a flexible working staff 'squad', rather than a single full-time 'team', will afford schools the flexibility to respond to not just unpredictable and unforeseen events, but also those predictable changes to staffing that can occur during a standard academic year.

Thinking more creatively about how we can develop roles in our schools, and offering a broader range of working patterns for both full and part time staff, presents an opportunity for the education profession to address the recruitment, retention and wellbeing crisis within our workforce. So, let's talk about flex...



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Emma Turner is a former co-headteacher of The Latimer Primary School and currently Research and CPD lead for Discovery Schools Academy Trust; her book, *Let's Talk About Flex: Flipping the flexible working narrative in education*, is available now (John Catt, £12)

Download your FREE copy of

TECHNOLOGY + INNOVATION

NOW on 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?

Saving for the future

Sound money management is something that can be taught, says Annette Whalley – and secondary schools are the ideal venues...

Money is a fundamental part of adult life. It's central to those big life decisions, but also something most of will think about on a regular, often daily basis. It therefore follows that the sooner we can support and educate our young people about money, the better equipped they'll be to make informed decisions about their future.

By improving their financial capabilities and independence, we'll be giving young people the skills they need to overcome numerous barriers and support themselves in the years ahead. But what do we mean by 'financial capabilities', and why should students encounter it at school?

Cross-curricular

Financial education sits well with maths and numeracy, but can also span a range of other subjects and take in the emotional dimension of the decisions we make around our finances. In history, for example, it's possible to study money in the context of war rationing; in geography, by exploring the alloys used in the manufacture of coins and the workings of national economies.

Young people at secondary school will already be experiencing a number of key life moments – from going out independently with friends, to buying things online – that involve making independent financial choices and decisions for the first time. Many will also be developing an interest in earning money through a part-time job or even some form of online entrepreneurship.

It's important that they possess the skills needed to make the most of these new experiences, so what do they need to know?

Good habits

Fundamentally, young people need to understand the basics of banking and why getting a bank account is important for their independence. At a time when they're likely to be starting their first job, developing an awareness of good savings habits early on will make it more likely that they'll set money aside for life's unexpected events or future goals, such as buying their first car.

This is also a time where they won't have many financial commitments. Keeping track of their spending will only become more difficult over time; developing budgeting skills now can set themselves up for success in later life.

In a world that's becoming ever more digital, it's also increasingly important that young people are taught how to bank safely. Financial protection can take many forms, from keeping their money safe from fraudsters, to recognising the dangers of being a money mule and preparing for unexpected events. With attempted fraudulent activity on the rise, an awareness of how students could be targeted by bad actors should be woven throughout the financial education they receive.

Tools for the future

At HSBC UK, we're working hard to help equip young people, parents and educators with teaching tools and resources. Our tools can help schools deliver financial capability sessions that range from core learning about banking, through to employability modules aimed at helping young people into the world of work.

The sessions can be downloaded and delivered by teaching staff, or an HSBC UK education lead can potentially deliver them on your school's behalf. There are two key programmes available to young people from the age of 11:

- Smart Money helps young people take control of their money as their independence grows, equipping them with the skills that they need to make smart decisions around money

- Level Up Your Finances includes a series of tools and sessions that will help young adults navigate the real world, and the various challenges and life moments they can expect to encounter

The education programme is free, and can be tailored to focus on specific age groups and needs so that you can get the most out of each session. The sessions can be delivered digitally or in classrooms, depending on social distancing measures – for more details, email educationteam@hsbc.com.

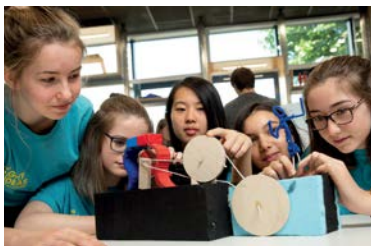
ABOUT THE AUTHOR
Annette Whalley is a senior consultant in education at HSBC UK

4 REASONS TO TRY... The Bright Ideas Challenge

What will cities look like in 2050? That's the question put to students aged 11 to 14 by Shell's Bright Ideas Challenge...

1 INSPIRE YOUR STUDENTS IN STEM

The cross-curricular Bright Ideas Challenge invites students to come up with creative ideas that can power the cities of the future, ensuring they are vibrant, healthy and clean places to live.



2 CURRICULUM-LINKED RESOURCES

Our curriculum-linked resources include a teacher toolkit, PowerPoint presentation, workbook and videos to help teachers deliver the competition in as little as 2.5 hours, virtually or at school. There's also a step-by-step film, and tips for helping students to work independently from home, individually or as a team.

3 FOSTER TOMORROW'S STEM SPECIALISTS

Despite their vital importance, we're facing a considerable shortage of engineers and technicians in in the years to come. We've aligned the resources to national careers strategies, making it easier for teachers to provide quality careers inspiration and encourage students to become tomorrow's STEM specialists.

4 WIN FANTASTIC STEM PRIZES

Some fantastic STEM prizes are up for grabs, including cash awards of up to £10,000, STEM goodie bags, and fun science workshops. Winning students will get to take part in a virtual winners' experience, where they'll interact with business leaders and engineering experts, while participating in STEM enrichment activities.

THE BRIGHT IDEAS CHALLENGE

Contact:
shell.co.uk/brightideaschallenge

At a glance

+ Spark 11- to 14-year-old students' curiosity in STEM, and inspire them to become tomorrow's STEM specialists

+ A range of flexible resources adapted for remote delivery and independent learning

+ Enter before Friday 21st May 2021 and you could win up to £10,000 and high-tech goodie bags for your school

"Headteachers have been stitched up"

Nick Hurn takes a dim view of the government's proposed alternative arrangements for this year's cancelled GCSEs...

The announcement in January that this summer's GCSE and A level exams were to be cancelled caused me considerable concern – which wasn't allayed by the subsequent publication of a joint Ofqual/DfE consultation on *'How GCSE, AS and A level grades should be awarded in summer 2021'*.

The most frustrating aspect of the decision to cancel the planned exam schedule is that this very situation had been anticipated by school leaders back in September 2020, when ministers were announcing that exams would proceed as normal in 2021. Despite an array of educational organisations and individuals urging the government to adopt a 'Plan B', the DfE, as usual, chose to press ahead and ignore the profession.

Student readiness

Indeed, this government seems to hardly respect its school leaders at all. On multiple occasions, important announcements affecting schools have been communicated via national media first, without any advance warning or consideration for the resulting impact on schools and teachers. It's therefore hardly surprising that headteachers have received this latest consultation with a strong degree of scepticism as to what extent their views will actually be considered.

I accept that unlike in Scotland and Wales, most qualifications in England are largely assessed through linear examinations, making it significantly more difficult for the English system to move away from exams. The centre assessed grades (CAGs) used in last year's exam round produced outcomes that appeared to reflect an 11% grade inflation compared to 2019. The worry is that if we were to adopt CAGs again in 2021 they would be equally generous, even if moderated.

At the same time, however, the notion that providing a slimmed-down exam model will create a more level playing field for all English schoolchildren simply isn't true. As one of my colleagues recently put it, "The playing field may well be level, but the players using this field are at very different levels of fitness."

All schools and students have missed considerable amounts of time as a consequence of isolations, closures and lockdowns. For some, however, this experience has been compounded by a lack of high quality remote learning, ICT provision and/or connectivity. Our students' readiness for these coming exams is a direct consequence of their own particular circumstances, provision or school, which is clearly neither equitable nor fair.

Collective expertise

I don't believe that exams should be adjusted in order to rebalance inequalities and address disadvantage within our education system, but nor should they be allowed to further increase educational inequality during this pandemic.

The alternative could be for Ofqual to apply some sort of assessment mechanism or formula to key groups within regions, areas or schools that have been disproportionately affected by the pandemic, thus limiting the impact these inequalities are undoubtedly having on our most disadvantaged and vulnerable students.

The general feeling among headteachers is that they've been 'stitched up' by the proposals contained within the January consultation. The strategy of this government is now clear – to direct as much work and accountability as possible towards schools, and away from awarding bodies.

Take responsibility for marking, for example – assigning this to schools is simply wrong, and may well lead to a repeat of the grade inflation fiasco we witnessed in 2020. All exams should and must be externally marked by awarding bodies.

The only thing that can be guaranteed is that all headteachers, school leaders and teachers across the country will do their best to ensure that whatever ill-thought out plan we end up using this summer actually works, for the good of their students. It's just a shame that their collective expertise and advice are so often ignored.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR
Nick Hurn is CEO of the Bishop Wilkinson Catholic Education Trust

4 REASONS TO TRY... MyLearning

MyLearning is a hub website hosting FREE learning resources from arts, cultural and heritage organisations across England

1 QUALITY CONTENT

All our content is checked by subject experts. We offer real objects, real people and real stories. Factually correct text, high quality images, audio, video, discussion and activity ideas, and supporting downloadable materials. Funded by Arts Council England, everything on MyLearning is curriculum linked and free for educational use.

2 EASY TO USE

The MyLearning website is designed for teachers, by teachers. Find what you need quickly and easily, whether it's accurate information, an original document, a fabulous image or practical activity resources. Search by keyword, subject, or Key Stage. Choose to log

in to personalise your experience and save content for future use.

3 FLEXIBLE TO MEET YOUR NEEDS

Teaching from someone else's lesson plan is often difficult. People teach in different ways and students have different needs and responses. MyLearning provides resources that can be edited, allowing you to create lessons that both reflect your teaching style and meet the needs of your students.

4 HOME LEARNING FRIENDLY

MyLearning contains no advertising and requires no login to use. Text includes glossaries where needed, while educational games, annotated 3D models and interactive images provide engaging ways to learn. Our content covers the whole of the curriculum, across KS1 to KS4. Why not recommend MyLearning to your students' parents and carers?

My Learning

Contact:
Explore a world of free learning resources at mylearning.org.
Got any feedback? Drop us a line at info@mylearning.org

At a glance

+ No fees, no contracts, no marketing – just great quality educational resources

+ Overflowing with resources to help support the development of your school's cultural capital

+ Content from museums, galleries and archives around the country, all in one place

4 REASONS TO TRY... The REtoday Library

Lat Blaylock, Editor of *REtoday* magazine shares his thoughts on how the REtoday Library can help all teachers of RE.

1 ACCESS TO 1000+ RE RESOURCES

Whether you're searching for practical resources to teach about religious and non-religious worldviews; top tips on leadership in RE; opinion pieces by Professor Brian Cox or Michael Morpurgo; or informed comment on the theory and practice of RE, this dynamic resource has something for everyone across all Key Stages.

2 NEWLY ADDED ARTICLES EACH TERM

REtoday magazine is published three times a year. Each issue carries articles that enable teachers of RE to grow their knowledge of different religions and worldviews, develop their professional practice

and vision, and perform the task of teaching RE in the classroom better than ever.

3 EASILY ACCESS VIA ANY DEVICE

The work we've performed to digitise the extensive back issue archive of *REtoday* is worth your attention. It makes it easy to find thoughtful, inspiring, and provocative articles and resources covering a range of topics We're glad to offer this professional insight to fellow practitioners – so subscribe and help yourself to better RE!

4 MULTI-USER ACCESS

Choose from three 12-month subscription packages: 'Individual' (personal access for £55), 'School' (all staff access for £85 – our most popular option) and 'Instituation' (access across MATs and other organisations for just £380).

Contact:
0121 458 3313
sales@retoday.org.uk
retodaylibrary.org.uk

At a glance

+ *REtoday* is the magazine for the RE community and has a readership of over 10,500

+ Our Library gives you easy access to over 1,000 fully searchable RE articles and teaching resources for use in the classroom

+ 98% of surveyed readers would recommend *REtoday* to other teachers and RE professionals

Diversity & Inclusion *in History*

Learn more about the work we're doing to build a more diverse and inclusive history curriculum, including:

- The introduction of a new Migration topic to our existing Pearson Edexcel GCSE (9-1) History specification for first teaching from September 2021, complete with full support, free teacher resources and training.
- Free resources to help you embed diversity and inclusion in your school, including History Topic of the Month, covering topics such as Mansa Musa and Votes for Women.
- Case studies sharing the experiences of teachers, students and parents.

For more information please visit:
go.pearson.com/diversehistory

B0103

Pearson

FOCUS ON: Humanities

We look at how recent events have lent particular urgency to the study of who we are, where we came from and the world that currently surrounds us...

To what extent should the humanities curriculum be informed by current events across the wider world?

THE AGENDA:

WHOSE HISTORY SHOULD WE TEACH?

Recent events have highlighted the need for school history lessons to adopt a much wider, more global perspective, says **Gemma Hargraves**

As monuments fell across the world last summer, some of us felt compelled to ask – are our young people seeing themselves and their cultures reflected in the history curriculum? And does it matter?

The answer to the first question remains unclear. Many schools have made great strides in recent years to make their history curricula more diverse and representative. As for the second question, the answer is an emphatic 'yes'. It matters.

Not just symbolically, but because the inclusion of world history, and the histories of groups previously overlooked in the curriculum, will make our subject richer, and enable us to tell a fuller story, in bright technicolour.

This discussion isn't about tokenism, but rather how to make a rigorous and just curriculum fit for purpose in our globalised world. I don't intend to suggest any distinct routes to curriculum reform here – but I do believe that it's worth exploring further the issues around whose history is being taught and how.

Regimes and racism

From the killing of George Floyd to the storming of the Capitol building, recent international events have prompted us to think again about the content of the lessons we teach. One can't ignore the work of the National Trust's fantastic Colonial Countryside project, the beginnings of Joe Biden's presidency and the wonderful poem from Amanda Gorman that she read at the inauguration:

> ***"We need to realise that diverse history is representative history"***

"*Somehow we've weathered and witnessed a nation that isn't broken, but simply unfinished.*"

As Sarah Maza argues in *Thinking About History*, history changes all the time because it's driven by the concerns of the present. She observes that history can be described as "What the present needs to know about the past" – and in this particular present, we've seen efforts at toppling monuments worldwide.

Statues of Christopher Columbus have been damaged in Boston, Minnesota and Virginia. A statue of Andrew Jackson located near the White House survived an attempt by protestors to pull it down in June 2020. Jackson served as the seventh US president from 1829 to 1837, owned slaves and enacted policies that forced Native Americans from their land, resulting in 15,000 deaths.

Closer to home, statues of Leopold II of Belgium were removed from locations near Brussels and a public square in Antwerp. Almost 85,000 people signed a petition calling for the removal of all statues of Leopold from Belgium, as the country continues to grapple with its colonial past. Leopold's forces seized Congo in the late 19th century and ran an exploitative regime that led to the deaths of as many as 10 million Africans.

For decades, colonial history has been barely taught in Belgium. The famous (and racist) cartoon book *Tintin in the Congo* can still be found in many Belgian classrooms. In June 2020, however, Belgium's education minister announced that the country's secondary schools would teach colonial history from 2021.

Britain was recently forced to confront its own colonial past when a statue of the slave trader Edward Colston was forcibly removed and thrown into Bristol Harbour. Colston transported at least 80,000 people from West Africa to the Caribbean, almost 20,000 of whom died on the voyages. The statue was eventually retrieved, though not restored to its former location. Since then, debate has continued to rage around those schools and streets that bear his name.

Two days after Colston's literal downfall, a statue of Robert Milligan outside of the Museum of London Docklands was removed by local authorities. He too was a slave trader who, by the time of his death in 1809, owned two sugar plantations and 526 slaves in Jamaica.

In January 2021 we saw the government's response to these protests, when Communities Minister Robert Jenrick announced plans to change the law in to protect historic monuments and ensure "We don't repeat the errors of previous generations."

Representative history

Are we, as Chris Husbands argues in *What is History Teaching?*, as concerned with concepts of humanity and inhumanity as we are with evidence and change? For that may fundamentally alter the nature and purpose of history in schools, regardless of whose it is.

An understanding of the current discussion around statues may appeal to those drawn more to the humanity

and inhumanity part of that equation, or indeed, those drawn more to evidence and change. However, the concept of the former doesn't fit as neatly into exam board specifications as the latter.

More recently, monuments erected to Churchill and Nelson have come in for especially heavy criticism, but there's one thing I'd take from both men before their statues are potentially destroyed, moved, contextualised or forgotten. 220 years ago, Nelson stated that "The boldest measures are the safest," with Churchill later using the same phrase himself – perhaps sound and timely advice with respect to our history curriculum planning.

If the question we're asking is '*Whose history?*', well – we must be bold. We must acknowledge, for instance, that Black British history is all our history. Our present day UK is one shaped by immigration, even prior to the *Empire Windrush*. More than one in five British people have a disability. We have evidence of homosexuality as far back as Roman times. We need to realise that diverse history is representative history. We must be global, not parochial; ambitious, not conservative. Curious, not close-minded.

Warts and all

Our globalised experiences show just how interconnected the people of the world now are, though our historical knowledge should remind us that this isn't new. Global histories may now have the potential to edge out national narratives, and with limited teaching time available in schools, choices must be made.

One can't claim to teach the history of every possible group in school; to attempt to do so would be superficial, misleading and lead to an incoherent history curriculum. Still, as Husbands argues, pupils' ideas of the past are linked to ideas they already have regarding human motivation, plus various ideas and experiences that they're exposed to beyond the school gates. Local history has its place too.

We can perhaps take inspiration from books like *The House by the Lake* (Thomas Harding) or *House of Glass* (Hadley Freeman), and broaden our timeframes to more of a breadth study, albeit while shining a spotlight on certain individuals, stories and evidence. Or we could add some of Miranda Kaufmann's *Black Tudors* to the established Tudors unit – a 'slot-in', as some schools are currently doing to rapidly diversify their existing units. But we must then build to do more, and do better.

One may well agree with Jenrick when he said "It is our privilege in this country to have inherited a deep, rich, fascinating and, yes, often complex past. We are mature enough as a society to understand that, and to seek to pass it on – warts and all. To do otherwise would leave our history and future diminished."

Indeed, it's the duty of history teachers to teach that history, warts and all. To borrow a further line from Amanda Gorman – which could relate to the UK as much as the USA – "*It's the past we step into and how we repair it.*"

All that's left is to continue carefully pondering whose history it is that we're teaching, and after Brexit and COVID-19, whether that history can help us heal.

DOWNLOAD

an audit tool for identifying gaps and areas for development in your history curriculum at

teachwire.net/history-audit

FURTHER READING

- *Natives* – Akala
- *Queer City* – Peter Ackroyd
- *The Hill We Climb* – Amanda Gorman
- *Brit(ish)* – Afua Hirsch
- *What is History Teaching* – Chris Husbands
- *Thinking About History* – Sarah Maza
- *Silencing the Past* – Michel-Rolph Trouillot

ABOUT THE AUTHOR
Gemma Hargraves is a history teacher, A Level examiner and secondary committee member of The Historical Association

WHAT DEFINES GEOGRAPHY?

Mark Enser explains why the ever-growing scope of geography serves up some valuable lessons on the importance and purpose of a subject's curriculum

"*Anything is geography.*"

These three words defined the thinking around the geography curriculum when I started teaching in 2004 and, for a while, this seemed hugely exciting. Geography is such a broad discipline that we could – we were told – study anything in our classrooms, put anything into our programmes of study, at least until we had to prepare for an exam specification, and we could call it geography.

And so we did.

We would create units on the geography of crime in which pupils would consider how different stakeholders felt about a crime that had taken place and, as a result, develop empathy. Or study the geography of sport and plot the location of Premier League football stadiums and, as a result, relate the subject to pupils' interests.

They could study the geography of fashion and learn about the deplorable conditions of sweatshops and, as a result, hopefully change their shopping habits. What mattered wasn't the content but the result of studying it.

A messy discipline

The problem is that once we decide that "anything is geography", it starts to become clear that therefore nothing is geography. If geography is the development of empathy, the study of things familiar to pupils, and an attempt to make them more conscientious consumers, then what unites it as one subject? How do we define this subject?

Our subject became lost, as it was turned into a vehicle to deliver learning around a range of social issues – according to political priorities – and soft skills to prepare pupils for the needs of an imagined 21st century. Although you could see elements of this in a range of subjects, I think it was a particular issue in geography because it is an unusually messy discipline.

Geography, as a field of study, has a long history stretching back at least as far as the ancient Greeks and the scholar Eratosthenes, who originated the term, coming from the title of his book *Geographica*. However, as an academic university discipline, its history only reaches as far back as the 19th century, and much of its expansion occurred in the early 20th century as a way of providing geography teachers to schools.

This adolescent subject is still testing its boundaries and seeking to define its role. As it has gone through this period of reflection it has become too easy for it to be led astray by those who would use it to further their own ends.

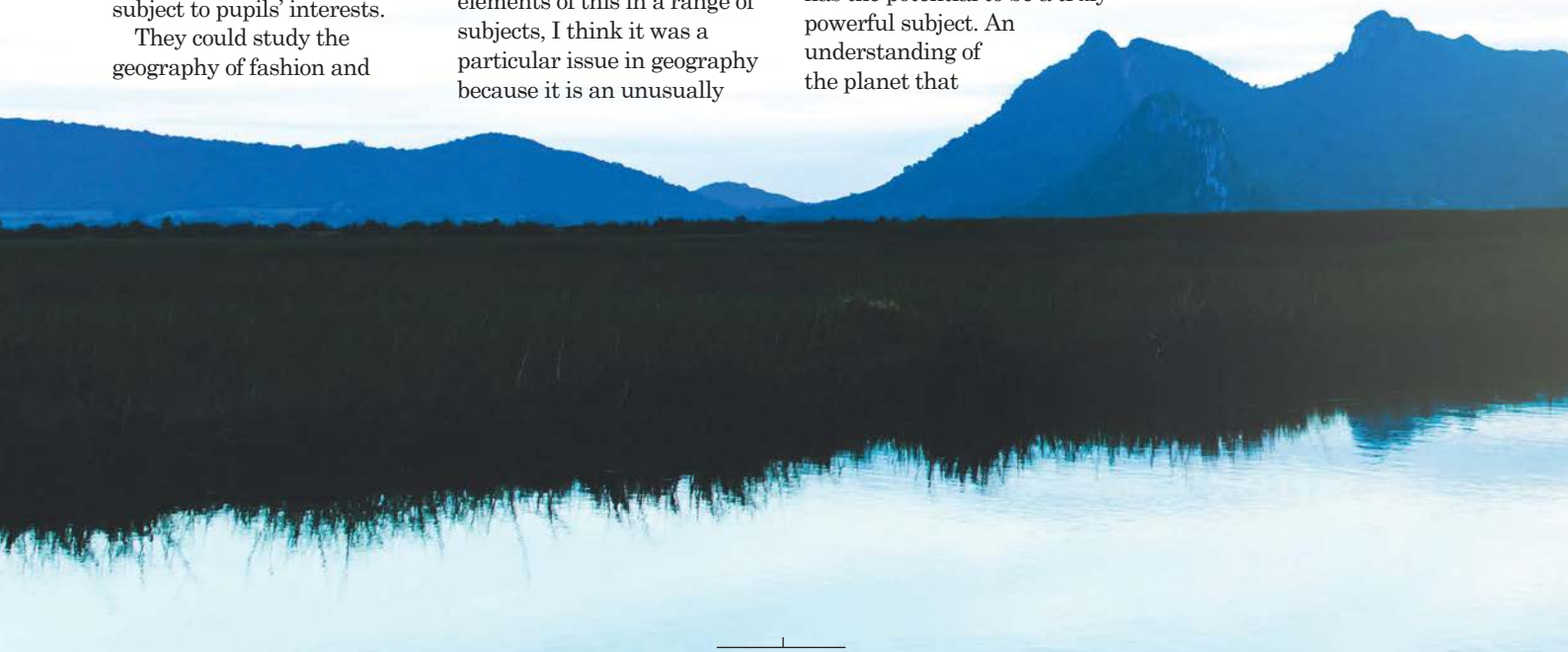
Powerful geography

These years of confusion are a huge shame, as geography has the potential to be a truly powerful subject. An understanding of the planet that we call home – how it works, how human and physical processes interact and lead to change – can transform those who study it and open up new vistas from which they can view the world.

A powerful curriculum needs a clear purpose driving it. Without this clear purpose, we will once again get led off into the territory of 'anything is geography'.

Curriculums are not created by one person writing out a programme of study, but by each and every teacher in the classroom. The word curriculum derives ultimately from a Latin word describing the route of a race, a journey. It is, excitingly for us geography teachers, a map.

It is the individual teacher who takes their pupils on this journey, and so it is the individual teacher who must take responsibility for understanding their map – especially as they will



inevitably alter the route as they teach, finding new tangents to explore and bringing in examples and references from their own lives, interests and experiences.

A curriculum is created many times over: set out by national bodies, interpreted by subject associations such as the Geographical Association and Royal Society, written by individual school departments and then created again in the classroom as the teacher brings it to life.

Teacher technicians

It is, however, becoming an increasingly common expectation for a curriculum to be written by a small team of highly experienced teachers within a school trust and then delivered, as written, by far less experienced teachers across the trust, or even by teachers in schools outside of the trust.

We run the risk of creating a culture in which, instead of teachers, we are technicians whose role is simply to deliver the vision of another. Not only will this create problems for the profession, in terms of developing such curriculum-makers of the future and in terms of teacher retention (who went into the profession to be a technician?), but it will also create a weaker curriculum because the teacher who created it needs to be there to bring it to life.

One of the forces that has allowed this de-professionalisation to occur is the perceived diminishing of the teacher's role in the classroom. In his paper 'Receiving the Gift of Teaching', Gert Biesta argues that this diminished role came about as a result of the application of constructivist ideas about learning, saying, "Teaching has become increasingly understood as the facilitation of learning rather than as a process where teachers have something to give to their students." This view of education led to a belief that teachers were simply in the room to draw out of pupils that which they already knew – an idea going back to Socrates.

"Geography has the potential to be a truly powerful subject"

However, Biesta argues that education requires something more than immanence (what comes from within): it needs transcendence (that which comes from without). Biesta's concern is that we have removed the teacher from education and turned them, at best, into a facilitator of learning or a learning resource. He argues that we need to tell a different story: "This is a story where teachers are not disposable and dispensable resources for learning, but where they have something to give, where they do not shy away from difficult questions and inconvenient truths, and where they work actively and consistently on the distinction between what is desired and what is desirable, so as to explore what it is that should have authority in our lives."

The garden of peace

In this alternative story, schools are not only places of learning, as one can learn anywhere, but are places where pupils are taught. It is here that they receive the gift of teaching, the one thing that other social institutions cannot provide.

There is another worrying trend in education, which is the move to make schools agents which serve the needs of wider society. It may be unclear why I deem this worrying, so widespread a belief has this become, but I will argue that the competing and clamouring voices are leading to confusion over the purpose of schools and, as a result, over the purpose of teaching geography.

I often find myself thinking back to the phrase coined by the American geographer David Wadley, who calls for academic institutions to be gardens of peace that stand outside the needs of the vibrant neoliberal city.

Here, in the garden of peace, we can enjoy the study of the world for its own sake and reach our own conclusions, untroubled by the rest of the world's urgent demands that we serve them. Here in the garden of peace we can be teachers helping to pass on the gift of teaching to our pupils for no reason other than the fact that it is a gift that they have the right to be bequeathed and the fact that it is our duty to bequeath it.

What we are left with is a question about what this gift should look like.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR
Mark Enser is a head of department and research lead at Heathfield Community College; visit his blog at teachreal.wordpress.com or follow @EnserMark.
This article is an edited extract taken from his book *Powerful Geography: A curriculum with purpose in practice* (Crown House, £16.99)

LEARNING THE LESSONS OF EMPIRE

Aneira Roose-McClew makes the case for why students ought to receive a full, frank and honest education in Britain's imperial past

Almost 2,500 years ago, the Greek philosopher Plato summarised the link between power and stories in a succinct and memorable phrase: 'Those who tell the stories rule society.'

This relationship between the holders of power and their ability to influence or control the narrative is evident throughout modern society. It's visible in the ability of media moguls to shape public opinion, in the billionaire-making social media industry to manipulate minds and elections.

It's also relevant when we come to reflect on how the UK's colonial past is perceived in the present day. When it comes to colonialism, it's as though the power holders and colonists of yesterday still control the narrative.

An incomplete history

The history we learn in educational institutions and wider society concerning the British Empire is incomplete. The stories that dominate tend to amplify the voices of the colonisers, depicting the 'Imperial period' as a time of glory and greatness – while the plunder, oppression and destruction of other people's societies and cultures often occupies, at most, a footnote.

We hear of how the British left behind sporting traditions, train networks, education and democracy (as if those subjected to colonialism wouldn't have come to these themselves), but learn little of how much of Britain's current wealth can be traced back to the suffering, exploitation and enslavement of millions of fellow human beings.

Nor do we learn of how the racist structures that persist today were colonial creations used to justify theft and oppression. Colonialism fuelled, and was fuelled by, racist beliefs; colonists were said to be 'civilising' the 'uncivilised'.

Learning an incomplete narrative like this is deeply problematic for several reasons. Firstly, it creates a misguided sense of nostalgia. It's not surprising that in times of difficulty and stagnation, tales of imperial glory have led many Britons to look backwards to a time, we're told, that was full of wealth and prosperity, rather than forwards.

Warped nostalgia

This warped understanding of the past stifles progress. It prevents us from taking the steps needed now to create a better society for all. Such nostalgia also highlights a lack of understanding about the impact of colonialism, which can hinder our ability to engage with our complex past with empathy and humility.

A March 2020 YouGov survey found that 33% of British respondents believed that countries colonised by Britain were 'Better off overall' for having been colonised, whilst 32% were 'Proud of the British Empire'.

It would be odd, if not sinister, to express these sentiments if those surveyed knew that the British Empire enslaved over 3.4 million Africans; oversaw famines in India in which millions starved; and amassed wealth by plundering countries around the globe. If the brutal realities of Britain's colonial past were taught in schools and discussed more within wider society, those survey results would no doubt be very different. As indeed might be our current political reality.

> ***"Telling the full story about Britain's painful and destructive history can help us challenge racist attitudes and systems"***

The 'mother' country

This lack of education concerning Britain's colonial past is further problematic in that it impedes our ability to tackle systemic racism. Without fully understanding the roots of the racist social structures that place white people above the rest, and which negatively impact the opportunities available to people of colour, we can't challenge them.

Britain's current social hierarchy is a product of colonialism, and the racial inequality of the present day can't be divorced from this history. It's a direct consequence of othering humans on account of their skin colour to justify shameful exploitation. Until we honestly examine this racist history and actively take steps to dismantle its structures, white voices will continue to be amplified, and white experiences still catered to by default.

Moreover, the failure

to understand how Britain invaded other nations adds further fuel to racist attitudes that focus on individuals' rights to be here. Too often, immigrants and Britons alike are accosted in the street and told to 'Go back to where they came from' because of their skin colour.

These racist views misunderstand how Britain's colonial past paved the way for immigration to this island, thus shaping its present day demographics. For a period, Britain presented itself as the 'mother' country – extracting wealth, labour and military power from its colonies, while instigating relationships with the people who lived in them.

These relationships didn't exist in a vacuum, nor did they stop when those colonies later gained independence. Ambalavaner Sivanandan, a former director of the Institute of Race Relations, summed this up well in a curt statement on postcolonial migration: 'We are here because you were there'.

Honest engagement

As educators, we need to start challenging the stories of Britain's imperial greatness that have endured, despite the end of colonialism. We need to question whose perspectives are missing from the narrative and fill in the blanks. In short, as thousands of young people have called for in petitions up and down the country, we need to decolonise the curriculum.

Telling the full story about Britain's painful and destructive history can help us challenge racist attitudes and systems, tackle social inequality and build a more empathetic society which would allow everyone, regardless of skin colour and class, to thrive. It's an act of justice – one which seeks to ensure that we tell the stories of, and bear witness to, those who suffered.

At Facing History and Ourselves, we believe that decolonising the curriculum goes hand in hand with giving students the tools to become active, thoughtful, and responsible citizens who are able to engage critically with the world around them.

Our collective history contains many lessons which can help guide our behaviour in the present.

To learn these lessons, we need to engage honestly with the past and explore how it's both shaped the modern world and shaped who we are.

To this end, we provide students with opportunities to engage with the complexities of identity, examine the range of human behaviour and reflect on the impact and consequences of our choices and actions. Once students understand the relationship between choices and history, they can better understand their own agency and the role they can play in standing up against injustice.

FIRST STEPS

1. Start with yourself
Before discussing challenging topics with students, connect with yourself – your identity and experiences – and reflect on how *who you are* might impact upon your interactions with students and how you engage with certain topics.

2. Make your classroom a safe and brave space
Use contracting to build a classroom environment in which students can share their ideas and experiences, and practice disagreeing respectfully.

3. Decolonise the content
Spend time reflecting on the content that you share with students. Think about whose stories it tells and whose perspectives it's missing, and actively seek out other narratives. When voices are missing, acknowledge this and explore why that might be the case.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR
Aneira Roose-McClew is former secondary teacher, examiner and teacher trainer, and now content developer at Facing History & Ourselves UK – a charity that uses lessons from history to challenge teachers and their students to stand up to bigotry and hate; find out more by visiting facinghistory.org/uk or following @FacingHistoryUK

Now we're talking

How to recognise pupils who stammer in pupils and make their lives easier

Stammering is a hidden disability which affects 1% of adults and up to 9% of children. With numbers like this, it's very likely you will encounter a child who stammers in your class or school. I'm a teacher who stammers – here's what behaviours to look for and advice for getting the best from pupils in your care who stammer.

Overt signs

There are a range of overt behaviours you might notice when a young person stammers. These include putting their hands over or around their mouth, repeating words or sounds and seeming tense and anxious.

Pupils who stammer may also speak in a funny voice, such as a baby voice, or speak more quietly or loudly than necessary. When they feel able to speak, they may interrupt or call out in class, which can seem rude. Look out for pupils using filler words such as 'like', 'and', 'y'know' and 'sort of' to act as a run-in to speaking.

Covert behaviours

There are also a range of covert behaviours you might notice when a young person stammers. These include avoiding talking and trying to get out of situations where talking is expected. Pupils may behave in ways that cover up their stammer. For example, they may seem quiet and hardworking, or they might be difficult in class and try to dominate other children.

Having a stammer may cause students to compromise on what they'd like to do or say. They may see situations as an exposure of their stammering and might judge opportunities solely in terms of it. For example, they may avoid school trips or visits to friends' houses. You may see pupils planning ahead in their talking, continually worrying about their choice of words, or talking so quietly that you can't hear what they're saying. Children with stammers often worry about friendships and simple social demands such as buying sweets, paying bus fares or calling someone. They may feel generally worried about what is coming next.

"It's vital to allow children who stammer the time to finish, no matter how uncomfortable it may be for you"

How to help

Some of the behaviours I've set out above might be familiar to you, whereas some might not be. Regardless, here are some easy tips to help young people with stammers feel at ease in your class and access the most from education.

Firstly, it's vital to allow children who stammer the time to finish, no matter how uncomfortable it may be for you. If there are behaviour issues to deal with in the class while a pupil is stammering, stop the speaker gently and say you will return in a moment.

Most children appreciate being given notice of oral tasks, so that planning can take place. This is particularly beneficial for children who stammer, as it gives them time to plan ahead. Anxiety can be reduced by explaining to a pupil when an answer will need to be given or a passage read aloud. Some children who stammer prefer to go first to avoid the build-up of stress, while others may simply just want to know when it will be their turn.

Children who stammer have the same range of abilities and personality traits as children who don't. It's easy to underestimate the ability of a child who stammers, as they may not always be able to express their thoughts and ideas. Track achievement in relationship to the potential of the child in question, using whatever cognitive tests are favoured in your school. Remember – just because a child doesn't appear able to talk, it doesn't mean they don't understand.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR
Adam Black is a secondary teacher, based at an autism service unit within a mainstream school

Can't learn, won't learn?

Simply placing pupils in a learning environment isn't enough to make learning happen, says **Kevin Hewitson** – so what will actually make them *want* to learn?

It would be great if your mere presence in the classroom was enough to motivate your pupils to learn.

It can happen. Just as with any audience, you can prime them, suggest the benefits that will come their way and create an environment and relationship that stimulates and sustains their interest. In a school environment, the motivation to learn requires more than just compliance, doing as you are told; it requires a level of engagement, a willingness to take part in the learning.

In a managed learning environment such as a school, we need to be motivated to learn. Just being sent to school is not enough to motivate you to learn. Even when there is a desire to learn, there are other forces at work that influence your learning journey. Some of these influences can distract us, just as seeing a sign at the side of the road for free ice cream could cause you to interrupt a journey.

Teachers are tasked with not only managing the learning (planning, resourcing, presenting and assessing) but also motivating learners. You do not hold all of the motivation cards, but you can bring key ones to the top.

Motivation through needs

Learning through, or as a result of a need is the type of learning we all recognise as being an effective learning driver. If overcoming a life-threatening challenge meant learning another language, you would be motivated to learn that language.

The need can be diverse and may not be obvious to others. The intensity of the need can vary too, from casual to imperative. Furthermore, the need can be very personal and not shared, even within a very close group.

Understanding pupils' needs within a learning context is essential in teaching and a key motivational aspect. Not all needs are good in terms of learning, though. It is recognised that we learn poorly in circumstances where we feel threatened or under stress.

When in this emotional state adrenaline is surging and your behaviour can become unregulated. Instinct or past success strategies will direct your response with little thought for rules, regulations or consequences. As a teacher, I would safely bet you have seen such behaviour from pupils. There is a balance to be found when motivating pupils. You will often find that, in education, a reward replaces a threat.

Rewards

Rewards alone are often not enough to motivate pupils, especially if said rewards, those benefits for making the effort to learn, are deferred.

The issue of rewarding pupils is one that will often divide opinion. For instance, people will disagree on the type of rewards and what the rewards should be given for. It is only natural that you should, as a teacher, create a need for learning You can easily move to creating an environment that promotes learning through need, rather than by reward by altering your approach.

Here are two approaches to how you may present a topic in order to motivate your pupils, based on a reward strategy:

1. You need to learn this in order to do or to have that (the outcome)

2. In order to do or to have that (the outcome) you need to learn this

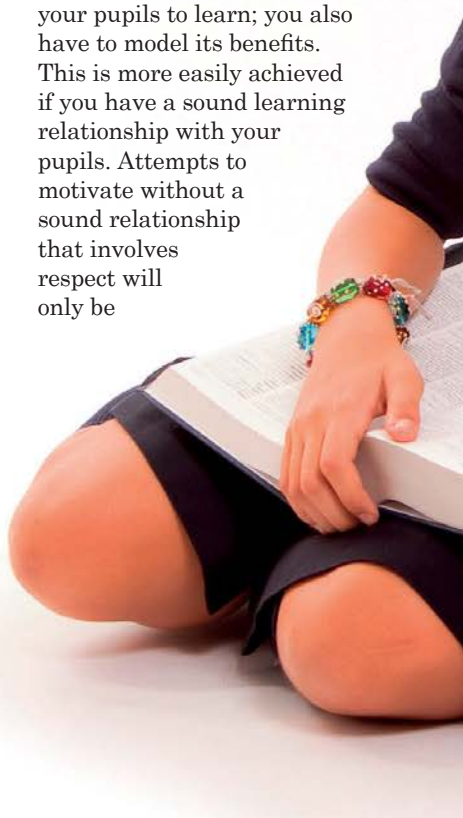
Under the direction of the teacher, the two approaches are often regarded as 'push' or 'pull' motivation. You may say there is no difference between the two, or that the difference is so subtle as to make no difference in motivating learners.

Putting the reward first, selling it, encouraging ownership, creating a reality, is a technique that car salesmen have been using for decades. Once you buy into a future where you have something or the ability to do something, then you are more motivated to work to achieve the reward.

To promote learning through need you must change from approach 1 to approach 2 – but first establish a value on what it is the pupil will gain. With approach 1, you are focusing on a rewards-based system, and if the reward is too distant, you end up replacing it with immediate rewards not connected to the learning – such as the 'chocolate bar instant reward', rather than the benefit of learning something that can be applied, or that will lead to future understanding.

Establishing before you start what students will be able to do after as a result of their learning will lead to longer-lasting motivation. Many sporting coaches use a process of visualisation to embed motivation in their athletes.

As a teacher, you must not only make desirable (and achievable) what you want your pupils to learn; you also have to model its benefits. This is more easily achieved if you have a sound learning relationship with your pupils. Attempts to motivate without a sound relationship that involves respect will only be



"To the pupil, I was bragging about my job, home and the things I was able to do"

partially successful, as I have found out.

Personal reflection

I found out the importance of a sound learning relationship when trying to motivate a pupil in my class who was quite capable of learning, but reluctant to do so because she saw no benefit to her in making the effort. The pupil was from what is often referred to as a 'disadvantaged background', which is something I can relate to and empathise with, having grown up in north-east England in the 1960s and 1970s.

I tried using what I had achieved in life – even though I had failed the 11-plus – to bridge the gap between us and encourage her to at least try; to show that with effort and belief, many things are possible.

My achievements were thrown back at me. To the pupil, I was bragging, for want of a better word, about my job, home and the things I was able to do. What I had achieved was still unobtainable to the pupil, because she saw no common ground between us. The relationship at that time was not yet strong enough, I had not created that bridge. Essentially, I had not yet met the pupil's learning needs for engagement and motivation in my class.

A lesson learnt, and one that underlined the importance of the learning relationship in motivating pupils.

Compliance

You can also be motivated to learn only because others want you to do so. This is not a true need in the learning sense, but a form of compliance, not unlike that which results from threats or punishment.

The outward sign of learning through need is self-driven engagement, a self-motivated learner. The alternative to a self-motivated learner is a learner who sees learning not as a reward in itself, but only as a coerced action to be avoided as soon as possible.

The tradition in schools has been to create or stimulate the learning need through a process of encouragement often bound up in policies and practices. The school will expect to see, reward or insist upon a set of behaviours that are traditionally associated with being ready or able to learn.

By complying, the learner outwardly expresses the motivation to learn, but this is merely a set of behaviours that mimic true motivation. These learners sit quietly, face the front and obey all the rules. They do this because they are told this is how you behave if you want to learn.

While absolute compliance may work for some pupils some of the time, it rarely gets the best from either teachers or learners. Nor does this approach match – in levels of determination or passion – the need that comes from within for learning.

Igniting the internal motivation for learning is what we should aim for as teachers, if we are to achieve true pupil engagement.

REFLECTIVE TASKS

1 Think of a situation where a need has driven your own learning. How did you recognise the need, how would you describe it and how did you plan to satisfy it?

2 Ask your pupils what motivational needs they have. You may have to rephrase the question according to their age.

3 Search the web for example behaviour policies, or obtain your school's own policy, and see if you can assess the tone of the document from its language and expectations. Highlight any guidance or advice that you would associate only with learning behaviours.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Kevin Hewitson is a former teacher with over 40 years' experience, having previously held the post of assistant principal responsible for learning strategies, and assorted pastoral and subject lead roles prior to that; this article is an edited extract taken from his book *If You Can't Reach Them You Can't Teach Them* (Critical Publishing, £17.99)

LEARNING LAB

IN THIS ISSUE

CONTRIBUTORS

ROBIN LAUNDER
Behaviour management consultant and speaker

KATHERINE DAVIS
STEM engagement trainer

ADAM RICHES
Senior leader for teaching and learning

MR E
Secondary English department lead

ZEPH BENNETT
PE teacher and school achievement leader

Ideas for...

REPORTING BACK TO PARENTS

It's amazing to think that you might put all that effort into writing and composing a school report and parents don't even read it.

One reason why is that they might assume it is written for the students rather than the parents. Another obstacle is the language used within it; secondary schools might talk about 'levels', 'predicted grades' or 'below-average progress', or use acronyms that are completely meaningless to parents.

Before you write a report, remember that parents want to know:

- You know and value their child
- You appreciate the child's potential and are working to help nurture it
- You appreciate all the positives, but want to work with the student and parents to help the student where they may be struggling

These ideas may help:

- Never say that a student has an issue without suggesting ways in which parents can help! It is fruitless for parents to hear that Jessica never puts her hand up in class without receiving some ideas for how they can help.
- Reports can sometimes aggravate parents unnecessarily through inaccessible language, an unhelpful tone, relaying information that parents would have liked to have known earlier or by only talking about struggles, and never where the student has thrived.
- Parents are more likely to read a school report when it is electronically accessible and there isn't a report to print out. The beauty of e-reports is that you can use hyperlinks to signpost students and parents to useful revision videos for subjects where children are struggling, for example.

Teaching tip – If you do use e-reports, ensure these are optimised for reading on a phone and that there is another option for parents who can't access the report in this way.

Taking it further – The skills you already have can help you – approach writing a report like you approach any other learning situation. What's the outcome? How are you going to help the parent get there?

TIPS TAKEN FROM *100 IDEAS FOR SECONDARY TEACHERS – ENGAGING PARENTS* BY JANET GOODALL AND KATHRYN WESTON (BLOOMSBURY EDUCATION, £14.99)

FIVE ELEMENTS FOR ENGAGING LEARNING

In the first of a new series from the Science Museum Group, STEM engagement trainer, Katherine Davis, shares some tips from the organisation's 'Creating Engaging Learning Experiences' training session for educators

In a typical year, we welcome thousands of school visitors to our five museums. Our aim is to engage and ignite their curiosity in STEM, which we do via our five elements of engagement – 'REFLECT', 'HOOK', 'INFORM', 'ENABLE' and 'EXTEND'. Whether you're teaching in the classroom or online, you can use these fundamental elements too.

1. Take time to REFLECT

Before you start, take time to consider who you are teaching. How can you help everyone feel included and confident to get involved? What might help them connect with your content? Reflect on these questions throughout your planning process.

2. Create a HOOK

Capture your students' attention and interest at the start of your lesson. This could be something as simple as asking a thought-provoking question, or introducing your topic humorously or in an unexpected, surprising way that sparks curiosity.

3. Vary ways to INFORM

Explore different ways of sharing your content. News articles, films, images, objects and pieces of music can really bring topics to life. Our own 'Medicine Image Bank' resource, for example, offers many images and discussion questions to help explore how medicine shapes our lives.

4. ENABLE them to get involved

Give students the opportunity to do something active with your content first-hand. We'll often use games, activities and experiments in our museums; using online tools such as kahoot.com, you could set your class the task of creating their own quizzes.

5. EXTEND beyond the classroom

Encourage the learning experience to continue after the lesson, so that they can link what they've learnt in the classroom to their everyday lives. Ask a question or set a challenge that can be done at home or with friends. Our 'How tall is that tree?' resource makes an ideal extension to a trigonometry lesson.

KATHERINE DAVIS IS A TRAINER FOR THE SMG'S ACADEMY, WHICH OFFERS FREE TRAINING AND RESOURCES FOR TEACHERS; FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT SCIENCEMUSEUM.ORG.UK/ACADEMY

5 WAYS TO ... *ADD GRAVITAS*

GET THE BALANCE RIGHT

When addressing the whole class, assume a commanding central position, square on to the students and give an attention primer, such as 'Students, eyes on me.' Once they're looking at you and silent, begin delivering your message.

PACE YOURSELF

Speak slowly, clearly and succinctly, emphasising key words. A formal register and tone will elevate the importance of your message, thus communicating to your students that they need to be listening to you.

PRACTICE AT HOME

This might feel silly at first, but you're partly an actor and partly an orator – no one in those professions would face an audience without practising, and nor should you.

BE ABRUPT

If a student starts chatting while you're speaking, stop abruptly. Mid-sentence is powerful, mid-multisyllabic word even more so. Look at the student, adopt an expression of surprise, and wait until there's silence. Pause a moment longer, then talk to the class again.

PARK THE QUESTIONS

If you choose to take questions, do so only at the end. It's often better to get all students working and on task, then speaking to the student with the question. Chances are it will have been answered by then, anyway...

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

46%

of pupils have seen a reduction in their maths knowledge, compared to the level they were at prior to March 2020

Source: analysis of 1,721 UK children aged 5 to 13 carried out by Whizz Education

The Sutton Trust has issued a report highlighting the situation for pupils ahead of the national lockdown imposed in January 2021, based on survey data sourced from Teacher Tapp and YouGov.

In terms of access to devices, only 5% of teachers in state schools confirmed that all of their students had access to appropriate remote learning devices, compared with a figure of 54% among teachers at independent schools. Overall, 19% of parents reported that their children lacked access to the devices they needed for remote learning.

The figures paint a more positive picture of the strides schools have made in their remote learning provision, however, with the report noting that 54% of teachers are now regularly teaching live lessons online, compared with just 4% in March 2020. The use of more analogue resources has meanwhile seen a significant decline, with just 15% of students using physical workbooks at home, versus 34% lat year.

As for the impact on learning, 55% of teachers at the least affluent state schools reported seeing markedly lower standards of work returned by pupils since the school shutdowns, compared to 41% at the most affluent state schools and 30% at private schools.

Download the full report at bit.ly/ts102-sutton

YOUR GUIDE TO ...

COGNITIVE LOAD THEORY

John Sweller's 1988 and 1998 papers on the concept of cognitive load theory have been the biggest influencing factors on the way I teach today. That's a bold claim, but I maintain they're the most important papers I've read regarding pedagogy.

CLT is based around the idea that our working memory can only deal with a limited amount of information at any one time. The theory focuses on the significance of how our brains deal with stimulus or inputs, illuminating the way in which new information must be fed to learners in a way that enables them to process it, without being overburdened.

Sweller identified three types of cognitive load – intrinsic (the inherent difficulty of the material itself), extraneous (ways of presenting the material that don't aid learning) and germane (elements that that actually aid information processing and contribute to the development of 'schemas').

Sweller's papers highlight what happens when our working memory is overloaded, and the impact this can have on the completion of tasks, as well as the transfer of information from our short term, finite working memory to our theoretically infinite long term memory.

CLT allows us to understand how our brains work in layman's terms. Sweller's papers do a great job of explaining learning from a psychological point of view, in a way that non-specialist classroom practitioners can easily grasp. Practitioners versed in CLT will make active decisions when planning to ensure that learners aren't overloaded with unnecessary inputs and stimulus that may overburden them.

Three CLT points to consider and potentially apply in your own lessons:

1. Break down subject content when introducing new topics and make time to recap and recall information

2. Present instructions clearly without introducing too much information at the same time

3. Be wary of reducing cognitive load too much – you don't want the desirable difficulty to be too low

ADAM RICHES IS A SENIOR LEADER FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING; FOLLOW HIM AT @TEACHMRRICHES

48%

of parents are more worried now about the pandemic's impact on their child's education compared with March 2020

Source: poll of 1,240 parents by Parentkind

Need to know

Academics at Loughborough University and the University of Sheffield have found that teachers may be over- or underestimating the effectiveness of education studies, based on how they're presented.

The researchers observe that several metrics are commonly used to communicate the successes of research trials, but that there's no consensus over which metric may be best for communicating with teachers. Said metrics include months of progress, percentile gain, Cohen's U3 (the percentage of students in intervention groups scoring above the mean of control groups), threshold and test scores.

According to Dr Hugo Lortie-Forgues, of Loughborough University, "In education research, an intervention's impact is typically reported in units of standard deviations, but this measure is hard to interpret, so studies are generally translated into more digestible metrics before being reported to teachers.

"However, very little research has examined how to present this evidence in ways that maximize the ability of teachers to make informed decisions."

Download the paper, titled 'How should educational effects be communicated to teachers?' via bit.ly/ts102-research

ONE FOR ENGLISH TEACHERS

GREAT NON-FICTION WRITING IN SEVEN STEPS

Training GCSE students to produce controlled argument writing can be like nailing jelly to a tree. How can you encourage them to produce short, effective pieces, as opposed to unpunctuated rants?

1. Be on good form!

Have students focus on the type of writing required of them. How we open and close an argument is dictated by whether we're writing a speech for an audience, a letter for an individual or an essay / article for readers.

2. Lead by example

Form established, encourage students to find examples. Writers and topics they're familiar with will resonate, but don't rule out classics such as Martin Luther King's 1963 'I have a dream' speech.

3. Play Devil's advocate

Encouraging students to take the opposite point of view to their own works well. Forced to become more measured, they'll come to focus on sound planning and utilising different devices.

4. Start with a bang.

Create impact in letters and speeches by inserting emotive or personal phrases, such as 'I feel passionately about this' or 'I feel compelled to speak out.'

5. Move from negative to positive

After a brief intro, have students focus on the negative repercussions of readers not taking their point of view. Having deployed emotive language to induce misery, they can then paint a glorious picture of a world that follows their lead, using positive abstract nouns such as 'hope', 'freedom' and 'happiness'.

6. Paragraph for Effect

Turning points – moving from the negative into the positive – are perfect for single-sentence paragraphs. Opinions disguised as facts ('Everyone knows that this is an outright lie') can be effective here; alternatively, digressions and flashback paragraphs never fail to impress examiners.

7. Build Word Power!

Focus on students' 'Tier 2 vocabulary'; words perhaps not familiar to them, but which can be regularly found in intelligent writing across various topics, such as 'fundamental', 'intrinsic' and 'corresponding.'

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

Research into... *Conspiracy theories*

Researchers at Northumbria University have found that 14 may be the peak age for susceptibility to conspiracy theories, with said beliefs persisting into early adulthood.

The research was funded by the British Academy, and is notable for being the first scientific analysis of conspiracy beliefs carried out among a younger population.

The team developed a conspiracy beliefs questionnaire specifically designed for young people – the Adolescent Conspiracy Beliefs Questionnaire – and worked alongside secondary school teachers to devise an initial list of 36 questions. These were then tested on a range of young people from schools across the UK over multiple studies, enabling the team to confirm a list of nine questions that effectively measured young people's belief in conspiracy theories.

Respondents then ranked statements in the final survey – such as '*Secret societies influence many political decisions*' – on a scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree).

According to project lead Dr Daniel Jolley, "We uncovered initial evidence that paranoia and mistrust are associated with conspiracy beliefs in young populations. We also found that by the age of 14, conspiracy beliefs appeared to remain constant. Exploring the psychological antecedents and consequences of conspiracy thinking in younger populations is important and timely."

THE PROJECT'S ADOLESCENT CONSPIRACY BELIEFS QUESTIONNAIRE CAN BE DOWNLOADED FROM BIT.LY/TS102-ACBQ; A SHORT ANIMATION OUTLINING THE RESEARCH CAN BE VIEWED AT BIT.LY/TS102-CONSPIRACY

TRENDING

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

REMOTE ASSISTANCE
The NEU has launched an online resource aimed at helping education staff deliver remote learning. The Remote Education Hub includes expert advice, guidance and access to a bespoke social network.
neu.org.uk/rehub

NOW HEAR THIS
Created and hosted by Greg James and Bella Mackie, the new Teach Me A Lesson podcast will feature a different teacher each week, delivering an informal 40-minute lesson on their specialist subject.
bit.ly/ts102-5live-teach

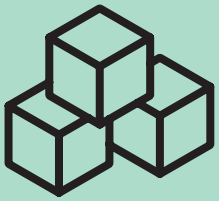
OUT AND PROUD
The Proud Trust has partnered with Schools Out UK on developing a free, cross-curricular resource pack to accompany this year's LGBT+ History Month.
http://bit.ly/3tMwgtJ

STUDENT WALKTHROUGH

REDUCING COGNITIVE LOAD DURING REMOTE LEARNING

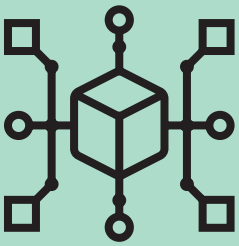
HELP YOUR STUDENTS BECOME BETTER LEARNERS WITH ZEPH BENNETT'S VISUAL EXPLAINERS...

CHUNKING
Present work in manageable sections, split up into topics or sub sections – chunking categories reduces the pressure on our working memory



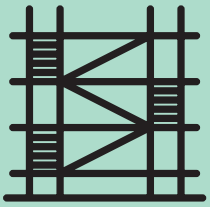
SIMPLIFY
Known as the redundancy effect, reducing unnecessary dialogue or text can help reduce cognitive load significantly when a visual is present

GRAPHIC ORGANISER
Using a GO, concept map or advanced organiser illustrates connections and the bigger picture



ELABORATE
Work through complex material with questions and present material in different ways to illustrate the same concept

SCAFFOLDING
Work through a problem and demonstrate or model answers before challenging students to complete a task.



DUAL CODING
Present work with visuals or diagrams to support the written learning material.

ZEPH BENNETT IS A PE TEACHER AND SCHOOL ACHIEVEMENT LEADER WITH 25 YEARS' TEACHING EXPERIENCE; YOU CAN FIND MORE OF HIS EDUCATIONAL ILLUSTRATIONS BY FOLLOWING @PEGEEKSCORNER

Got a great learning idea? Email editor@teachsecondary.com or tweet us at @teachsecondary

Great Ormond Street Hospital Charity

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** for great ideas, fun activities and handy resources.

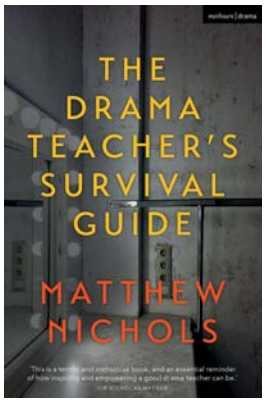
Schools

Get in touch:
schools@gosh.org or
020 7239 3131

CPD

The Drama Teacher's Survival Guide

A comprehensive, engagingly written and well-informed book that any drama teacher will find inspiring, practical and reassuring



AT A GLANCE

- **Outlines the core principles behind the development of a creative drama curriculum**
- **Essential teaching, learning and assessment information**
- **Crucial tips, golden nuggets and informative case studies**
- **Designed to facilitate the delivery of inspiring lessons**
- **Hard-won, 'been there, done that, got the T-shirt' experiences shared with wit**

REVIEW BY JOHN DABELL

Survival guides should live up to their name, yet some turn out to be little more than sink or swim toolkits that leave you high and dry. But some do what they say they will, as is the case with *The Drama Teacher's Survival Guide* by Matthew Nichols (£19.99 in paperback, £17.99 as an eBook).

The book begins with a sharp and humorous look at the place drama has occupied in schools – or rather been pushed out of – during the last few decades. It explains why drama is a critical subject that permanently has to stick up for itself, why drama teachers have to fight for the subject and why drama matters.

The first part gets us to consider just how "Brilliant, terrifying, exhilarating, creative, frustrating and all-encompassing" the job of being a drama teacher really is, and goes on to explain that drama is "The coat and the hanger, its subject and method."

Nichols devotes one chapter to curriculum design, and challenges his fellow drama teachers to think critically about the type of curriculum they want to teach – what will meet the needs of their students, how to start and how teachers can play to their own strengths.

Another chapter, titled 'Creating, Performing and Responding' explores the areas of teaching space, resourcing, creating work, performing and helping students develop a critical vocabulary. The explanations and ideas outlined therein provide readers with plenty of material they can use to become more present in lessons, and respond skilfully to their students' range of needs, strengths and experiences.

From there, it delves into the art of survival, examining the common pressure points felt by drama teachers, and why teaching drama is no soft option, but rather a highly specialised practice that's both practical and inherently academic.

> ***"Teaching drama is no soft option"***

Other areas considered later on in the book include cross-curricular teaching, working with SLT, staging productions, Ofsted and subject administration. Throughout, Nichols offers some valuable advice on staying relevant, why theatre visits are an absolute must (once we're past the pandemic, at least) and why social media doesn't have all the answers.

Whether you've been in the drama trenches a while and need a fresh pair of eyes, or are a fresh-faced NQT, this guide will serve as a feisty friend and professional mentor. Central to the book's appeal is how it goes beyond mere survival to show readers how to thrive, excel and 'be brilliant', while still staying grounded in the advice it gives. Drama can save lives – and in a sense, this book could save a few professional lives too.

teach SECONDARY

VERDICT

- ✓ **Packed with advice on how to be a dazzling drama teacher**
- ✓ **Contains lots of ideas for keeping the subject fresh and relevant**
- ✓ **Includes suggestions boosting your own interpersonal skills**
- ✓ **A book that truly cherishes and champions the subject of drama**
- ✓ **Written in a vital and passionate voice that invites readers to ask some frank, but ultimately helpful questions of themselves**

UPGRADE IF...

You're looking for tips on how to improve your drama teaching practice, avoid burnout and build a sustainable career. This witty, sometimes prickly and often canny book will help you strive to be brilliant.

Find out more at bloomsbury.com/drama

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

THE LAST WORD

Strictly come teaching...?

John Lawson reflects on the powerful mentoring lessons contained within the country's pre-eminent televised dance contest...

After 30 years of being so consumed by teaching that I scarcely even glanced at a TV, I recently succumbed to the charms of *Strictly Come Dancing*. I found it remarkable how tyros of all shapes and ages could be turned into ballroom stars by professional coaches.

One of the 2020 celebrity competitors, Jamie Laing, revealed how he'd naively advised his instructor to, "Dial it down a notch for the first week, in case everyone thinks I'm a professional." Said instructor, Karen Hauer, simply smiled and proceeded to spend a week boot-camping Jamie in order to yank a passable American Smooth from him.

It struck me that Karen and co are precisely the kind of ultra-supportive, yet no-nonsense mentors that teachers need. I'm still haunted by the memory of how ill-prepared I was when teaching my first Y9 vandals, who went straight for my jugular – but their shenanigans were mild compared to the regular rollockings I received after school from my termagant mentor: '*Shape up, dummy, or ship out!*' It was the *Strictly* treatment, minus the supportive pick-me-ups...

Harangued and humiliated

We know that teenagers don't become smarter or more skilled by being harangued and humiliated, so why brutalise their teachers? What my mentors failed to realise was that having me watch them teach wasn't the same as actually teaching me how to teach. To this day, I suspect my pass from teaching practice was due to my Uriah Heep act in the face of my mentor's criticisms – 'I 'umbly accept your every chastisement, milady – may I have another...?'

Once qualified, however, I worked ceaselessly, striving to become the master teacher I dreamt of being, never letting a day pass without learning some new teaching strategy. I devoured teaching manuals, observed terrific teachers, attended numerous lectures and workshops, and studied every motivational teacher movie I could find (*Freedom Writers* remaining my pick of the bunch).

10 years later, I received praise from a department head for delivering '*A scintillating masterclass that was a privilege to observe*'. There was still much more for me to learn, but I could now at least peel off my 'staffroom imposter' tag. Had there been a strict, albeit kindly and skilled mentor regularly amending my flaws, I could have reached that pinnacle far sooner.

Lessons learned

I've since used my own experiences to assemble a 40-step mentoring package for new teachers that empowers protégés to become A-team teachers within three years.

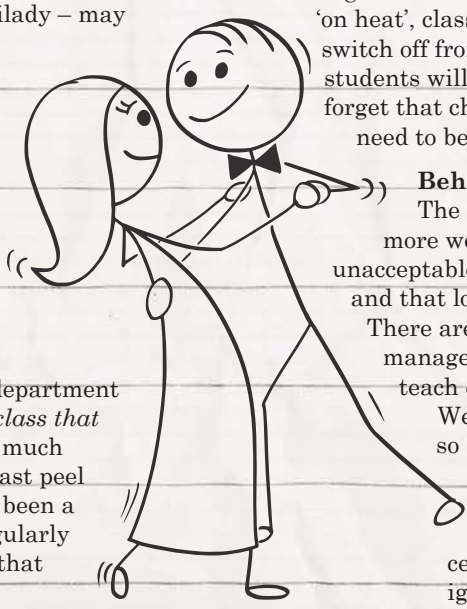
I'll finish here with a selection of those steps I wish I'd known sooner in my own career...

'Be yourself; everyone else is already taken'
Oscar Wilde had it right, and his words apply to teaching. Think of teaching styles as dinner suits – tailor-made always fits more comfortably and looks more stylish than something off the peg. The way that works for you is the best way to teach.

Love what you do
The most effective form of classroom management will always be brilliant lessons taught to children by knowledgeable, passionate and caring teachers who love their subjects and their students.

Be relaxed and friendly, but never a friend
Once we trespass into the 'friend zone', almost everything we do will be terminally undermined. Most children have enough friends in the playground. The friendship hurdle is unforgiving, and continually claims far too many promising new teachers. Don't be its next victim.

Teach for mastery, not mystery
Are the aims and objectives of our lessons transparent, stimulating and achievable? While we can't be permanently 'on heat', classroom time is teaching time. Once we switch off from teaching or set busywork, our students will start searching for distractions. Don't forget that children are intellectual infants – they need to be 'burped' regularly.



Behaviour before curriculum delivery
The more disruption we tolerate, the more we'll have to tolerate. Eliminate unacceptable behaviour early in the year, and that lost time will soon be reclaimed. There are few teachers who can both manage unacceptable conduct and teach effectively.

We must model the behaviour we expect, so stay cool. Anger is the bodyguard of three demons – fear, insecurity, and indignation. When we give into anger, our own behaviour takes centre stage while the conduct that ignited it remains unaddressed.

LEGOLAND WINDSOR RESORT

BOOK NOW FOR 2021
FROM £9.25 PER PUPIL!

www.LEGOLAND.co.uk/schools

'Building your creative trip brick by brick'

14 Curriculum Workshops Available

NEW STEAM WORKSHOPS

For more information email us at

school.enquiries@LEGOLAND.co.uk

or call 01753 626 415

New Professional Development **Academy**

Supporting UK teaching professionals in their continuous professional development.

Our brand-new Professional Development Academy provides access to a wide variety of high-quality courses suitable for teachers at all stages of their career, whether in a primary or secondary educational role.

We have a range of on-demand, live and self-guided courses available, creating flexible learning options at a time and place that suits you.

Why choose Pearson to support your continuous professional development?

Courses to help teachers and non-subject specialists develop their subject knowledge and skills across primary and secondary.

Easy and flexible access to a wide variety of courses to meet every teacher's individual career aspirations

Supporting teachers to develop the knowledge and skills to ensure students of all abilities and backgrounds thrive.

High-quality courses developed by educational experts and trusted partners.

PEUK B0121

Pearson

Visit **go.pearson.com/pdats** to take a closer look